

10 Lessons

from over 1,000 Kingdom Entrepreneurs in Africa and Beyond

Courtney Rountree Mills tells the story of her personal experience in trying to tackle poverty in Africa. From theoretical beginnings she went on to try helping the poor directly out of her own pocket, but failed because the poor did not have the skills to support themselves. The solution was to train local middle-class, educated entrepreneurs, who would then employ the poor. She outlines ten ways that entrepreneurs can be enabled to be successful.

My story starts in January of 2009, and I was stuck in a roundabout. I was completing research in Kenya on how to ease bottlenecks in the private sector as part of my Master's thesis at Harvard. I was in downtown Nairobi, when my cab shook pitifully and crept to a halt. While sitting in the sweltering heat as the cab was being fixed, I made a decision to buy

my own car. So, I talked to a wise Christian Kenyan friend about where I should look, and he said "Courtney, the one piece of advice I can give you is that **if someone tells you he is a 'born again' Christian, do not buy your car from him. He is almost certainly a con artist.**" I laughed at first. A funny joke to be repeated at a dinner party.

But the more I thought about it, the less funny it became. Had participants in the marketplace in Kenya prostituted Jesus' name for economic gain to the extent that claiming to be a Christian now had a negative connotation, *one equal in fact to being called a con artist?* If this was true, it was a tragedy of epic proportions.



Nairobi car bazaar

Photo: Kenya Auto Bazaar Association