



The ARDF Global agency works across the world, partnering with the Global South, Asia and Africa. Early January, Mike Tweedle, the National Director of ARDF Canada, interviewed Rev. Dr. Jake Stum, the Executive Director of ARDF US, and the Global Executive Director of ARDF Global to explore a little of this work. This transcript is taken from a Zoom interview held Jan 26th, 2021.

**The Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada (ARDFC)** is a Canadian global aid agency that works in close partnership with the Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC).

ARDFC together with the Anglican Relief and Development Fund (ARDF) comprise the global relief and development arm of our province, the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). In 2012, we welcomed ARDF-Australia (ARDFA) to the ARDF network.

**ARDF Vision:** Working together, we demonstrate the love of Christ and spread the Gospel by helping the poor and needy through leaders working in their own communities.



**Mike:** Hi Jake, welcome and many thanks for speaking with me about ARDF. The most recent project that ARDF Canada has taken on is the expansion of the El Redentor, a school in Asunción, Paraguay, and before that the development of a vocational training centre in Giza, Egypt. Tell me about the other programmes or projects are ongoing at this time in the ARDF Global world.



**Jake:** Since its inception there have been 201 development projects in 38 countries worth about \$11 million USD. In addition, there have been 47 relief projects funded, in 22 countries for about \$3 million USD. At present there are 13 projects ongoing, but not yet completed.

Let me tell you about a few of these. One is in Kenya, in a village outside of Nairobi. We are funding a bakery there. The plan for the bakery is that it will become self-sufficient, supplying affordable bread for the local population while employing dozens of people. The building is not yet completed, but is partially built (the walls and floors are constructed). This project has come out of the proceeds saved from the chicken farm which was funded earlier. This new local bakery will offer 4 types of bread in various size portions, including a new sweet potato bread.

The second venture is the expansion of a seminary for training clergy in Yangon, Myanmar. This will allow 75 students to train and then join the great commission.

The third project is the building of a conference centre in Oji River, Nigeria. Although in COVID times it will find little use, later on the building will be able to host up to 500 people in all walks of life.

There is also an expansion for a high school in Northern Kenya. There is a long running primary school that educates kids K-8, but they have been sending the kids to public schools for High School. We will be adding a building for High School boys in 2021 and one for High School girls in 2022. This will allow the students to have a high-quality education all the way through High School.

**Mike:** That is pretty amazing, Jake. These projects reach out to many people, and the idea of self-sufficiency is practical. Tell me more about the Global aspect of the ARDF.

**Jake:** ARDF is a Global Relief and Development Agency. It includes ARDF US, of which I am the Executive Director, ARDF Australia, whose Executive Director is Lucy Lim, and ARDF Canada, of which you are National Director. There is the ARDF Kenya, which at this point is really a fund, on whose board there are 3 African representatives, and 2 American representatives. Also, there is the Singapore arm in South East Asia, which uses the funds and accepts back any profits repaid. The whole plan is for a progression of increased autonomy with a declining dependence on grants.

The process is from the ground up, a project being suggested by the local church to the bishop, then the bishop to the archbishop, through the ARDF project application process. At this point a third party (The Grid) takes over to independently assess the project, its viability and the ability of the local church to carry out the work, and make recommendations. Once what we call Investment Opportunity (IO) document is prepared it is sent to the ARDF board for review and is presented to the Global council.

On the ARDF Global council there are 8 International Primates who meet once a year at this time, to review, pray over and approve all the projects to be taken on by the ARDF affiliates. Once approved the affiliates then prepare the memorandum of understanding (legal documents) and work begins. The third party (The Grid) monitors the progress, and upon completion prepares an Impact Assessment (IA) reviewing all aspects, including who the project has impacted, and how it has improved lives.

**Mike:** It sounds like the process is well thought, with much opportunity for the projects to be “considered” and vetted. There are many people involved in this process. I shall be interviewing some of them. Please tell me about yourself and how you joined ARDF US?

**Jake:** I was born and raised in Kentucky, with a family background in the Roman Catholic church. My family didn’t stay in that tradition, and it was later on that I was drawn to God in a small-town revival. We attended different churches, but there was a youth pastor who helped me see what I wanted to do. So, I went into school with the intent doing what he did, become a youth pastor. I pursued an undergrad degree in Pastoral Ministries and a Masters in Biblical Studies. I worked in various church ministries for several years, but eventually felt drawn to Development work. This was due to becoming frustrated with too many examples of the church engaging the world in ways that weren’t ultimately healthy. Another contributing factor was that my wife and I adopted two sons from international contexts and seeing the deep need around the world moved me to learn more about how to better engage the world. I began working with an international non-profit in SE Asia and learned best practices around healthy development work. I then pursued a PhD in Organizational Leadership. I began attending an Anglican church 8 years ago and fell in love with the liturgy and beauty of worship. This led me to become an Anglican priest and plant a church in my hometown of Cleveland, Tennessee.

When a friend saw that the position of Executive Director of ARDF US came up, it looked perfect, and my wife agreed. I wasn’t really looking for a job, but the job seemed right for me, and I thought I might be a good fit. And now here I am.

**Mike:** It almost sounds as if it was made for you, and I believe that you enjoy the work. What would you say is your main role, and your greatest challenge at ARDF?

**Jake:** That’s a good question. I would say I should be a champion for the cause for the Anglican church, to raise awareness for relief and development, globally. I should be an ally, a cheerleader! The challenge would be to do better work, encourage a better response to raise more funds. (I am quite happy to raise funds, ask for money for relief and development to help others). Perhaps I might describe it as being more of a partner. In the past a church congregation would send a cheque to support us, and we would send a thank you note. Now we want to be more of a partner and reciprocate in some way, connect with them on another level.

I think we also need to look at other non-Anglican NGOs, or charities and see how they work, what they do well and borrow some of their tools or methods. If we see how they connect with their donors, we might learn from them.

**Mike:** You have much yet to do then, Jake. What would you say to anyone who is interested in helping out in mission work?

**Jake:** I would say, if you are interested in mission work, then take a good look and see what is out there. Look at the Anglican Global Mission Partners as an example. There is a list of almost two dozen mission organizations associated with the Anglican Church here in the US. Gather a group of people around you who can discern. They should understand you and be able to see where you would best fit, and what would be good for you. Look into non-profit organizations and ask questions to determine what they are about. There is a whole mission world out there.

**Mike:** Yes, there really seems to be Jake. There is lots of God's work we can join with others in accomplishing. Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Jake:** Yes, thanks. I am most inspired by the Global Body of Christ. It seems to me that now, during a pandemic, we are all suffering in one way or another, at the same time. Yet there are so many, (both within and without of ARDF), who without hesitation are concerned for, and take care of their neighbour.

**Mike:** Thank you so much Jake, for taking the time to speak with me. As the Good Samaritan parable tells us, we need to help our neighbours, and you and the ARDF have taken this to heart, and determined that our neighbours can be across the world.

Thanks, as always, in Him

Mike