

Pray for Kenya November 2016

Dear Brethren:

This is the third report about my visit to Kenya in September. The last part of the visit was attending the Reformed Baptist Association of Kenya (RBAK) annual meeting of church delegates 23-26 September.

The Association has existed for many years, initially bringing together churches planted through Trinity Baptist Church, Nairobi. Some of these churches are now independent with their own registration with the Kenya Government. The basis of associating is the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith.



At present there are about 20 members churches from different parts of Kenya with some others interested in being a part of RBAK in the future. We do believe that like-minded churches need to get together for mutual encouragement and to foster a more visible unity. However, because we are scattered throughout the country getting together is difficult. We are trying to establish regular contact through the WhatsApp medium, but it is

slow in taking off. We are also seeking formal Government registration of the Association, but the word 'Baptist' in it has been refused because it has been 'patented'.

For the first time we decided to meet together over a long weekend so that we could be of encouragement to the hosting church. They have the presence of brethren from various parts of the country so knowing they belong to a larger group, and we can even be of help in evangelism and ministry. Annually a member church offers to host the Association and its Pastor automatically becomes the Chairman for that year responsible for arranging it. This time it was in Osani, in the far south-west corner of Kenya near Lake Victoria. In 2017 it will be in Bumala, 60 miles north-west of Kisumu, near the Uganda border.

There were a total of 23 in attendance representing 20 churches (and their daughter congregations). Almost all were church leaders. One of the difficulties is avoiding it becoming a 'Pastors' Conference' instead of a meeting of delegates representing local churches. Just one church was represented by its pastor and a deacon.

The programme covered Friday evening through Monday evening. There were a number of teaching/preaching sessions on the theme of 'The Local Church'; many hours were given to receiving reports from the churches and bringing them to the Lord in prayer; in the evening after supper we gathered for a devotions session. I thought the teaching sessions needed to be more practical as it is not information that we lack. What was challenging is the fact that our leaders are not supported by their members. With the very clear Biblical teaching on this, how can we call ourselves 'reformed' if we are not living in obedience?

How did we encourage the church? I trust our very presence was an encouragement. On the Friday, before the formal start, a few of us went to visit two of the former leaders in Thimlich. Both had to be removed, one because of inheriting a wife so that he became a polygamist, the other because of stealing church money. There was a good response from both with evidence that they might come to genuine repentance.



We also managed to visit the nearby Osani Clinic set up under Trinity Baptist Church many years ago. We gathered the patients and staff and preached about the far worse disease of sin. HIV infection rates are high in this area, at about 30%, with the Clinic having 1,200 persons registered to receive ARVs.

Let me tell you something about the churches involved in the Association.

1. Osani, Thimlich & Wath Orango. These 3 churches are within a few miles of each other. Osani Trinity Baptist Church was the host for the RBAK. It is a very small church with 8 resident and 5 non-resident members, but they did a good job of hosting about 20 men! We were all accommodated in the houses of Daniel Ngollo (the Pastor). You might ask, why houses? Often a family start with a small house, then as they get more resources, a larger one is built on the compound (it is a rural area). The smaller one may be used for the boys as they grow up.



There was also a mud-walled hut with corrugated iron roof where Cliff and I slept. Such a dwelling could have been constructed for children or a relative staying with them. Much of the food was also from his farm – bananas by the hands, pawpaw, cobs of maize. He told us that there are 8 charismatic churches in the immediate neighbourhood of Osani and one night we were disturbed by



very loud 'praying'. The Thimlich church was the very first one outside Nairobi that TBC started in the early 1980s. Because of the leadership problems it has almost ceased to exist. Wath Orango on the other hand has been most encouraging and they want to set apart Nelson Okaka as their pastor. On December 2nd. 3 students are due to be baptized. So there is a great need in this area that we call South Nyanza for a spiritual revitalizing.

2. Othoo & Migosi. Othoo Guildford Park Church was also an observer. They have 2 pastors, but few members. A few years ago there was a ritual murder in the area and the church was wrongly implicated. They have also had the problem of the destruction of half of their building due to the renewal of the main road into Kisumu. Migosi Calvary Bible Church has 36 members, and was begun from Nairobi TBC in the late 1980s. The Pastor, Ernest Oluoch, has to work at a full-time job to support his family, as he is not provided for by the church. The other Pastor likewise is a teacher, but it is encouraging that there is a plurality here that seems to be working.

