



V I S I O N

M I N I S T R I E S K E N Y A

MORE, EFFECTIVE, FLOURISHING CHURCHES

P.O.BOX 9277-00200: NAIROBI, KENYA

TEL: +254 202 047 117/+254 725 830 020

E-MAIL: visionministrieskenya@gmail.com

WEB: www.visionministrieskenya.org

FACE BOOK: Vision Ministries KENYA

DATES: 6TH, 7TH & 8TH –NOVEMBER - 2020

VENUE: HOPE BIBLE CHAPEL, NAIROBI.

**THEME: ‘MOVING FORWARD WITH GOD
IN THE ERA OF COVID-19’**

INTRODUCTIONS

The Covid-19 pandemic affected religion in various ways including cancellation of the worship services of various faiths and the closure of various church activities. The churches in Kenya had been affected so much.

As we reflect back in the last VMK-Nairobi region conference planning meeting, we had several descending voices. About sixty percent of leaders who attended the meeting were not for the idea of holding a conference this year. This forced Brother Ishmael to consult more with the board members if it was the right thing to do during this season. We also had to go pray and fast on the mountain to get the will of God concerning this.

Another leaders' meeting was convened later at VMK-office Nairobi. The attendance was really encouraging. In the meeting there was an agreement reached. The conference for Nairobi region was to take place at Hope Bible Chapel as from 6th -8th, November, 2020. The decision to hold a conference in Nairobi was however scary since the second wave for the pandemic was on peak. Nairobi being the corona epi-center, was recording about a minimum of 600 positive cases daily. With faith we decided to move forward, never to turn back.

It was really motivating to hear report from the Canadian brethren a week later through Bro. Ishmael. They agreed to partner and facilitate the conferences virtually alongside the local facilitators who were to be consulted. All the proposed local facilitators when consulted, acknowledged the invitation to facilitate the conferences. What a great news!

The planning started immediately. We were to have five conferences in five different regions.



Bro. Ishmael explaining vision, mission and purpose for VMK to leaders during his conference opening remarks

CONFERENCE DAY ONE, 6TH, NOV, 2020

It rained heavily this day but we thank God that it started powerfully. The day started by the delegates registering at the administration desk. In the administration desk, the details of the delegates were taken, their temperature measured, hands sanitized and then issued with the tags and masks.

Worship Session

The worship session was that catchy. The mood was heavenly. I vividly remember brother Cerullo, one of the shelter band worship leader, leading the conference theme song '*Because He lives, I can face tomorrow*'. In fact at this time of global panic and uncertainty, we needed such biblical rich songs as ever. We needed to soak our hearts and minds in hymns that are honest about death and suffused with the unshakable of eternity.

This was such a refreshing moment as we thought of how God has been faithful all through and has given people hope to continue with the conference amidst the pandemic. I mean this must have been a crazy faith!



Powerful worship moments by the youth band

Teaching Session One

The first teaching session on this day started with brother Gord's lesson. '*Doing Greater Things than Jesus*'. You know it was the first time we were trying the virtual method of teachings. Ishmael and I were actually curious of the result. How was it going to turn out? Was it going to be powerful the African way? Was it going to impact lives as it had in other physical teaching conferences we have had before, and many other questions were crisscrossing our minds.



Virtual presentation by Gord.

We thank God. The way this lesson turned out was unbelievable. Brethren were touched and challenged. It was as lively as a physical teaching session.

The part that really brought a lot of discussions was about betrayal. A brother asked during the break in between about how to live with the betrayers in the ministry.

“How should we live with the betrayers in the ministry? In case of Jesus, after he had been betrayed by Judas, Judas killed himself and Jesus as well proceeded to be crucified at the cross. Meaning they did not serve together after the betrayal. Now how about our situation whereby your betrayers are with you and serve with you daily. How do you handle them? ”anonymous leader asked.

This left the leaders thinking though one answer that was clear from brother Gord’s presentation was that ***‘just love them’***... ***‘These things I command you, that ye love one another...’***

I don’t know how brother Gord Martin would have answered this on one on one basis.

