

Hi! I'm seriously considering taking a two month leave from Wycliffe this summer so that I can serve in a ministry in a large slum in Nairobi, Kenya (Kibera). I was just innocently sitting in Sunday school at my North Carolina church when this Kenyan couple, Imbumi and Martha Makuku, came and shared about their ministry and they mentioned how they can use short term workers, even if you don't speak Swahili.

Kenyans view the Kibera slum as a harbor for evil people: criminals, prostitutes, gangs, drug addicts, and violent political activists. The Kibera church where Makukus serve counters that these are the people who listened to Christ when he preached the Good News. The church, started in 2002, desires to plant a church in each of the 10 neighborhoods of Kibera (Kibera is divided into 10 areas, most of these are neighborhoods based on tribe). The church plans a Bible institute where pastors can be trained and a library to serve as a resource for pastors. The church is an advocate for the people in issues of land rights, tenure and security of the people, and education of the children. The church also links the poor with Christian professionals engaged in seeing righteousness and justice practiced in society at large.

About Kibera: Kibera is the largest slum in Kenya and the second largest in Africa. **One million** people live on the **one square mile** it covers. (I'm told a good description: unbelievably **crowded, dirty, and smelly.**) Slumlords have semi-legal rights to the land; the occupation of the slum is **temporary**; the government can have it moved. Structures are made of semi-permanent materials (mud walls and iron sheets). People rent rooms --- average room size **10 x 10 feet**, average **4.2** people per room, average rent: \$15-\$20 a month. The average income is **\$1** per day. **Unemployment** is about **80%**. **AIDS** affects 1 in 3. The **infant mortality** rate is high, mostly caused by environmental sewage and sanitation conditions. **Water** must be purchased. **Garbage** is burned or thrown into the river. Landlords build pit **latrines** that generally serve more than 100 people. New people arrive daily (15 houses are added each day); sometimes rooms are built on top of the pit latrines (i.e., some people have substandard toilet facilities and some people have no facilities). Access to health care is minimal. **Common diseases:** tuberculosis, AIDS, malaria, STDs, scabies, respiratory diseases, dysentery, measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, hepatitis and worms. The Kenyan education system requires uniforms and payment of school fees; **poverty** prevents access to education. **Cults, prostitution** and **chang'aa breweries** are common and prominent.

Stuff you can pray about:

- Never done a missions trip with a group: **pray** for good relationships with the other people going (a team of 8 people together pretty constantly for two months --- remember how I'm an introvert and also how I'm outside the age bracket for summer missions)
- **Pray** for colleagues I'm ditching to run off to Nairobi. God is perfectly capable of running Wycliffe without me, but pray that work will go smoothly while I'm gone, that projects I'm working on won't lose momentum, that God's purposes will be done at my job, ...plus in my life.
- **Pray** that if I'm not supposed to go, this will be clear to me. This is the chicken-way, but I figure if the financial support doesn't happen, I don't go. It's very simple, clear cut; doesn't require great leaps of faith either...
- **Pray** for the ministry of the Kibera church, for Makukus, for social justice, for God's work in the lives of people in Kibera since God is for them (and for us) our only hope.

When I do this (if I do this), it's not IT (I'm not even bringing a laptop --- I can occasionally get internet access at internet cafes) and it's with another mission: Mission to the World (MTW), a Presbyterian organization (my North Carolina church denomination).

MTW gave me a budget for travel and living expenses and a visa and such --- it's \$5,541 US. People gave a substantial gift in December (which convinced me maybe I really am supposed to do this). Also, if I'm not here, I won't be spending some parts of my regular support (like I won't buy groceries or gas but I still have to pay rent and insurance). The December gift plus the portion of my regular support I have available to use is \$2,700 (about half what I need).

Information for sending gifts to MTW for me (if you're inclined) is enclosed.

Trip dates are May 31 – Aug 3, 2007 and I'm told I should be prepared to be flexible about what it is that I actually do. It could be working in a shelter, doing door-to-door home visits, assisting teachers in schools, participating in AIDS support groups, and/or service projects. I believe the people who say they can use short term people so I'm not concerned with the fuzziness about what it is I'm doing there.