

Pray for Kenya

November – December 2019

Dear Brethren,

As you are aware, I spent two weeks of the last half of November in Kenya. In God's providence the visit did not go according to my plans. The basic purpose of the visit was to spend time in Rendille, in north Kenya, and to introduce someone else from UK to this ministry. Before the visit I had been recovering from flu-like symptoms. Whether it was the flying, or having to stand outside in the cold to board the plane in Manchester, on arrival in Nairobi I immediately developed sinus problems with a throbbing headache that also affected my ear. I saw a doctor on Friday and told him of my plans and he said 'Go! the hot weather will do you good'. But in consultation with my brethren, we decided that for many reasons in addition to my health I should not go. There was the heavy rain in the area, no one with a knowledge of English and Rendille to accompany me, and the sickness of Joseph Ogom's son.

1. Rendille

It was late 1996 when we first made contact with Rendille people in Nairobi. A missionary working there encouraged us to get involved as '90% of them are unreached with the gospel'. So we made our first visit in 1998 and from then sought to visit twice a year. We developed a ministry towards Rendille people who lived near us in Nairobi and who worked as watchmen and saw a number converted. Two men began training with a view to working amongst their own people and were sent to Korr in 2004 to begin the work of church planting. All the converts in Nairobi went back in 2007. Everything looked good. Two other Churches had been working for more than 2 decades but neither had a message of repentance from 'the futile traditions inherited from their fathers', but just adding of Christianity.

Then it seemed that the devil attacked the work. The two trained men ceased to be leaders in 2008 and we were left with 3 who we call 'Evangelists' but who have no specific training. We sent a non-Rendille to lead the work but he proved very unfaithful and had to be excommunicated. Only early in 2019 were we able to send Stanley Musyoki and his family to help. In two places where we have sponsored a Primary School, Lekuchula and Losidan, we have only occasionally been able to visit to preach not having anyone to live and minister permanently. And little by little other Churches are coming in making the situation more confusing. However, we are thankful that there are two good, local men, seeking to plant churches in Lontolio and Sakadala, but not under TBC, and we pray the Lord to raise up many more. There remain places we have visited where there is no regular preaching of the gospel, such as Farakore, let alone places even more interior.

Brethren, we have had a number of men interested in ministering the gospel there. Some others have indicated their willingness but we cannot meet their financial expectations. A few others are not yet mature enough. A young couple from TBC Nairobi are very interested and it has been their desire to serve the Lord in such places for a long time. If you have not done so before, please go to <http://trinitybaptistkenya.org/rendille-ministry> for more. And let us pray for the men to preach the gospel and for sinners to leave their trust in their animals and put it wholly in God in Christ.

2. Nairobi

Instead of a week in Rendille, I spent it in Nairobi. This gave me an opportunity to talk with some of the TPC students who were being taught the Ethics course by Oliver Allmand-Smith. One wanted to hear from me everything I could tell him about marriage, as his wedding was imminent. Another had two problems he wanted advice about in his church.

Money was loaned from a church fund by the treasurer, but without authorization, and it has still not been repaid.

Both a man and his wife are rumoured to each have another spouse.

Yet another spoke about difficulties in the church he has recently gone to pastor. It is one thing to church plant, and another to become pastor of an already established church and find things are not as you expected.

I was also able to be part of the church again for those few days. Friday was the Dine & Listen. Saturday afternoon was a church members' meeting to which I was kindly invited. Sunday was a very full day of meetings and fellowship. And I was able to visit 6 of the families of the church in their homes.

One thing I was concerned to talk about with the Elders is a book project where we want to present the Lord's dealings with TBC in Nairobi and Kenya. A number of people have prevailed on me to take up this project, but I have made it quite clear that I am not willing to do this on my own. We wish to do more than present the history in order to give glory to God. We would like to show why, from the Scriptures, we have done things the way we have, whether looking at it from the perspective of the 'missionary' (me) and the sending agency, or the local church so established.



There was also the wonderful opportunity to meet with a former student of 50 years ago (left). I did not get an answer from him as to why he never joined TBC, as he told me the Lord used me to lay the spiritual foundation of his life. Another very great encouragement was a visit by Mama Beth and her son from Thika where I ministered 1975-1977. We had not met since and she related how blessed she had been and how opposed she was when I was forced out. She claimed she still uses the notes of sermons and Bible study from that time!

3. Meru

As was planned, I spent the weekend in Miathene, 160 miles NNE of Nairobi. It is where I first came to Kenya way back in 1968 as a secondary school teacher. Although I have made frequent visits it is always nostalgic to return – to meet with old people like myself who I taught 50 years ago, and with faithful church members over the decades, and even to visit my old school.



It rained a lot, and remember this is the tropics. We spent the Saturday visiting older members, but it took so long trudging through the slippery mud. Mzee Jeremiah can no longer walk the fairly short distance to church. Mama Esther is now a widow and she had us for lunch. Note the typically wooden frame houses built on a stone/concrete base. I visited with the full-time pastor, Joseph Mucheru, one of the members, Geoffrey Muriuki, and the two members from Nairobi, Nickson Teka a TPC student, and Martin Omondi.

This was the Sunday morning congregation in such a large auditorium. Before the leadership troubles of a few years back, when one leader went off with the wife of one of the members, and another tried to take over the church for himself, there were a couple of hundred in attendance. As is typical in rural areas, people came in dribs and drabs with eventually about 45 adults and 20 children. There are two services in the morning, the first styled as a Bible Study, then followed by Worship. I spoke at both on John 15:1-8, on the need to bear fruit, and how to bear fruit. There is also a service in the afternoon which is not so well attended. Joseph Mucheru is the trained pastor in Miathene, with his wife Isabella and 5 children. The week before his oldest two girls were baptized in the river on profession of faith.

On Sunday afternoon we drove the 20 miles into Meru town for the usual Bible study with students from the Methodist University. A few years ago some of them started to object to the charismatic / prosperity messages they were hearing at the Christian Union and so decided to arrange their own meetings. But they were refused any space in the University itself. What a delightful time of serious Bible study as we looked in depth at John 12:1-19. There were lots of helpful contributions and many questions. God willing, this group will soon form the basis of church planting in the town of Meru.



This was my school house in Miathene 1969-1970. Quite a mansion for a young bachelor! I still remember having my tea after school, looking through the veranda door to the towering peak of Mt. Kenya (17,000 ft.+), only 40 miles away. How privileged I was to teach here just after independence and in many ways it laid a foundation for future ministry. Two former students were founder members of TBC when we started in 1978. One remains in the church today as a valued Deacon. There were great opportunities of ministry in school Christian Unions and holiday Camps, and even in churches. I also had a good introduction to Kenyan culture being the only non-Kenyan Christian in the school. During this weekend I stayed with Paul Kianji (pictured) and his wife Zaveria. He was already a teacher when I arrived at the school in 1968 but was only converted in the early 1980s. He eventually became one of the Pastors of the Church and continues to serve in this capacity. He is pictured here with two grand-daughters and the two men I brought with me from Nairobi.



In Christ's service,

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