

PRAY FOR KEITH & PRISCILLA UNDERHILL
TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH, NAIROBI, KENYA

“Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honoured” (2 Thess. 3:1, ESV)

2015, No.8 (14/08/15)

Dear Brethren

We do give thanks to the Lord for His sustaining grace. In every aspect of our lives the Lord has been most merciful. We have finally got to the point of actually making the online application for the settlement visa for UK for Priscilla. Next Tuesday (18/8) we have to present the various documents we have gathered to support the application. We have put down as our intended arrival in UK late October so, assuming that the visa is granted, we shall aim to leave about mid-November, Lord willing. So having been here as a family since 1975, 40 years, the countdown has started! The big task will be clearing 40 years of accumulation of things. Then there are the farewells. The first one was last weekend, and the final one will be the weekend of 31st October, not Halloween, but Reformation Day.

RBAK Farewell

The RBAK is an Association of Reformed Churches in Kenya that hold to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. At our annual meetings last year they wanted a time when they could come and say goodbye to us so that long ago it was fixed for this last weekend. 20 churches from all over the country were represented and many more were not able to come for one reason or another. Some want a special farewell at their own place! It is at times like this, when we review decades of our lives, that we realize afresh what the Lord has done. There have been many struggles, many failures, but the word of the Lord has not returned to Him ‘empty’. Most of the men have passed through the PTC and speak maturely.

A few of them arrived early so on Saturday morning we were able to sit down and talk very personally about the situation in our churches, the need for unity and the efforts being made to secure it, and the paramount task to preach the gospel in season and out of season.



The Farewell formally began mid-afternoon with many others having arrived from various parts of the country. Various brethren were designated to speak on differing aspects of their experience with me, and of course they said lovely words of thanksgiving. As time went on so many came that we had to move to our church ‘small hall’.

Then it was time for me to speak. What does one say after 40 years of ministry, and having known one of the men there for 47 years? I went back to the time I first came to Kenya in 1968 as a High School teacher. From the start the Lord was preparing the way for the establishment of Trinity Baptist Church 10 years later. Two ‘boys’ from the school became founder members. Five contacts from our ministry in Thika (1975-7) joined them. Of the 10 who constituted the church in 1979, 5 of us were present, 3 others wished to be so, and one is in Canada. How gracious the Lord has been in keeping us!

I never had plans to plant churches, considering just one was daunting enough. But early on God brought people in from various parts of the country. They so much appreciate what they heard that they wanted to take the truth back to their home areas. Now there are more than 50 churches that would call themselves Reformed Baptist. While the majority are with RBAK there are other groupings, and we have yet to learn to work together to encourage each other. The first RBAK meeting was in 1998 and, sadly, a number of the 8 pastors present have been unfaithful.

It was also very early on when the theological training programme started (PTC). A large Independent Church in Kisumu called me to speak at a Conference in 1980 and then I was asked by the Bishop to help train his young men, for when he sent them abroad they never came back and worked with the church. This did not last long, but it was the beginning and scores of men have now passed through the training. It is amazing how God in His providence makes something to start somewhere in order to make it useful somewhere else.

I then told them that, against the background of a massive influx of false teaching into Kenya, the Reformed Faith is what they must hold up to view. Specifically they must emphasize the freeness of the gospel being of grace alone in Christ alone. Then the flip side is to emphasize that 'without holiness no one shall see the Lord' (I used Romans 5:18-6:4). They must carry the baton, and cease to rely on Nairobi and me in particular, if that is what they have been doing.

After supper various gifts were presented to us from different churches. "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" We have found brethren so hospitable and I have stayed in so many of their homes. It has been a great privilege and we shall miss the deep fellowship we have had.

Sunday was a glorious day where I just sat back and profited from the ministry and fellowship. If it was a taste of things to come then the Lord has already begun to greatly bless. We sing for 30



minutes as brethren arrive, at 9.40 repeat the Bible verse(s) we have been learning, and at 9.50 have Sunday School classes. Brother John Muketha, whom I have known since 1970, and who was a founder member of the church, led the Bible study in the first of a series on the prophet Amos. Pastor Murungi very clearly and challengingly preached on the 2nd coming from Mark 13:24-37 in his consecutive expositions of the Gospel. At 2.00 there was a special time of prayer for us, led by brother John (photo).



After lunch we gathered for the Lord's Supper and we welcomed 2 new members. Michael Owit (left) has just graduated from College and he told us how the Lord graciously rescued him from sin and the Jehovah's Witness cult. Tito Walubengo (right) has been our much respected Caretaker for a few years and we are so delighted in his clear profession of faith.

Then at 4.30 we had our evening service where our intern, Peter Kivati, preached on Prayer from Colossians 4:2-4. He recalled the time we were in Rendille together, at the foot of Mt. Bayo in the village of Lagarama where for the first time he met people who had never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was overcome with emotion as he thought of the unreached whereas we have heard the gospel times without number. Why are we generally so unconcerned when we confess that without Christ there is no hope for eternity?



These are most of the brethren who came for the weekend, some with their wives.

Still the day was not finished. More than 30 crammed into our house for what the young people call the 'Tea Plot'. There is always animated serious discussion. This time we requested George from the Coast to tell us about his ministry where Islam is very active. Mosques are being built and many people go especially during Ramadan. Despite this he told us that the people are very open to listening to the gospel and there is a general regret that their community did not want the first missionaries when they came in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Ukambani

This is the large area of Kenya east of Nairobi towards the coast. Two of the Reformed Baptist churches in the area are part of RBAK, Kima in Makueni County, and Vote in Kitui County. Donald Kivungi represented the Community Baptist Church at Kima on the main road to Mombasa. It has only been in existence a few years and many of the members are retired so it is unusually an aged congregation. They are also unique in our experience as they have been self-supporting, having been able to put up their own church building and pastor's house.



The Kima Church gave me a typical Kenyan stool as a mark of respect to an elder (mzee).



They gave Priscilla a typical Kenyan basket that women use for shopping at the market, with the colours of the Kenyan flag.

Miathene

This is where I first came to Kenya as a High School teacher, just east of Mt. Kenya. A thriving church was started here over 20 years ago but leadership problems saw the light almost extinguished. The 2 untrained but faithful pastors kept things going, and we have now been able to send another man to labour there full-time (Joseph Mucheru). The church is being rebuilt and has a membership of around 40, and an outreach ministry at Muili.



If anywhere is home for me in Kenya it is Miathene. One of the pastors there is Paul Kianji with whom I taught from 1968-1970! How fitting he should come with his wife Zaveria. Paul and I are age mates, and there is no doubting what stage of life we have reached when I am presented with a walking stick!! In a culture where the hoary head is still honoured such a gift is a token of respect.

Thank you for your continuing prayers for us, and now as we go through this time of transition. On Friday evening we have the monthly **Meaty Forum**, which will tackle difficult texts that people have sent in ahead of time. Sunday morning I shall continue with **preaching** through Galatians, from 3:15. Then Tuesday we shall go to submit the relevant documents for Priscilla's **visa** application.

Your brethren in Christ's service,

Keith & Priscilla Underhill

There are a number of young people from disadvantaged families (one-parent, poor) who are in need of primary, secondary, and especially tertiary education. If you would like to consider helping, please go to the website of TRAIN, www.trainkenya.com for more information, under Projects

(Previous newsletters may be found at www.trinitybaptistkenya.org)

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Please note that my email address kunderhill@maf.or.ke is no longer active, so please use kunderhill@digitalsavannah.co.uk or kunderhill@rocketmail.com from now onwards. Thank you.