

# July-August Greetings!



## Richard Ondicho's Newsletter 5/2025

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### *July-August Newsletter*

**\* Three weeks of perfect summer weather • 🤝 Heartfelt reunions at SLEY Evankeliumi Juhla • 🌍  
Missionary Festival at Luther-Kirkko • 📖 Encouragement from Hebrews 12:1**

***May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.***

July was truly a month to remember, blessed with three glorious weeks of warm sunshine and temperatures often reaching 30°C. The summer days seemed to stretch endlessly, filled with golden light, gentle breezes, and the kind of warmth that lifts the spirit. This perfect weather was not only a blessing for our souls but also opened up many opportunities for fellowship and joy.

This July was unique for me because I had nobody to step in during my absence, so I chose not to take my usual annual vacation. Instead, we embraced the season with a heart full of gratitude, continuing our weekly Bible studies without interruption. The warm weather made it possible to gather outdoors for extra activities, including peaceful fishing trips that brought moments of quiet reflection alongside shared laughter. These simple pleasures created a beautiful rhythm to the month—reminding me that even without time off, God's presence makes every day refreshing and meaningful.

In my last email, I shared my anticipation for traveling to the SLEY Evankeliumijuhla, and I am delighted to say that attending the festival was a truly wonderful experience. The joy of being there was beyond what I expected. One of my heartfelt hopes was to meet and shake hands with some of the many people who have faithfully supported my work. It was deeply encouraging to have this prayer answered in such a tangible way.

As we entered the arena on Friday, three young girls from Karkku came forward to greet me warmly. They recalled the Bible study sessions we shared, expressing their appreciation in a way that touched my heart deeply. To my surprise, they had even been reading my newsletter—something I had never known before! It was a beautiful reminder of how God’s work often moves quietly behind the scenes, encouraging and blessing in ways we cannot always see.

The greetings didn’t stop there. Many grandmothers and grandfathers approached to shake hands and share kind words of encouragement. Their warmth and support were uplifting, and I felt truly blessed to be surrounded by such a caring community. These moments of connection strengthened my faith and renewed my energy to continue the work God has entrusted to me.

The massive turnout at the gospel festival was inspiring and humbling. It brought to mind the powerful words of Hebrews 12:1: **“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders... and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”** Standing amid so many believers who share a common faith journey was a poignant reminder that none of us run this race alone. We are supported, encouraged, and surrounded by a vast community of faith both past and present.

Just last week, my wife and I had the joy of attending the SLEF Missionary Festival held at our church, Luther-Kirkko. It was a heartwarming event, filled with stories and fellowship. We met many former and current missionaries to Kenya, some of whom I had last seen in my childhood when I met their parents. This gathering was rich with memories and hope, celebrating the enduring bonds of mission work and friendship across generations.

One of the highlights was witnessing the commissioning of several missionaries embarking on a new four-year term of service. Their dedication and willingness to continue in this demanding work was truly inspiring. Additionally, I had the privilege to hear from a missionary engaged in outreach among Muslim communities in Southern Europe. Her testimony was both moving and encouraging, illustrating the broad and diverse ways God’s mission unfolds in the world today.

Looking ahead, it was a wonderful surprise to learn that SLEY missionaries will be visiting Karkku again this Friday. Reflecting on this, I find myself echoing Peter’s words on the mountaintop when he said to Jesus, **“It is good for us to be here; let us put up three shelters...”** (Mark 9:5). Like Peter, I feel a deep desire to linger in these joyful moments of fellowship and spiritual renewal—to stay in this place of celebration alongside Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, cherishing the peace and encouragement these encounters bring.

Meanwhile, the immigrant ministry at Luther-Kirkko continues to grow in exciting ways. Recently, a group of Sri Lankan dancers participated in the SLEF dance event, joyfully sharing their vibrant culture and talent with our community. It’s heartening to see how this outreach is bearing fruit, as some of the children whose parents danced are gradually becoming acquainted with our church and its message of hope and love. This gentle, ongoing connection gives me great hope for the future.

There is so much more to say about the incredible impact of former missionaries, including those from LEAF who served in Kenya. Their dedication and service have helped shape our local church in profound ways. I plan to write a longer essay soon that will tell the fuller story of the wonderful work the missionaries of SLEY have done in supporting mission efforts, both past and present.

As this summer season draws to a close, I am filled with gratitude and encouragement. I feel blessed and strengthened by the many precious people God has placed on my path—partners in faith, friends, and fellow laborers in His mission.

***In Christ I remain His servant and yours***

***Richard***

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