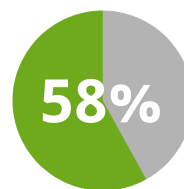


**JOURNALS** POSTED ON AUGUST 13, 2016

## A Journey of Discovery



STAN SLADE



SUPPORT PLEDGED



GLOBAL

"I *get* it! This is a journey of discovery!"

My new Kenyan friend Didacus was right. He did “get it.” BereanSafari is all about making discoveries... in Scripture... in the Lord... in our world... and in ourselves.

BereanSafari was created by a dynamic, dedicated and creative group of East African followers of Jesus. They wanted to make it possible for a wide variety of pastors, people in university student ministries and lay leaders in local churches to experience how powerful it can be to immerse themselves in discovery Bible study for a week. So they created a Bible study training event. They called it “BereanSafari,” combining the Swahili word for “journey” with a reference to the people of Berea, who searched the Scriptures to see whether Paul’s message about Jesus really did fit together with the revelation of God in what we now call the Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament (Acts 17:11).

Their vision has caught on. This year, from August 6 to 13, the tenth annual BereanSafari brought together 84 people from throughout and beyond Africa. These week-long events have been held at various places in Kenya and Ethiopia. This year we were in the most delightful setting so far: a beach hotel south of Mombasa, on Kenya’s Indian Ocean coast.

My role is to work with one of the study groups, asking questions, drawing people out and helping them truly to hear one another and the text, while also putting relevant background information at the service of the group, I also cheer them on. Soon, the group comes to understand that the foreign “expert” is far more interested to learn what they see and think, than to tell them either what he sees, or what they “should” think. Throughout the week they sharpen and expand their ability to work directly with the text of Scripture, rather than deepen their dependence on the knowledge and opinions of others. Of course, there is a vitally important role for the work of experts in Biblical history, cultures and languages, so participants also deepen their appreciation for the proper use of scholarship and reference materials. But, as Didacus exclaimed this week, at some point they come to the realization that BereanSafari really is about learning to use both their direct observations and fruits of scholarship in order to discover fresh insights and unsuspected riches in the Bible.

At one point this week Didacus made a discovery that surprised him greatly. In his ministry setting, he is surrounded by advocates of the “health and wealth” or the so-called “prosperity gospel.” He saw that the missions of John the Baptist, Jesus and Jesus’ disciples were all set on a different trajectory. When he saw the full context in Mark for Jesus’s statements in Chapter 4 about “the measure you give will be the measure you get,” and “to the one who has, more will be given,” he exclaimed, “Oh Lord, this is not at all about what people have claimed! They’ve been plucking the words right out of their context, to make them say what they don’t say!”

It has been an incredible privilege to be invited by the African planning committee to be a part of the BereanSafari leadership team for each of these last ten years. I love to work with first-timers and also to help coach participants who are learning to become teachers and facilitators for others. This year I had the pleasure of co-facilitating with long-time friend Andrew Sibairo, a gifted and dedicated member of the BereanSafari core leadership. He has a wonderful way of helping people to discover the relationship between Scripture and their current African contexts. I love to learn from Andrew!

God has blessed and powerfully used these events. Time after time, we see people surprised and inspired by what they find when they study Scripture together in a patient, careful way. Over the course of a week together, a learning community forms as people share each other’s questions and discoveries. Before long, they are sharing each other’s struggles as followers of Christ, and helping to bear one another’s burdens.

Along the way, their fresh encounter with Scripture also becomes a fresh and surprising encounter with God. And with one another. And with themselves. The experience can be life changing! It was for me, nearly 44 years ago, as a college student. It continues to be life-transforming in the very different context of East Africa today.

Thank you for making it possible for me to play a role in God's work of changing lives and equipping leaders for the work of God's mission in our world!

May you be blessed as you allow God to use your life to bless others,

Stan

P.S. The many different aspects of the work I do are all supported both by focused contributions to my personal support and by gifts to the World Mission Offering. So, I am excited to see the [IamIM](#) effort to double gifts made to this year's WMO. If you are able, I invite you to join me in helping to grow WMO through [IamIM](#)!