



## Ogdens in Kenya

Dr. Phil Ogden and his wife, Judy, spent almost 5 months from January to May, 2009 serving as volunteers in Kenya, East Africa. Phil is emeritus professor of physics and adjunct instructor of physics at RWC. Here is his account of their experience in Africa:

Judy and I left Rochester at the end of December in 2008 and spent almost two weeks in South Africa on our way to Kenya. We visited many of the sites in South Africa where Judy had served as a missionary in 2001-2002, and also connected with some of the national Christians with whom she had served.

On January 10, we arrived in Nairobi, Kenya, and settled in rather quickly in our flat (apartment) on the Athi River campus of Daystar University. Daystar is an independent Christian university with 3700 students on 3 campuses. It is the largest Christian university or college in Africa. The Athi River campus is 40 kilometers southwest of Nairobi and is the main campus for traditional undergraduate programs. It is there that I taught two physics courses for the semester from January 13 to May 13. The students were very friendly and congenial. It was a joy for me to work with them. Judy also enjoyed interacting with the students. She baked cookies for both of my classes, and entertained several of the students in our flat.

The Athi River campus is in the savanna with a wide variety of wild animals and birds. A favorite activity for us was a “walking safari” just outside the campus. The giraffe picture here was taken



on one of those adventures. We also saw large herds of wildebeest, zebras, gazelles and antelopes. How many other college campuses are surrounded by wild animals?

As a part of their general education, all Daystar students are required to take a

course in Physical Science. I had 51 students in my section of this course. We had no textbook,

but used “Energy” as the theme for the course. During the semester, I assembled materials and wrote a textbook that can be used for the course there at Daystar in the future.

In my other course, I had 31 Computer Science majors in a sophomore-level course in Electricity and Magnetism. I was pleasantly surprised at the quality of the facilities and equipment. As you can see in a photo here, my classroom even had a whiteboard. I also had access to a video projector that I could connect to our laptop computer for PowerPoint presentations. We had rather sophisticated electronic equipment for the laboratory experiments, although at times it was a bit challenging to run a laboratory with 31 students. Daystar has received approval for a physics major, and will phase in the advanced courses over the next few years.

Worshiping with the students in the chapel every Tuesday and Thursday morning was a rich and rewarding experience. We also enjoyed eating occasionally with students in the cafeteria.



Judy is an ordained minister and was rewarded with several ministry opportunities. A major involvement was her volunteer work with an organization in Nairobi that is involved with the HIV/AIDS crisis in Kenya. This organization is called HEART – Health Education Africa Resource Team. Part of her time included the design and writing

of teaching materials. One such pamphlet, which addresses hygiene and sex education for girls 11-16 years of age, is being published by Proctor & Gamble and will be used in school classrooms. Much of this work was done on our computer in our flat, although we did make many trips to the HEART facilities in Nairobi. Through HEART we were also able to travel with various U.S. teams coming to Kenya. In February, we traveled with a medical team to Mombasa on the Indian Ocean. While there, we assisted with physical check-ups and Judy did some teaching and preaching.

Judy also had the rewarding experience of leading 5 women to Jesus while sharing with a group of women in a micro-financing program at the Olive Branch, a Free Methodist ministry in Nairobi. The next day, John Parit, the Olive Branch Director, took us into Kibera, a slum area with more than one million inhabitants. There we observed some of the women at their micro-financing projects and visited one of the two Free Methodist schools and churches in Kibera. The following day, Judy taught a lesson to the children and preached in the Free Methodist Church in Karen, a suburb of Nairobi.

Another highlight of our time in Kenya was a visit with Dr. Russ White, his wife Beth, and their 5 children at the Tenwek mission hospital. Russ is a 1985 graduate of RWC and is the head

surgeon and medical director of the hospital. We had a wonderful 5 days with them and were very impressed with the work they are doing.

When we were not traveling on Sundays we attended a small evangelical Anglican church just outside the Daystar campus. We enjoyed very much the opportunities we had there to worship and to participate in ministry. Judy preached there one Sunday and taught the children on two occasions. It was thrilling to see the response of the children, many of whom are former street boys living in a nearby Youth for Christ center. Quite a large number of the children made commitments to Christ at the end of the lessons. We were happy to know that some Daystar students and others in the church will follow up with discipling these precious children. As you can see in the photo here, Judy had a special bond with these children.

We praise God for the opportunities he gave us for service and ministry in Kenya. However, it is good to be home, and I am looking forward to teaching Quantum Physics at RWC this fall.