

Firsr Friends Church  
Katrina & Shawn McConaughey  
Blessed to Be a Blessing  
Gen 12:1-8, 22:15-18

Scripture

Genesis 12:1-8

Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. <sup>5</sup>Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother’s son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, <sup>6</sup>Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, ‘To your offspring I will give this land.’ So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. <sup>8</sup>From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and invoked the name of the LORD.

Genesis 22:15-18

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, <sup>16</sup>and said, ‘By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup>I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, <sup>18</sup>and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.’

Message

The passage is the first missionary passage in the Bible. God is a missionary God interacting with humans. God moves forward with human beings to the Kingdom of God. The story we heard is of Abrams mission, but it begins the mission of all who follow God. It begins a string that extends through all time. The mission begins but does not end with Abram being blessed and being called to bless the whole world- the seed will multiply through all time- all the families of

the world. It is a big mission-God's mission to call all people to be redeemed. Late God reminds Isaac (Gen 26:2-4), Jacob (Gen 28), Joseph (Gen 29). With Joseph the image changes from seed and sand to branches but God's promise and call remains the same- As I bless you, I call you to be a blessing. God calls us all, in all times and places- Abram was 75 and we know he wasn't perfect- he forgets to trust God and lies. But this seed/blessing applies to all of us who follow God, just as Jesus was the seed, so are we.

Today we want to tell you of three ministries that we get to follow along who are blessings. We are grateful to be with Friends United meeting here in Kenya. We live in Kisumu near Lake Victoria where the Friends United Meeting is- South West Kenya. This is where the triennial was supposed to be. Most Quakers live in Western Kenya. There are 22 Yearly meetings with somewhere around 400-500,000 Quakers. The ministries we want to talk about are with the pastoralist/herding people in Turkana and Samburu- the north east is primarily desert.

The first ministry is Friends Theological College which is located where the original mission was founded in 1902-3. They many programs from a one year certificate to a four year degree for pastors and chaplains. There can be a lot of division among tribes but FTC works hard to build bridges and ensure all are equipped; preaching, teaching, mental health and even first aid classes are offered. They are looking to expand their spirituality and leadership program. It is flourishing under their first Kenyan principal Robert Wafula who is a blessing for the generations. Pleas pray for them as they stretch to do on line learning- they have not had stable internet, but now because of the coronavirus all schools are going on-line. Robert is blessed to be a blessing!

The coordinator of Friends Church Peace Team is Getry Agizab. She is a force of nature and Spirit with her energy and charismatic personality! The Peace Team rose up in the midst of violence during the elections. They organized quickly to provide physical assistance to refugees from the violence, but also counselling and training in conflict resolution and reconciliation. The today to help people learn how to heal trauma and deal with conflict. Getry uses her skills and gifts to be a blessing to restore faith in other human beings and God. She is a blessing helping people and speaking Truth to power.

The Kakuma Refugee camp is located in the Turkana mission. There are about 30 churches there. It is remote, desert and pastoralist/herders live there. Churches often meet under a tree until they build a meeting space. The leadership there sees many opportunities. One of the leaders is Zelika who is the president of the Women's association. She had never been to Turkana but now she is leading the women's efforts to bring supplies and build churches. (Here it is said the men think they are doing things but the women actually are!) The Turkana mission

director has been John Laskie Mour. for 20 years. He is retirement age but he has heard the call to go and work in ministry in S. Sudan with his wife Grace

We feel we are blessed because God is working through and with these people. We want you to know them and to know how they have responded to the call to be a blessing. The Kenyan Friends are now also trying to find ways reach out to support the Tanzanian Friends.

One of the most miraculous things about God's work with Abram was that Abram obeyed! We encourage you to look at areas in your life where you need to go and be a blessing.

#### About Shawn & Katrina

Katrina and Shawn are members of the North Valley Friends Church in Oregon. They served as pastors in two churches for a total of 20 years and Shawn also served as Associate Superintendent for Global Outreach and Pastoral Care in the yearly meeting for ten years. They are grateful to have the opportunity to be in Kenya serving as Programme Officers as part of FUM Africa Ministries staff team, headed by John Muhanji, Africa Ministries Director. Kenya holds special significance for them because they got engaged there when leading a team to visit Friends in 1988!

Katrina and Shawn are responsible for facilitating global and cross-cultural relationships, accompanying ministry partners in project implementation, lifting up African voices and experiences in FUM's communications, and hosting mission visitors. About the importance of having North American members as part of the Kisumu-based staff team, John Muhanji says, "Ever since the Africa Ministries Office (AMO) was established, it has been working under the four priorities of Evangelism, Leadership Development, Communication, and Global Partnership. The presence of North Americans in the AMO is very key and strategic in reflecting the unity of Quakers, in demonstrating how we are one across the world, and helping the Quaker church in Africa feel connected to others through the priority of Global Partnership."