



## Mission: Kilimanjaro HIStory



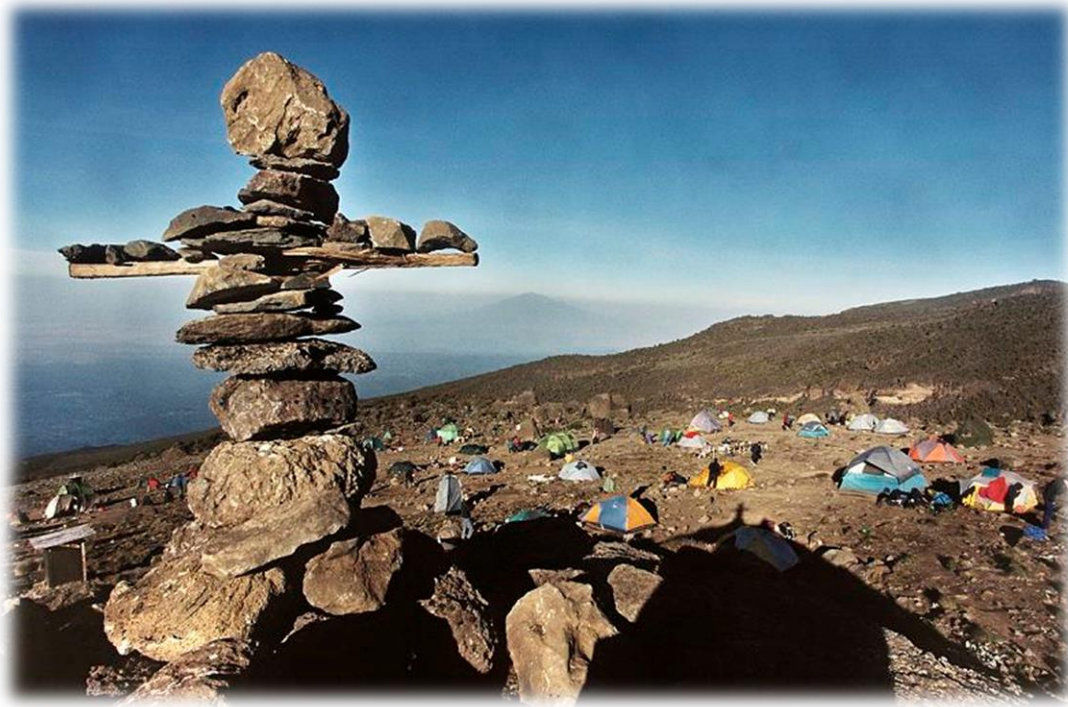
**Mount Kilimanjaro summit, 1998.** (Photo by Gary Fallesen)

### 1998:

- While training for his first climb of Kilimanjaro, **Gary Fallesen** is instructed by God to “start a Christian climbing organization.” This is the beginning of CLIMBING FOR CHRIST, incorporated in April 2004. C4C began doing missions (or “Evangelic Expeditions”) in April 2005.

## 2007:

- **Gary Fallesen** returns to Kilimanjaro for the first time since 1998 and the start of C4C with a team consisting of: **Becca Catlin**, Tacoma, WA.; **Jim Doenges**, Littleton, CO; **Shawn Dowd**, Rochester, NY; Gary's son **Jesse Fallesen**, Hilton, NY; **Aaron Hemphill**, Blairmore, AB, Canada; **David Lesh**, Cherry Valley, CA; David's son **Joshua Lesh**, Cherry Valley, CA; **Mollie Olson**, Saranac Lake, NY, and **Todd Paris**, Pottersville, NY. The group is guided by Gary's Muslim friend, **Yusuf Hemed. Saidi Ngaini** is our assistant guide. Trip is Feb. 16-March 1, 2007.
- God moment: Delivering duffels of gear to the Kilimanjaro Porters Assistance Project in Moshi, we are asked by the American director of this organization if we would like to meet a Lutheran pastor. We say we would. "We are extremely excited as Pastor Moshia has just recently come up with some ideas as to how the church can help the situation of the porters. So it will be perfect timing for your group to provide encouragement for his doing so. The only way change can be effected here is by the Tanzanian people themselves. You will be helping the situation tremendously." We travel to Marangu to meet **Pastor Winford Moshia** of the Lyasongoro Lutheran Church. Pastor Moshia shares what God has put on his heart: to put someone at the Marangu Gate, one of the busiest entrances to Kilimanjaro National Park and the tourist route up the mountain. This person would pray with the porters before and after their climbs. They would also talk about HIV with the hundreds of porters and guides who pass this way each day. He asks what we would like to do. Gary says, "What you said." It is our desire to plant a missionary around Kilimanjaro to work with the guides and porters.



