

# A New Beginning

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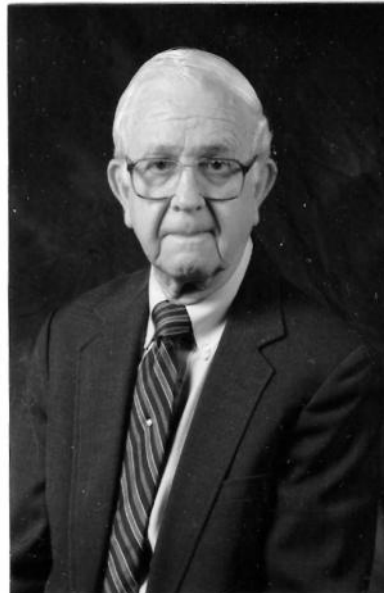
## Sam McReynolds' Legacy Kenyan Deaf Children have a New Beginning

Sam McReynolds spent his life as a teacher committed to Christian service to his students, his community, and his church. Along the way Sam carved out a special place of service for himself in missions.

Over the decades he served on the S. 11th & Willis Mission Ministry where he made a difference in the world. Sam took seriously the Great Commission and determined to see that Willis would be proactive in taking the Light of Jesus to those places where only darkness reigns. Sam became a part of the wonderful legacy carried out during the first half century of Willis mission work in places throughout the world. As in his life, Sam continues that legacy in death. Leaving behind a gift of \$80,000 to the Mission Ministry, Sam establishes an endowment fund to help secure a new orphanage for deaf children in Kenya we will

call Sam's Place. He makes possible a New Beginning for children who have no hope. Discarded by a society that views deaf children as worthless, deaf children are thrown on the garbage dumps or left tied up in the forest for the wild animals. Sam's Place will change all that forever.

In this issue you will find details about the plan to build and operate Sam's Place in the rural landscape of Kenya. At Sam's Place deaf orphans will find Jesus and the safety of their new home. Willis will provide funding and help equip this New Beginning and partner with mature Christians in the Kenya churches of Christ. Kenyans will provide leadership and an operating commitment to staff and to provide a daily home for our



Sam McReynolds 1928-2006

children at Sam's Place.

Join with Sam to help build the endowment for operating funds for our deaf orphans in Kenya. Our goal is to grow Sam's gift into \$330,000 to insure the future for each and every deaf orphan who comes to Sam's Place.

## Mission Emphasis Sunday Set for April 22nd

Sunday, April 22nd is the climax of our 2007 Mission Emphasis Week at Willis. Our goal this year is to brief every member at Willis on the Sam's Place project and our exciting opportunity to obey Jesus' command to take the Great News into all the world.

This year's special collection goal is \$11,500. Of this amount \$1500 will be allocated for travel and deaf workshop expenses for two Kenyan men who have agreed to take leadership posts at Sam's Place. Simeon Ongiri and Charles Otieno Riata (see Our Mission on page 2) will arrive

this summer to attend the National Workshop for the Deaf and be on hand in Abilene for planning meetings with the Willis church community.

The remaining \$10,000 will be used for the initial construction costs at Sam's Place (see Construction Fund on page 3).

**SPECIAL POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- *Sam McReynolds leaves \$80,000 to Willis Missions*
- *Pemberton's \$5,000 gift starts the Education Fund for Kenya deaf orphans*
- *Land purchased for deaf orphanage—Spring 2007*
- *Willis' Mission Emphasis Week to kick off Kenya Deaf Orphanage Project*



## Our Mission with Kenyan Deaf Children

Willis has long been the “mission church.” This image of our church family comes from a half century of making a difference in the world. Early on our church family recognized our responsibility to take the Great Commission into all the world. When one looks back at the work that has been completed and the foundations that have been established, it leaves a person breathless. What a legacy to have and to build upon!

Our long and continuing work in Kenya is entering the 21st Century with a small but innovative and important project. As the AIDS virus continues to destroy families and threatens the very fabric of life in Kenya orphans are paying a high price. Hearing orphans

surely suffer too but the deaf child is often singled out to be abandoned and sometimes worse. A common practice is to take the deaf orphan deep into the jungle and leave them tied there to be prey for the wild animals. These frightened and desperate children have no hope as Kenyan society sees them as flawed children to be discarded. But God has a plan for them— and for us! There will be room at the inn for those who find their way to Sam’s Place.

Simeon Ongiri, preacher and elder at the Mogesa Church of Christ in Kisi, will be the executive director of Sam’s Place. Tobias Odiambo, another elder at Mogesa will be an advisor for the project. Simeon and Tobias, along with other members of the Church of Christ in the Kisii and Rongo area, will partner

with us to build and operate Sam’s Place.