After the first teaching session, there was a break in between then later the worship team took on to usher the delegates to the next session.

Teaching Session two

The second lesson was ***‘spiritual disciplines’*** by pr.Matthias Otieno, one of the main local facilitator. From brother Matthias’ presentation we handled the discipline of ***‘abiding in Christ’***. We went through John 15:1-17

Abiding can be a state of grace but we are encouraged to Abide.

In the scripture text we see four players

1. The Gardener..... Our heavenly Father.
2. The Vine..... Jesus.
3. The Branches..... We who are saved.
4. The Fruit..... Those we preach to

The Gardener’s responsibilities

- *He cuts dead Branches*
- *He cleans good Branches*
- *Prunes good Branches*
- *He trims them back everyday*

His purpose for doing this is for the plant to bear much fruit. Trimming them back severely so that all the energy in the plant is put on the fruit.

Note that the passage in John 15:1-17 speaks about the relationship between the Gardener and the vine



Afternoon Session

In this session we had discussions then later finalized with the revival as was led by Brother Matthias Otieno. This was a session to reflect and pray for the ministry.

Because of the curfew regulations still being enforced in Kenya, we had to finish early to allow leaders depart to their various homes and prepare for the next day Session.

CONFERENCE DAY TWO

This was one of the busiest day. We had a mandate to finish all the teachings, have testimony session, issue the certificates and as well prepare for the next Sunday Service.

Bro. David Ralph started the teachings for the day. Talking about 'Church organization'. How leaders could organize their churches as Paul did. From the comments during the pauses in between the teachings, Leaders did admit that many of their ministries have had several challenges being associated with poor church structure and some have even got into the trap of emulating some models from circular world that haven't worked for them. In fact the models have been some major source of confusion in the ministries. They even admitted some do not even have structures at all.

Some highlights from Bro. David Ralph' teachings;

Structure and vision and mission:

- A good structure flows from a strong mission and vision.
- The structure must follow and enhance the mission and vision – not the other way around – structure never proceeds vision or mission.
- A strong structure can improve the living out of a limited mission and vision.
- On the other hand - you can have the right mission but the wrong structure – that keeps a church from fully living out its mission – just as much.

The Importance of a Good Structure:

- Facilitates the fulfillment of God's mission and vision and key objectives for the church and helps create and carry out effective strategic planning.
- Minimizes conflict because everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- It minimizes politics in the church because there are clear guidelines for the selection of leaders and key church volunteers.
- It enhances communication because there are clear lines of communication that should be followed and they provide the lines for it.
- It improves co-operation by the entire church community because everyone is clear about who makes the decisions and how the decisions are made.
- It creates a healthy and vibrant church culture because the energy of the church members is focused on the vision and the mission and not diverted to issues that can be and are often the result of bad structure.

Second Teaching Session

This was the Dr. Doug's Session on '*Leading Your Own Household*'.

From his opening remark, Dr. Doug reminded the leaders the big danger of sometimes being busy with work and ministry that they even neglect their own household. The leaders in all fields are called to disciple their families.

Leaders in this meeting truly affirmed that in many occasions their calling, work and ministry have been a priority. They rarely think about their wives/husbands and children. It is always work, prayer, mission and church matters. Especially in Africa context, this is a real challenge.

Dr.Doug was challenging leaders as highlighted below;

How do we disciple our children / household as we go into a hostile environment?

1. This begins with a VERY BIG VIEW of the LORD God Almighty (Deuteronomy 6:4)

Question: How do you grow in your knowledge of God?

2. Our first calling is to watch our own spiritual life.

- Love the Lord our God with every part of our life (verse 5)
- Keep our spiritual life as our FIRST PRIORITY (verse 6)

Question: How do you guard your personal walk with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Who do you have to challenge you and encourage you in your spiritual life? (Over 100 "one another" verses in the New Testament- God never intended us to do this alone)

3. Our next calling is to Teach, to communicate the LORD and His GOOD NEWS to our family, in WORDS and in DEEDS.

WORDS: We are called to Teach our family about the LORD on all occasions (verse 7)

- breakfast, night, bedtime, as we walk along the way. Get on your knees with your children- to Play and to pray!

