

Regional Strategic Partnership

By Daniel W. Dill, Chairman & CEO, LifeLift International

In October 2004 LifeLift International (formerly Ascend Ministries) entered into a strategic alliance with African Evangelistic Enterprise – Kenya (AEE-K). As Michael Cassidy explained, African Enterprise' vision is to spread the Gospel in both *word* and *deed*. LifeLift was asked to work with AEE-K to provide life saving resources for Kenyan communities representing *deed*, while AEE-K and LifeLift would together share the soul saving *word* of the gospel of Jesus.

In early 2005 Faith Community Church of Whittier, California in the USA asked LifeLift to manage development of two boreholes in the Kikuyu Community of Maai Mahiu, Kenya, in the Great Rift Valley an hour west of Nairobi. LifeLift contacted AEE-K Team Leader Stephen Mboho and his Senior Staff Member Joseph Mulinge and asked if Joseph might assist us with liaison work and technical assistance with this project. Joseph immediately reported that there was bloody warfare between Maai Mahiu and its neighboring Maasai community of Suswa.

Joseph soon informed us that many people were being killed in fighting between the Maasai and Kikuyu and suggested it might not be advisable for us to drill two boreholes in a Kikuyu village without giving one to the Maasai. The primary issues in the conflict were water and land rights.

Joseph offered to meet with the Kikuyu and Maasai leaders and recommended that we ask our sponsors if they would consider giving one of the borehole projects to the Maasai and one to the Kikuyu. Both Faith Community Church and the leaders of Maai Mahiu agreed that this project should be shared with Suswa and that each village should get one borehole. It would be necessary to approach the Maasai Chief in Suswa and ask for his blessing on the plan.

Joseph volunteered to act as emissary and proceeded to cross into Maasai country through the area of fighting. He did so at considerable personal risk. The Lord honored his faithfulness and the Maasai Chief greeted him warmly, embracing the chance to receive a borehole.

Thus, a relationship began which involved African Enterprise, LifeLift International, Faith Community Church, Maai Mahiu and Suswa.

We contracted with our Kenyan hydro-geologist to accomplish a survey and soundings at sites in each community. Signs of water existed in each village so we secured permits to drill in each.

In September of 2006 one of my fellow board members, Chris Anderson, and I visited Maai Mahiu and Suswa with Joseph. Drilling was scheduled to begin at Maai Mahiu within days and at Suswa in about two weeks. After reaching agreement with Eliud Mbugua, a village leader in Maai Mahiu as to terms and conditions for them to receive their borehole, we proceeded to meet with the Chief of the Maasai and about eight of his village elders and his representative and interpreter, Patrick Toris.

We had a number of conditions necessary for each village to receive their boreholes. First; each site must be a site of peace and they must allow anyone in need to draw water at a fair price. Second; they must sell their water in order to have funds for maintenance and upkeep and they could not discriminate in their pricing. Third; each site must be a focal point for evangelism, discipleship and church planting in the name of Jesus Christ. Fourth; they must stop fighting and killing each other.

The chief spoke extemporaneously for a long while then explained there were issues between the Maasai and Kikuyu besides land and water but the Maasai were so overjoyed that we should travel from America to give them a borehole that he had decided that day that there would be no more fighting between the Maasai people of Suswa and the Kikuyu people of Maai Mahiu.



Meeting with the Maasai at their borehole site.

I had met with Dr. Ted W. Engstrom, President Emeritus of World Vision International, the day before I left on this trip. Dr. Engstrom had spent time with the Maasai in years past and shared a deep respect he had developed for their integrity. He told me it would be challenging to negotiate with the Maasai as they deliberate exhaustively among their elders but he also said that once a Maasai chief pronounces an agreement you can count on it. They are a people of their word.

After that day the Maasai chief offered to deed us property in Suswa to plant a Christian church. He has also solicited a copy of our beliefs and precepts so that the Maasai people of Suswa can convert eight of their churches to Christian churches. We made a commitment that day that we would continue to walk with these precious Maasai of Suswa as our new brothers and sisters.

We drilled five boreholes in Kenya in 2005. Four, including the Maai Mahiu borehole, were very successful. Unfortunately, the borehole in Suswa was dry and had to be abandoned. My heart was broken and I feared fighting might once again break out. The peace has held.

Dr. Engstrom's prediction would turn out to be true. A few days after learning of the borehole failure in Suswa I received an email from Patrick Toris. He had been asked to forward a message to us from his chief. The message was that the agreement their chief made with us would be unconditional, even though their borehole failed.

In January of 2005, just before Joseph Mulinge had visited the leaders of Maai Mahiu and Suswa, twenty people had been killed in the fighting between these two villages. Since that day of Joseph's visit, all fighting has ceased and there is peace and commerce between the two communities for the first time in years.



Chris and I with Eliud, Joseph, Stephen and our friend from Faith Community, John Njoroge.

The Maai Mahiu borehole was completed successfully in late 2006 and is currently

providing safe water for the Kikuyu people and their livestock and is being used for irrigation. That borehole can produce up to six thousand liters of water per hour, nearly twenty-four hours a day. Though currently under utilized, we expect the site to be very productive soon.



The Maai Mahiu borehole, pump house and water reservoir nearing completion.

In Suswa we have since committed to raise funds to build them a 700,000-liter covered water reservoir to supply water to the Maasai livestock during dry spells. There is a source of water to upper Maasai country, supplied by a fragile pipeline from Lake Naivasha farther north. The pipeline gets washed out from each storm that passes the area and it takes about a month each time for the government to make repairs. We believe the water reservoir will help to sustain the Maasai people until repairs can be made.

As we attempt to raise funds to complete this project we are working concurrently with AEE-K on three other projects in progress and one pending, all in Kenya, and two other projects in the village of Rwanguba, the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, in a region which has recently been ravaged by warfare.

In the near future we expect to embark on two new joint projects with AEE-K in Southern Sudan. We are trying to meet physical needs of desperate people in the name of Jesus. We see many come to Him, as we have in the village of Miu, Kenya, where we recently completed drilling another successful borehole. AEE-K held a successful crusade there and saw over 130 people make first time decisions to follow Jesus.

This regional alliance, between LifeLift International and African Enterprise was first envisioned in meetings with Malcolm Graham and Michael Cassidy, as a means of spreading the Gospel through both *word* and *deed*. The relationship seems to be working well, *indeed*.