



The Clean Water Climb Story by Mike Navolio

After my first trip to Africa in 2007 I was haunted by the images of people in eastern Kenya, scooping contaminated water from hand dug holes in dry river beds, pouring the water into 5 gallon Jerry Cans, strapping the Jerry Cans to donkeys, and finally walking back to their villages – sometimes up to 25km. They were spending most of their life getting water – contaminated water no less.

My heart was immediately impacted, but it took 3 more trips to Africa trying to get my head around the problem and how I should be involved in a solution, continually seeking what God would have me do. Then in 2010, on a flight from Nairobi to London on our return to Houston, a man next to me asked the question: “What were you doing in Africa?” I told him, and then I asked him the same question. He said he and 34 of his friends had just climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro to raise money for a hospital in England. After a great deal of discussion and questions, I told him that maybe I should climb Mt. Kilimanjaro on my 60th birthday the following year. But I wondered who would even want to do something like this with me.

Two months later I met Stanley, a fellow Compassion, International Advocate, at one of Compassion’s child sponsorship concerts. He told me that he had just climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro. God often speaks to me through what some people would call coincidences. I no longer believe in coincidences. I believe they are God-incidences. He got my attention, but at first it was still all about me climbing for my 60th birthday celebration the following summer in 2011. Deep down inside I knew this wasn’t right, so I justified it to myself and to God, that somehow climbing Kilimanjaro would be a fund raiser for Child Legacy. They liked it, and even Karen Rogers, one of their co-founders, said she was in! My first recruit!

But God got my attention again when, during my study of Isaiah at Bible Study Fellowship one day; this thought began to consume me: “Are my plans God’s plans, or are they just my plans?” That was it. I wasn’t going to do it. I was done. I was finished! I was not going to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro on my birthday and draw attention to myself.

However, shortly afterward God then revealed to me that I should do the climb, but for His purposes and His Glory: I needed to move the climb off my birthday and focus the climb on what really had been bothering me for the last 4 years: the need for clean water in Africa; specifically Malawi. I contacted Child Legacy and asked them if the fundraiser could be for their water well ministry, but there was just one more thing – I had to come up with a name. The Clean Water Climb was born.

But then I thought “another fundraiser? Oh no, I am already committed to asking people for money for the BP MS 150, a fundraiser for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society! Lord, I can’t ask people to donate their hard-earned money twice in the same year.” God said, “Don’t worry about that. I will take care of that.” Well, He has!

Websites: childlegacy.org

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