



February 2018

## AFRICA: MYTH VS. REALITY

We are well into our fourth month of living in Tanzania, Africa so we want to debunk four misconceptions that many Westerners, including us before we arrived, have about Africa.

1. Africa is a country.

Africa is a continent, a large continent in fact. Africa is extremely diverse, made up of 54 countries including many different tribes and ethnicities. Tanzania is a country on the east coast of Africa, and is about twice the size of California. It takes us a two hour flight followed by a three hour drive to get from the biggest city and economic hub of Tanzania (Dar es Salaam) to the town where we live (Shinyanga).



The True Size of Africa”  
Source: Kal Krause



This month we made the three hour drive to Mwanza, the closest major city to Shinyanga, twice. Once for a marriage conference and once for a week-long conference about albinism awareness hosted by Under the Same Sun.

2. Africa is dirty.

Some public areas, often city centers and outside markets, in Tanzania are trash-filled and untended but that's more about lack of organization than the character of Tanzania. People most definitely have a much different way of life here than in the West. But Tanzanian homes, vehicles, and most businesses tend to be very clean - sometimes cleaner than in America. There are, also, some incredibly picturesque locations here in Tanzania and all over Africa. More than any of that, the Tanzanian people are absolutely beautiful and that leads me to the next one...



This is the little super market that we frequent in Shinyanga. As you can see, it is kept very clean and organized.



Look at that view of Lake Victoria from the hotel we stayed at in Mwanza!

3. All Africans are poor.

Poverty is a huge problem in many African countries. But that doesn't necessarily mean that everyone is poor. Even though Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world, there are many middle-class and rich people here. Economic class distinctions are huge here and rich people are usually treated better, with far more respect and privilege, than poor people.

Also, even with the poverty, Tanzanians, regardless of their economic status, dress very formal and professional. Women are almost always wearing dresses or skirts and men are almost always

wearing slacks and a dress shirt. Furthermore, there are great amounts of beautiful fabric, which is locally designed and printed, in the markets here. Often times, we feel quite under-dressed.



The beautiful women that graduated this month from the deaconess' program, for young women with albinism. Their hand-made dresses were exquisite.

At the Under the Same Sun Conference, for understanding albinism and their trauma, there were Tanzanian teachers, head masters, social workers, pastors, and doctors all in attendance.

#### 4. All Africans know Jesus.

Definitely not in northern Africa and only partially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly 51 million people live in Tanzania. On the main land, 45% of the population is Christian, 35% is Muslim, while 20% still hold to traditional beliefs. That means about 55% of people on the mainland have not experienced the love of Christ. There are still thousands of villages without a church and dozens of languages that don't have Bible translations in Tanzania alone.

However, Christianity and missions has spread like wildfire in the sub-Saharan Africa the last few years. In fact, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is doing some phenomenal work to contribute to this. In Tanzania, there are 6 million Lutherans. We are told that the Lutheran church is the largest nonprofit organization in Tanzania, which continues to evangelize and provide aid in their communities. We are so privileged to be able to partner with and work under them in Shinyanga, Tanzania.



This is inside the Lutheran cathedral in Shinyanga which we attend every Sunday that we are in town. It is so powerful to see many people come together and raise their voices to worship our God!

*For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

*(2 Corinthians 5:14-15)*

**This Month...** Check out our most recent video about what we have been doing this past month at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxqaHM7cxDY&feature=youtu.be>

### Breaking News!

We will be back in Texas April 11th to May 16th for Amber's internship requirements, church visits, and a wedding! Come see us at Faith Lutheran Church in Georgetown, TX on April 22nd and St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Houston, TX on May 13th (Mother's Day).

We will, also, be hosting an auction and dinner on May 11th at St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Houston, TX. We will have many African goodies and cultural artifacts to bid on, in the auction, as well as lots of other fun items. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details coming in the upcoming month.

### Prayer Requests

- Thanksgiving for safe trips to Mwanza this month, the opportunity to attend the Under the Same Sun conference and future opportunities with them, the church leaders helping us here in Tanzania, and so many more.
- Completion of some official paperwork we need to be able to work at Buhangija, as well as a lot of patience on our part.
- The new class of young women with albinism who will join the Deaconess' Program to learn entrepreneurship skills in the next month.