Charles Otieno Riata, cabinet maker teacher the Kuja School for the Deaf in Rongo and preacher for the Rongo Church of Christ, will live with his family at Sam’s Place and serve as the on site administrator. Together with the Willis family, these Kenyan dedicated Christians will shepherd the deaf orphans at Sam’s Place and nurture them in the gospel of our Lord. What a future they have now!

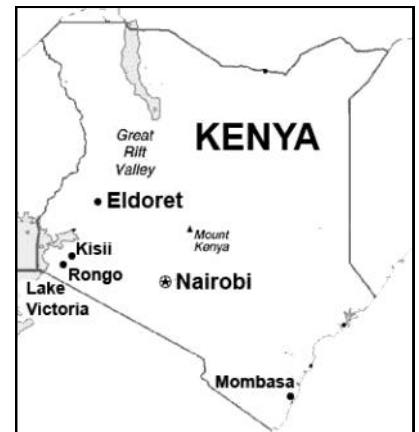
There is work to done for everyone at Willis. Help the project financially. Lend your talents to make Sam’s Place a reality. Make these children a priority for you in the next year. Young and old, listen to the whispers that beckon us to a place far away, a place that will be a new beginning for Willis in Kenya.

## Where the Rubber Meets the Road

Far from the cities of Nairobi and Eldoret lies a vast body of water called Lake Victoria. Famous across the span of time long past in Africa, today Lake Victoria gives life to people of the many nations it touches. Not far away to the southeast is the village of Kissi in Kenya. If you travel from Kissi on the road south to Rongo, you will pass by the land that is now reserved for Sam’s Place. It is here that the rubber will meet the road. It is here that lives will change forever as Jesus will once again gather his little children around him and

touch their lives in a most profound way.

At Sam’s Place the land will be prepared for building. Fences will be built, a well dug, and living space will be constructed of brick made from the rich Kenyan soil. It will be here that deaf children will come to begin life in a safe place. During their time at Sam’s Place they will learn the basics of living a life centered on Christ where they will be surrounded by those who will love and cherish them. They will learn sign language which will be the key to their future.



## The Willis Difference

Looking back at over a half century of mission work in the world, Willis has laid a lasting foundation for evangelism that offers great opportunities for the 21st Century. In the Philippines and Asia, Europe, and Africa, Willis has sent God’s Word through the work of countless missionaries in the field and others who have labored in the vineyard in short term mission efforts. Throughout all those years, Willis has maintained a high priority for missions, using the Great Commission as our guide post.

Today the long work continues in

Kenya with Larry and Hollye Conway in Nairobi and Keith and Grace Gafner in Eldoret. Their work, based on years of effective teaching and nurturing by many Willis families in Kenya, continues to carry out the Great Commission there.

As the new century begins, Sam’s Place will add a new dimension to the Willis commitment to Africa and her people. The work among the deaf people in Kenya will be expanded to deaf orphans who have no real advocates and no future in Kenya’s AIDS-ridden society. Sam’s Place will equip and train a

new generation of Kenya deaf people who will grow to maturity with the firm knowledge of Christ, able to build families with Christ at their center.

*“... go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19*

## The Endowment

On February 23, 2006 Sam McReynolds passed away from this life and all those who loved him took comfort in the idea that Sam had finished his mission on the earth. We soon learned that Sam had other ideas. His carefully designed plan was revealed to the congregation soon after his memorial service.

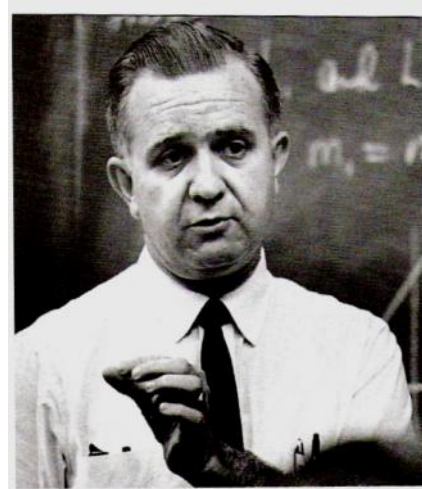
Sam left \$80,000 to the Willis Missions fund to carry on Sam's life-long work supporting missions from South 11th & Willis. Using earnings from a long career in teaching, Sam intended these funds to make a difference in the world. What better use of Sam's gift than to help a group of children who, without the assistance of God's family, would have no escape from pain and suffering, no hope and no future?

Using Sam's bequest to establish an

endowment, Willis Missions has set a goal to raise an additional \$250,000 from others who are committed to these Kenyan deaf orphans. With a starting endowment fund of \$330,000, these monies will be invested to produce earnings to be applied to the annual operating expenses Sam's Place.