**Cross cairn built by C4C team in Karanga Camp on Mission: Kilimanjaro 2007. (Photo by Shawn Dowd)**

## 2008:

- Our team – consisting of **Jim Doenges**, Littleton, CO; **Gary Fallesen** and **Miguel Samper**, Rochester, NY – returns to climb Kilimanjaro and start Kilimanjaro Chapter. Trip is Feb. 19-March 5, 2008.
- Feb. 23, 2008: We meet **Dauson Chonjo**, a guide who leads the prayer group at Pastor Moshu's church. He tells us the prayer group he leads has been praying "about our team and the plans" God has for us. Dauson estimates there are about 1,000 guides in the 5,000-person guiding and porter community. Maybe half are Christian. The other half will be difficult to reach because "they have to stop feeling (they'll lose something) if they accept Christ." As it is now, they cut corners, using fewer porters than they are contracted to take so they can keep more money for themselves. This means the porters have to carry more weight than they should. Dauson said those guides believe accepting Jesus is bankruptcy. They do not know the freedom He offers and the eternal promise of something far greater than a few extra tschillings. On Feb. 23, 13 guides and 12 porters from three churches attend the inaugural Kilimanjaro Chapter meeting at Lyasongoro Lutheran Church in Marangu.
- We lead a group from Pack Paddle Ski (Ned, Kathi, and Laurel) up the Rongai Route as part of the "Journeys of Inspiration" cancer climb. **Coleman**, a Christian, is our guide. **Saidi Ngaini**, who was scheduled to guide, has malaria and cannot climb.
- On March 3, after descending Kili, we hold the second meeting of the Kilimanjaro Chapter in Moshi. Thirty-nine guides and porters join Climbing For Christ, giving us 74 in Tanzania. Guide **Frank Sabas** hosts the meeting at his Kiborilon Assembly of God Church. **Tumaini Mkonyi** also participates. We sell Tumaini's CD of Gospel music in the years ahead.

## 2010:

- Team consists of **Charlotte Crain**, Gig Harbor, WA; **Gary Fallesen**; Pastor **Carl Jenks**, Rochester, NY, and **Allan Persons**, Eagen, MN. We hold one-day training in Marangu, attended by 39 Kilimanjaro Chapter members (29 are new members). Only Persons climbs (guided by Yusuf) while the others travel to Malawi on the first mission to that country. Trip is Jan. 19-30.

## 2011:

- Team consists of **Elaine Fallesen**, Hilton, NY; **Gary Fallesen**; **Michael Heitland**, South Fargo, ND; **Bob Kuebler**, Buffalo, NY; **Randall McGarvey**, Rochester, NY, and **Shelly Torres**, Chicago, IL. One day of teaching in Marangu followed by climb (again guided by Yusuf) and then team travels on to Malawi for second mission to that country. Trip is March 6-23, 2011.

## 2013:

- Team of **Gary Fallesen**; **Michael Heitland**, South Fargo, ND, and **Joshua Cook**, Colorado Springs, CO. Cook is a candidate to become C4C's missionary to East Africa. This trip is from March 13-27

and included one day of teaching in Marangu and another ascent of Kilimanjaro. Cook later turns down the opportunity to serve in Tanzania.

