

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)

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Dear Brethren

We continue to thank you for your prayers on our behalf. Priscilla remains in Liverpool, not feeling strong enough yet to return to Nairobi. You might know that one of the known results of a stroke is ‘fatigue’. She continues to do well and is fully taken care of, either by the children or by ladies in the church. God willing, I shall return to be with her for a while from 19th March.

The Lord continues to encourage us here in Nairobi with continual visitors on Sundays, people interested in membership, and especially some professing conversion to Christ. We resumed the monthly Meaty Forum Friday 13th February and there was an excellent attendance (70?) for a panel discussion on ‘Work’. It is almost all young adults, and what I find most encouraging is the seriousness of the many questions that are asked, not to score points, but to know what is pleasing to the Lord. Yesterday after the evening service more than 30 young people came home for refreshments and a discussion on ‘chivalry’, something sore needed in this male dominated, selfish society. Of course, we would call it showing honour and serving each other.

Rendille Visit

I made another visit to Rendille with Peter Kivati from January 27th to February 5th.



These are the faithful members in Korr at the Wednesday afternoon Bible study. They still meet under ‘the shade’ pending the completion of the church building (behind right). It is too hot to make the building enclosed so we just need to put in the concrete floor and build a partition to be a brake to the strong winds. As is typical in Kenya, many are saying, ‘Complete your building and we and many others will join you.’

The three leaders in Korr faithfully go out to the surrounding goobs to preach the word but very little fruit is seen. We talked about why this might be. They responded that people are listening more intently these days, not like before, and there are a few men who are showing much spiritual seriousness. They also said that generally people do not respect fellow Rendille who come with a new message, thinking they are no different from them, and to back it up they quoted, ‘A prophet is not without honour except in his own country’. They think there is a great need for someone from outside the Rendille community to come, who will be better listened to, and who will be able to give them more training in the Scriptures. Peter and his wife have indicated their interest.

Wareiya illustrates the difficulty professing believers have. She professed faith with her husband in Nairobi and then went back to live in the Matarbaah goob (village), around 10 km from our meeting place in Korr. The husband turned back to traditions and married a second wife with whom he seems to stay most of the time. She is rarely able to come citing the distance, and young children. But she clearly says she continues faithful to the Lord. What does that mean for a person who cannot read, has access to no electronic media, and who rarely hears the word preached?



There is now another Protestant church in a nearby goob and we encouraged Wareiya to attend there at least. Sadly other Churches do not believe the Rendille must forsake their traditions and turn to Christ (as 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10). They tend to cite the outward similarity of some of the traditions with the Old Testament – use of animal blood on entrance posts to their homes, burnt offerings under special circumstances. If the continued practice of their traditions is incompatible with genuine Christianity, then there are very few genuine Christians! Please continue to pray for the genuine preaching of the gospel of Christ, that our brethren will not be discouraged, and by the Lord's mercy they may begin to see fruit for God's glory.



Typically, we talk day by day sitting on the ground under a tree. Of course the chair was brought for me! In the background behind the car are the 3 classrooms of the Lekuchula Primary School. The Government has finally given us a Head Teacher and we are working on getting the School registered so that we can receive all benefits including food for lunch from the World Food Programme.

The great need continues to be for the Lord to send preachers. We have been going to the communities of Lekuchula since 1998 but no one has assuredly professed faith although a number say they are interested. We have never had anyone to minister here week by week and we believe this will be necessary for the ministry to develop. We sponsor the school so we could teach the children the word of God, if there is someone willing to do so. But who wants to live in such a backward place where everything is difficult? But it will not be backward for long. A main hard-top road will soon go by the school, because of a big project near Lake Turkana to generate electricity from wind power.

Ndikir is where Raphael Bulkash is based. This is the Sunday service with only 2 adults from the nearby goob. The rest are Raphael's family, and teachers at the school run by Kind Fund. Some of the children are cared for in a little orphanage they run, others come to the school from the goob. Men (wazee) especially are loath to come where they are children. Rendille men have an enclosure in the centre of the goob, the 'nabo', where they gather to talk and pray; children are not allowed. It is a fiercely patriarchal society.



Pray for Raphael that the Lord may encourage him at this time. He is basically working alone, is unique in that he is not living in a town but where the goobs are, and he has seen little true interest in the gospel. We have provided a motorbike for him but punctures are frequent because of the thorns. We have directed him to look for the one or two who show special interest and spend more time with them. We also want him to go to the school at Losidan every Friday to teach the children, which he has been doing. The community leader in Losidan challenged me to put up a church structure (of corrugated iron), which I have agreed to do. It is not our usual policy, but it is necessary to keep a foothold in the community and we pray the Lord will raise up a labourer soon.



We spent the last night at the 'Foor'. This is a temporary enclosure made by thorn-bush branches as the animals are taken from place to place looking for pasture. The enclosure is just to the right of the car where the people are. Many Rendille spend years of their life like this which is why they might never have heard the gospel as they are on the move in very remote places.

The Lord has given us two opportunities on radio to bring the gospel to the Rendille. Raphael Bulkash broadcasts in the Samburu language of the Ariaal Rendille on Trans-World Radio. Stephen Silamo broadcasts live on the national radio in the Rendille language, both on Wednesday and Sunday afternoon for an hour. May the Lord mightily use these opportunities which are freely given.

TBC Nairobi

We thank the Lord we are now more than 80 members, with 20 additions in the last year, half through baptism. We are beginning to formal process of considering another elder, so that there will be 3, excluding me, by the middle of the year. I have just started preaching through Galatians in the morning services when it is my responsibility. This will be my last big series! It will emphasize the basic themes of the gospel and Christian living. In the evenings I am dealing with the Five Points of Calvinism.

Forthcoming

(1) Pokot North. I plan a further visit for 9 days from 2nd March, especially to see the Kamketo Girls High School which is now operational!

(2) PTC March 11-18. Geoffrey Thomas (Aberystwyth, UK) and Stephen Turner (New Zealand) are coming to teach the course on the Gospels and Acts.

Give thanks for the renewal of my Entry Permit (Work Permit) for 3 more years.

Thank you for your continued prayers. In Christ's service,

Keith Underhill

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