The investment plan calls for the fund to yield 5% to be used for an annual operations budget for Sam's Place with any additional earnings to be reinvested with the original principle to produce future earnings. Under this plan, a target budget of \$16,500 per year will be available for salaries, maintenance, utilities, and other operating expenses.

Make a commitment today to partner with Sam to create a refuge for these deaf orphans in Kenya. Send in your checks, earmarked for "Sam's Place



*Sam McReynolds spent a lifetime teaching and ministering to generations of children who benefited from his wisdom about mathematics and the world that God hath made.*

Endowment." See page 4 for contact information.

## The Education Fund

Cecil Faye and Ted Pemberton have donated \$5000 to start the Education Fund. This fund will provide for each child as they make their home at Sam's Place. Each child will receive a Bible, school uniforms, school books and supplies, and other personal items needed in the day-to-day life in their new home at Sam's Place.

The Education Fund will also equip the home with a "family room" with

extra Bibles, Bible study materials, fiction and non-fiction books to read, computers with educational software, and recreational materials. The family room will become the center of family life for the children and those who nurture and care for them.

Physical education equipment and space for outdoor activity will also be a priority for the Education Fund. Building the body, as well as the mind, will

insure that the children will grow up strong and healthy in God's family.

In addition to attending a nearby school for the deaf, children living at Sam's Place will receive long term on-site vocational training in woodworking and other valuable skills that will help them to be self-sufficient later in life.

Join with the Pembertons to build up the Education Fund so we can equip Sam's Place.

## The Construction Fund

During Mission Emphasis Week culminating on Sunday, April 22, 2007, a request for \$10,000 in construction funds will be sought during the special contribution for Missions. This initial sum of money will provide funds for digging a well, fencing, and the first building construction on the site.

Working with Keith Gafner and our Kenyan brothers, the construction process will begin 2008 after the deed transfers and planning is complete. Construction costs are much lower in Kenya with the primary building materials produced from materials available

locally. The \$10,000 will go far in producing the improvements needed on the land for our deaf children.

It is not too early to begin planning how you can help the construction phase of Sam's Place. You can give to the three funds, volunteer to be a part of youth and adult teams traveling to Kenya to help build Sam's Place, or you can organize teaching and learning support materials for the children. We pray that, whatever your age or experience, that you find a place for yourself in making Sam's Place a reality. This is a new opportunity to make Willis mis-

*"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress. . . ." James 1:27a*

sions a real part of your life. Like generations of other Willis members over the last half century, you too can reach out across the world and take Jesus' light to a child's world where there is only darkness. Join us, will you?

# Sam's Place

*A Home for Deaf Children  
in Kenya*

## S. 11th & Willis Church of Christ

3333 South 11th Street  
Abilene, TX 79605

Phone: 325-698-3255

Fax: 325-698-5707

E-mail: [churchoffice@willischurchfamily.org](mailto:churchoffice@willischurchfamily.org)

## World Missions Ministry Members

- Jerry Drennan, Co-Chair  
Email: [drennanj@suddenlink.net](mailto:drennanj@suddenlink.net)
- Vernon Williams, Co-Chair  
Email: [vwilliams@acu.edu](mailto:vwilliams@acu.edu)
- Gary Stephen, Shepherding Elder  
Email: [wvgs@nts-online.net](mailto:wvgs@nts-online.net)
- Colleen Blasingame
- E.B. Dotson
- Jean Dotson
- Debbie Oliver
- Frankie Parker
- Pres Parker
- Cecil Faye Pemberton
- Ted Pemberton
- Eileen Stephen

## Elders

- Raymond Blasingame
- Ross Blasingame
- Joe Cardot
- John Robinson
- Roy Shake
- Gary Stephen
- Roger Thomas

**We're on the web!**

**[www.willismissions.org](http://www.willismissions.org)**

*Sam's Place will provide an environment for deaf orphans in Kenya that is conducive to spiritual and academic growth. Important values will be emphasized that focus on:*

- *stewardship*
- *emotional stability*
- *spiritual maturity*
- *integrity*
- *honesty*
- *self-control*
- *compassion and respect*



*Taught within the context of a Christian world view, each child will grow to maturity equipped with the tools they will need to make their way in life and make a difference for God wherever they may go.*

## Help Sam's Place Grow Legs

How can you help Sam's Place grow legs? There is need for endowment funds to ensure that the day-to-day operations of the facility will be secure and stable.

Help with construction of the home or assistance with the Education Fund are also wonderful opportunities to take the story of Jesus to Africa and make a difference there. Small, medium, and large gifts are needed to build the endowment fund. No gift offering is too small.

It has been written that it takes a village to raise a child. We have witnessed that reality at Willis where all have taken a role in raising our children. These deaf orphans need our village, all of us who are God's people. Our village, at Willis and from other congregations everywhere, can live the lesson Jesus has left us. Help us to help Sam's Place grow legs.