### 2014:

- During Mission: Malawi 2014, in March, a call is extended to **Damson Samson** to become C4C's missionary to East Africa. Climbing For Christ has supported Damson through college in Lilongwe after having met him in 2010 when our team first visited **Pastor Duncan Nyozeni's** Searchlight Ministries in southern Malawi. Damson has served with Pastor Duncan, caring for orphans who are sponsored by C4C's Project 1:27.
- Mission: Kilimanjaro 2014 is held July 29-Aug 12 with **Gary Fallesen, Hayley Fallesen** (Gary's daughter), and **Damson Samson** participating. This is Damson's introduction to Tanzania and the culture around Mount Kilimanjaro. He spends time with Pastor Moshia and others while Gary and Hayley climb (guided by Yusuf).
- Mission: Kilimanjaro 2014, Part 2 is held Nov. 7-23. **Damson Samson** returns to Kilimanjaro, this time with C4C staff member **Jordan Rowley**, to hold a two-day mini-conference on evangelism with 30 guides, porters and cooks.

### 2015:



**Gary, Damson and Jordan on Mission: Kilimanjaro 2015.**

- Mission: Kilimanjaro 2015, March 7-15 – **Gary Fallesen, Jordan Rowley** and **Damson Samson** hold follow-up meetings to measure results from the November evangelism training and the ensuing December-March trekking season. We decide Damson needs to visit the area every

1½ -to-2 months. Trips are tentatively scheduled for April, June, September and November. Damson also started small groups for Bible study in Marangu and Moshi.

- May (Damson). [“Growing disciples to work on the mountain.”](#)
- July (Damson). [“A ‘vote of thanks’ from Tanzania.”](#)
- October (Damson). [“Building something of eternal value.”](#)
- November – conference (Damson). [“Much joy in heaven over sinners who repented.”](#)

## **2016:**

- May (Damson). [“Praying for more lives transformed.”](#)



**Damson, center, on the summit of Kilimanjaro with Pastor Joe, right, and Jim Doenges.**

- Mission: Kilimanjaro 2016, Aug. 19-31 – Team of **Gary Fallesen**, **Damson Samson**, **Jim Doenges** (Littleton, CO), and Pastor **Joe Trussell** (El Dorado Springs, MO) teach evangelism to Kilimanjaro Chapter for two days and then climb the mountain. See the story [“Eyes wide open on the top of Africa”](#) about Damson’s ascent from *The Climbing Way* (Volume 36, Sept. 2016).
- November – conference (Damson). Third annual evangelism training. [“Hatching a dream for those working on the mountain.”](#)

## **2017:**

- April (Damson). [“From the valley of dry bones to the Word on Mount Kilimanjaro.”](#)
- June (Damson). [“Rejoicing in the presence of angels.”](#)
- September (Damson). [“Impact, not size, is the measure of Great Commission success.”](#)

- [Mission: Kilimanjaro 2017](#), Nov. 26-Dec. 2 – **Gary Fallesen** and **Damson Samson**. Part 1 of The Timothy Initiative (TTI) training for 50 Kilimanjaro Chapter guides and porters.

## **2018:**

- March (**Damson** scheduled to GO). Part 2 of TTI training.
- June (**Damson** scheduled to GO). Part 3 of TTI training.
- September (**Damson** scheduled to GO). Part 4 of TTI training.
- [Mission: Kilimanjaro 2018](#), scheduled Nov. 26-Dec. 9 – Team consists of **Gary Fallesen, Jordan Rowley, Damson Samson, Adam Copper** of Cañon City, CO, **Jesse Eells** of Mishicot, WI, **Jon Scofield** of Huntley, MT, and **Frode Strand** of Oslo, Norway. Final TTI training, graduation, and team trek.