Question: What intentional times do you teach your family about the LORD?

ACTIONS: We are called to live out and demonstrate and model the Christian life for our family at all times. (Verse 8-9)

examples : decisions, money, personal Bible reading, Family night, hospitality, thankfulness, Christian music., Mother and Father praying together for the family.

Father- the greatest gift you can give your children is to LOVE their mother the way Jesus loves His church, and gave Himself up for her.

Mother- the greatest gift you can give your children is to LOVE their father and work with him with a servant heart.

Question: How can you be a better example to your family of a person who loves the LORD and is filled with the Holy Spirit?

Where do you need to grow as a loving husband or wife?

LEADERS' TESTIMONY SESSION:

After Doug's session the leaders got to a moment of praise then later a session of commenting about the conference.

Bishop Luke Jakoywa (*photo shown on the right*): 'Now I have understood why the devil was fighting this conference. Me as the chair was not really for a conference in Nairobi at this challenging moment. Some churches like mine have really lost members (key leaders) during the pandemic and was just worried whom I'm going to take to attend the conference. Today I'm here to testify of the goodness of God. I am going back to my ministry feeling charged and encouraged to start a gain. The firm foundation: 'crazy faith' was my topic.'



Pr. George Roche (*whose photo is shown below*)



"This was a divine time to host this conference and the topics were selectively chosen for me. My family has really struggled to understand what I am doing in the ministry. After having heard about the teaching on 'Leading my own household', it a time for me to go start it a fresh with my wife. I am going to ensure my family is involved in what I am doing and give the time and love that they should be receive from a father. My thinking about ministry has totally changed. Thank you Ishmael and the organizers of this conference for this idea."

Elder Washington Otieno

"I am one of those leaders that started ministry work and gave up in the middle. Currently I serve with Faith Alive Ministries in Kangundo road as deacon. One thing I have realized after attending this conference that led to my failure the structure. I did not consult and learn from others. I thought that ministry is all about being filled with Holy Spirit only. I have now known the way. I have no regrets. This conference was mine. God bless you all."

CERTIFICATES AWARDS

After the comments' session all the participants were awarded certificates of participating in the conference.

JOINT SUNDAY SERVICE

With the covid-19 protocols, Hope Chapel would have not accommodated all the Nairobi partnering churches. The leaders therefore resolved to sending representatives. Kayole Chapel and Conservative

brethren Assembly, Mathare however came with all their believers. This was possible because of the number of their congregation.

On this day it was encouraging to see the children being involved in active Sunday service after a long suspension period of Sunday schools by the Government due to Covid-19.



Representatives from Grace Brethren Church during the joint Sunday session at Hope Bible Chapel



Children ministry presenting

Conclusion

COVID-19 has suspended life for billions. This unusual season brings countless trials, pressures, and pains. And yet, we trust God has important lessons to teach His people during such disorienting days.

One of those lessons is that no matter where we are, whom we are with, or what happening in the world, believers should have a reason to give thanks to the Lord. We understand millions of Christians may be unable to gather or hold conferences, but no virus can silence our praise for the faithfulness of God.

We sincerely appreciate all the donors, partners and friends who partnered with us in prayers and in kind to see these conferences come to a reality.



Joint delegates photo after the service



Brethren and the children sharing a meal together during the conference

Key role of ladies and Youth during the Nairobi Region Conference

- ✓ Praying and fasting as the conference was approaching
- ✓ Taking charge in the administration desk
- ✓ Ensured all visitors who were boarding were accommodated
- ✓ Ensured visitors and all the participants were well fed
- ✓ Co-ordinating various activities as they work hand in hand
- ✓ Were the Covid-19 response team

NAIROBI CONFERENCE ATTENDEES DATA	<i>CHILDREN</i>	<i>YOUTHS</i>	<i>ADULTS</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
<i>DAY ONE</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>DAY TWO</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>JOINT SESSION</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>88</i>