

Leslie Is Passionate About the Value of Missions Trips!



Leslie with a breakout group at the Kenya conference.



Pastors Imbumi Makuku and Randy Nabors.



Students at Mamlaks School near Nairobi.

By Leslie Cory

When Randy Nabors announced a team trip to Kenya in 2023, I was excited. First Presbyterian had not fielded a church team on the mission field since before COVID.

My last trip on behalf of the congregation was in 2017, when I traveled with a small team (Melissa and Shad Guinn and Chris Bowen) to Berlin to meet with our church planters at the Kreuzbergprojekt to see how we could help them with the inundation of refugees from Syria.

Sending church teams out to labor with our missionaries is a vital part of our World Missions program. Why? (1) What you learn from experiencing your missionaries' lives first-hand is invaluable, both to you personally and to your relationships with your missionaries. (2) Missionaries and church planters are greatly encouraged when churches care enough to send teams. (3) Teams can sometimes reach people and minister in ways that missionaries can't. In the past, First Pres has sent medical teams to New Guinea and South America.

I was on a lawyers' team to China, which enabled us to meet law students on a law school campus. When Serge missionaries in London send out naïve summer team members to knock on doors in South Asian neighborhoods, doors are sometimes opened to them that would be closed to "professional" representatives of our faith.

So why a trip to Kenya in 2023? One reason is that Missions Pastor Randy Nabors was invited to speak at a pastors' conference near Nairobi, on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Our new missionary, Pastor Imbumi Makuku and his wife, Martha, have a farm/camp/shelter/dreamed-of vocational school in a suburb of Nairobi, and they had invited Kenyan pastors to attend a conference at the camp, to hear Randy and to join in fellowship.



Pastors listen to a speaker in an open-air pavilion in Kiserian, Kenya. "It was cold!" said Leslie Cory.

("Kenya" continued from P. 1.)

Randy wanted to give some of our church members the opportunity to minister to the pastors Imbumi had invited. Plus, Imbumi runs a school (pre-Primary through 8th Grade) in one of the slums of Nairobi, and Imbumi and Randy wanted some of our members to have the opportunity to meet with and minister to teachers and students at the school.

Also, Randy wanted us to join Pastor Makuku's congregation in Sunday worship, which we were able to do both Sundays we were in Kenya (although that first Sunday, having just debarked from an over 24-hour trip, we slept through much of the service – sitting right up there on the front row, for everyone to see).

Was our visit difficult for our hosts? Absolutely! Imbumi and Martha transported us on the hour-long trip to the school every time we visited the slum. Martha and the two Girls' Shelter house mothers and two graduates of the Girls' Shelter prepared all our meals, as well as the meals of all the pastors during the days of the conference. And every day when we went to the school, the teachers would meet us in the guarded parking lot where we parked the van, to form a protective barrier between us and our surroundings as we walked through the slum to the school. We taught them about life in America and I had an opportunity to share my testimony. I took a lot of pictures during my two weeks in Kenya, but none on my walks to and from the school. Martha would not let me carry anything in my hands when I walked through the slum.

It was a wonderful trip and our team was perfect for it. Randy and Joan Nabors, who had been missionaries in Kenya, Gyven Nabors, who had lived in Kenya and had a good knowledge of the country and people, Tsennebah Piel and Connie Yallup, two Native American ladies from Sacred Road in Washington, who had never been out of the United States and were excited to be their church's first representatives on the World Missions stage, and then Gary Reid and me, the two old-time members of First Presbyterian who wanted to make a contribution to our new work in Kenya. It was, as I said, the perfect team.

But I asked myself more than once, if we have more trips to Kenya in the future, will more of our members come forward? I wondered, couldn't we field a medical team? Or a sports team? Or a teachers team? All are needed. Are we up to it?

So, now you know what I did on my team trip to Kenya. My question is, why *wouldn't* anyone want to go on a church team missions trip?

Leslie's Mission Trips

Belarus

3 vision trips, giving spiritual encouragement;

Choir trip

Cherokee, N.C.

Home repairs for native Americans

China

Sharing Christ at a Chinese law school

Colombia

Checking on a church-backed loan program

Ecuador

Helping to build a church in Duran

England

LEAP Week in London with Serge, education and evangelization

Germany

To visit church planters in Berlin and help with refugees

Kenya

Attending a pastors' conference, giving testimony, ministering teachers and students