

WEEK 7 DROPBOX ASSIGNMENT.

AN INTERVIEW WITH PASTOR GIDEON ROBI.

Pastor Gideon Robi is a Kenyan from the Kikuyu ethnic group. He was born in Bondeni which is within Nakuru town. He is a graduate of Moffat college of Bible class of 1993. After graduation, he worked with the Africa Inland Church in Njoro D.C.C where he was serving thirteen churches. He is married with two sons.

Gideon left for America in 1995 to study at Beulah Heights University where he did his Bachelor's degree. He proceeded to Luther Rice Seminary where he did his Masters in Divinity in Bible and Theology and went to Clark University where he attained his Masters in library science. He worked at the Columbia Theological Seminary for four years between 2003 and 2007. During this time, Project Kenya was founded and he resigned at the Seminary to work full time at Project Kenya as the Executive Director.

When Gideon arrived in America, the first shock he got was the face of poverty. He never thought there were any poor people in America and was shocked to find out that there were white people who were poor and homeless. Another thing that shocked him was the rate at which he was expected to learn new things. For instance he was expected to work at a very busy restaurant after only a few hours of orientation. The African culture encourages interdependence but once in America, Gideon learnt that the culture there was one of independence and he had to adapt fast and learn to live an independent lifestyle. He also had to learn time management because he found out that time was valued and respected in America than what he was used to in Kenya. He clearly understood that in America, owning a car was a necessity, not a luxury because of the busy lifestyle there and where one is expected to be punctual.

The first challenge he faced on arrival had to do with settlement. The married quarters at Beulah Heights had all been taken and the University was not expecting him to bring his wife along. They were therefore booked in different hostels until after three weeks when finally an empty apartment was available and they had to start from the scratch! He also found out that he couldn't use his Kenyan driving license and so he had to do a written test and a road test with a borrowed car to acquire an American driving license hence surrendering his Kenyan license. Gideon had to look for a job so as to support himself and the only job he could get was at a restaurant or a gas station. Having been a respected pastor in Kenya, Gideon felt like these were demeaning jobs. He felt stripped off his dignity and this was a frustrating experience. Language was also a barrier because Kenya teaches British English and people in America speak American English. Accent too was a greater barrier. He found out that he couldn't communicate well because he couldn't understand others because of their American accent and they could hardly understand him due to his accent too.

Beulah Heights University helped Gideon to change his mindset and his perspective about things. Since the university had staff from mixed backgrounds and cultures, it was a good place for him to understand different cultures which has taught him to appreciate people for who they are and also to respect their space and their beliefs. Here he learnt leadership skills which he uses to run Project Kenya and accountability which he practices as he heads the project. Thanks to Beulah Heights University, he didn't struggle while registering his school in Kenya which has helped to change the lives of many Kenyan children.

Gideon says that he has to adjust his mindset whenever he is coming to Nakuru because he doesn't expect everybody to behave American. He has to put on his African mindset so as to fit in the African cultural norms like respect to the elderly and patience when people don't behave the way he is used to in America.

All in all he is thankful to Dr. Benson Karanja who was there to help him adapt to the American lifestyle. It was interesting to interview Pastor Gideon Robi and we had a great time.

May God bless him and his family.