**The Evolution of the Shepherd Fund**

*(This was first written as a response to an email request and may contain specific references to people or questions. Please disregard those comments that seem out of place!)*  
  
I first visited Kenya in 1999 when I took a mission team from my church (Peace Lutheran from Lombard, IL) to help build additional staff housing for Carlile College. Carlile is a theological and business school of the Anglican Church of Kenya located in Nairobi. (The Principal at the time was Reverend Tim Dakin whose father Stanley had founded the college. Tim is now Bishop of Winchester having been appointed to that post by the Queen of England in 2012.) We met students from eight different African nations there to train as evangelists and missionaries in their home villages. Some were there at the risk of their very lives. From that first visit Kenya stole my heart. Since then I have returned with teams and alone several more times. Along the way God has given me a passion for the people and a vision for ministry.   
  
There are projects that are very immediate and crucial that involve helping improve living conditions for children living at the Jehovah Jireh orphanage in Nairobi and blind children at St. Luke's home in Kitui. Then there is an emerging project that is much larger in scope. This includes raising support for student scholarships. There are now students from eleven African nations attending Carlile College. Carlile owns a farm outside Nairobi and recently decided to begin raising crops to supply the college cafeteria.  
  
While living in Colorado the Lord inspired me to incorporate a nonprofit, The Shepherd Fund, that I hoped would build support for Kenya in general and Carlile in particular initially and over time would provide a platform for developing microfinance and microbusiness support to existing indigenous ministries doing that kind of work. When we left Colorado to return here to Illinois that nonprofit was still just an idea as my full time job did not allow me time to pursue the development of it. Before we left I met a man at our church, Wayne Dorband, who is a renowned expert in sustainable agriculture with a mission to empower one million 'ecopreneurs' in developing countries by 2016. His plan is to train them in proven techniques of hydroponics and aquaponics using equipment that can be installed in any environment in the world.  
  
When I arrived back here we bought a house in Wheaton and after several months discovered our neighbor is a native of Democratic Republic of Congo and heads the Congolese Christian Church in Chicago. He has an NGO in Congo developing leaders and helping them establish sustainable business ventures. His friend, who I met over the fence at the same time I met Willy, is Dr. Bill Rapier who founded and heads African Leadership Development. Bill is working in several African nations developing indigenous church leaders and the day after I met him moved his ministry to Colorado Springs (this move had been in the works for some time). I connected Bill with my friend Wayne in Colorado and they've begun talking about getting Wayne's technology connected to Bill's leadership network.  
  
Then in early January I lost my full time job and began seeking God's will in my current circumstance and where I should be investing myself. A couple of weeks later my friend and ministry partner, Daniel, from Kenya called to say he was taking on the management of the Carlile College farm. The next day Dr. Peter Nyende, Principal of Carlile, emailed me about needing support from the U.S.   
  
I sometimes miss when God speaks, but when he lines up property in Kenya, the leader of an African Leadership Development ministry, an internationally respected businessman committed to bringing sustainable agriculture to the poorest of the poor, a college that's training missionary/evangelists from eleven African nations and puts me at the center of all these connections with time on my hands and a dormant nonprofit even I don't have to wonder if He's lining up something I should take seriously!!  
  
Add to that I spent five years working for Group Publishing and spent two of those years traveling the globe doing the research and start-up work to launch the [Lifetree Adventures](http://www.lifetreeadventures.com) mission trips connecting with indigenous ministries and learning how to effectively partner in other cultures. I was also part of a leadership team that negotiated projects with Compassion and World Vision that took me to their headquarters in Colorado Springs and Seattle respectively and on the road with their leadership to Guatemala, Mexico and Uganda. God seems to have prepared an awesome opportunity to make a difference in Kenya in a way that isn't currently being done.  
  
I am now raising money to cover the costs of getting The Shepherd Fund registered as a 501(c)3 nonprofit by the IRS, building and launching the ShepherdFund.org website, building specific plans and strategies with my Colorado partners and working with my Kenya partners to see that everything we do advances their ministry according to their needs. Once up and running The Shepherd Fund will be able to collect tax deductible donations so beginning to create a donor base will be part of this process, as well.  
  
Sooner rather than later I hope to begin taking short term mission teams from U.S. churches to Kenya that will work to improve the physical facilities of Jehovah Jireh orphanage, help establish the sustainable agriculture systems on the farm and meet students they support to build relationships that will carry over to when those students become missionaries back in their home countries.  
  
This has been a long answer to your question but that's how God has put this together as far as I can tell and I'm excited to be in the midst of his plan. I've set up a campaign through GoFundMe.com with a target of $10,000 to launch this project. If you decide you'd like to support the launch or share the news with others who might be so inclined you can go to this link <http://www.gofundme.com/23w97w>.  
  
I'm happy to answer any other questions you have. If you're interested in learning more about my philosophy of ministry as it relates directly to how we do charity and what we need to do in order to reverse decades of 'benevolent oppression' please read [my blog](http://www.dangerouschurch.blogspot.com) where I've been writing about this almost daily for the past few weeks.