3. Bondo. Around this town there are 3 churches, Ndira, Maranda & Nyaguda, and a couple of church plants, under the name of Guildford Park. Two of their leaders were present. It is worth remarking that most of the leaders in RBAK Churches have been trained in the TPC in Nairobi over the last 30 years. Like other churches, they seek to reach out with various Conferences, for ladies, and for youth.



4. Siaya. This is an up-coming town where we granted a plot by the Council and a building has been put up. One of their great needs is for its completion to the satisfaction of the Council. Division all but destroyed the church, but through the faithful ministry of Charles Abwok there are now 13 members, and it is slowly growing. One feature of all the reports was to inform us of the content of the ministry, especially which books of the Bible are being read publicly and preached on. Here it is reading through the Bible systematically starting with Genesis, and preaching through Colossians. Such attention to Scripture is so rare, perhaps only among us (?).

5. Funyula & Bumala. Simon Ochieng' went as a missionary to the small town of Funyula some years ago. There are now 18 adults who attend but it is a town where people come and go because of business. A group from the Netherlands recently came and constructed the shell of a building and now the need is to complete it. Simon struggles with no regular support. We sought to help him with a chicken-rearing project, but it did not work out. Like many leaders he has the burden of fees for education. His oldest daughter (Phoebe) has been accepted for teacher training, and the next born is in secondary school. One way we seek to help these men is with such fees for education but the demands are great! Nearby Bumala is an Africa Inland Church that has identified with the RBAK as a result of its pastor, Eric Ngala, having been through the TPC. The 2017 Assembly will be hosted by this church of 40 members. They have recently called Charles Awelo to help pastor the church, a mature man who completed the TPC just a few years ago. You can read more about what brother Eric does in training church leaders at <http://trinitybaptistkenya.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/bumala/>.



6. Mumias. Elly Achok Church (GMA). They are not observer. The church is still in official membership, and way from Pokot North to Osani Kisumu) where Elly was Reformation Conference. For has given him please visit <http://trinitybaptistkenya.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2016-alumni-reports-and-testimonies.pdf>.



represented the Gospel Missions Agency yet formal members, so he attended as an the process of reforming, establishing an adopting the 1689 Confession. On the we stopped briefly at Obambo (near speaking on the Holy Spirit at a his latest newsletter of the work the Lord <http://trinitybaptistkenya.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2016-alumni-reports-and-testimonies.pdf>.

7. Kasei & Kamketo (Pokot North). These two churches, with 3 daughter churches, were represented by their missionaries, Isaiah Juma (Kasei) and Patricko Odhiambo (Kamketo). Patricko was especially eager to be at the RBAK as he was sent to Pokot from the Osani Church.

8. Chebang'ang'. David Ng'etich leads Glory Baptist Church with a fellow pastor. It is a well-established church, but only with 17 members, as they have no wish to hurry people into membership. They seek to bring the gospel into nearby schools, and David has a burden to reach

visually impaired people. He also thinks that Glory is well established so he would like to engage in church planting in nearby Kericho town.

9. Nairobi TBC. Both Murungi Igweta and myself were present as delegates.

10. Miathene. This where I first came to Kenya to teach in 1968. After some serious leadership problems, we sent a TPC mature student, Joseph Mucheru to minister here. The church is now being reconsolidated and has 36 members, with 10 applications. There used to be 100 members with many more attending, and some of these are now returning. Joseph requested that we pray for growth in maturity for the church.



11. Ndikir/Korr. Joseph Ogom represented the small church in Korr (Rendille), and Raphael Bulkash from Ndikir (Ariaal Rendille) was an observer as there is yet no established church. Please see the report from Murungi Igweta after his recent visit.

12. Kima. This was the church that was represented by its pastor (Donald Kivungi) and a deacon (Maundu). It is a church of 20 members in a settlement scheme on the main road from Nairobi to Mombasa. Many of the members are aged. Perhaps the pressing need is for the pastor to find a wife, now that he has passed the 40-year mark. But he has been unable to find a suitable lady.



13. Boyani. Led by George Mwanjisi, this is a growing church with 38 members. With many Muslims in the locality he has found that going through all the books of the Bible is a great help to the people. We have been able to provide them with a church plot, now there is the need of a permanent building so that they can move out of George's home. He has also had the struggle of a wife who is often sick, and who now has to care for her bed-ridden mother who recently suffered a stroke.



What wonderful instruments mobile phones are for keeping in touch with family back home!

We thank the Lord for your fellowship in the gospel.
In Christ's service,

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