

Prayer Letter from the Underhills

2023/2, 7th. March

Dear Brethren,

Thank you for your love and prayer on our behalf.

Pokot North

There have been two major developments over the past few months.



(1) The Chepkinagh church building is now up to lintel level, as you can see. Building supplies are brought by lorry from Kapenguria well over 100 kms away, last 30 being dirt. Transport of materials for the roof has just been completed. The pastor here, Andrew Chemolok, is coordinating this with me.



CHEPKINAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

(2) Support of teachers through TRAIN(Kenya) started at the beginning of March. There are 10 registered primary schools, and 3 secondary schools, and the needs are more than can be presently managed. We are seeking to support about 20 extra primary teachers, a matron for one boarding school, and one secondary teacher. We are encouraging PPI each Friday (instruction from sponsoring church), devotions in the 3 primary boarding schools

after classes, and even morning assemblies. There are now 2 former students who are doing the TPC in Nairobi, one of the very reasons why we started the schools many years ago.

I have just received the following from Andrew about the famine situation in the area (slightly edited). "We are facing great challenges here in North Pokot spiritually and physically. We are so affected by this drought, especially men. Many are not attending church services fully; they can miss even the whole month; others can attend once a month or twice. Children are also affected spiritually and academically because they moved with their parents to a far place in the side of Uganda. And now the families are facing the danger of hunger. For example, at Wasat has been the worst two years having had no harvests at all. So pray for us that God may intervene and bring change in this situation. Pray for the church joint service at Kasei TBC that will take place 12/3/2023." Note: Because not all of the 13 churches have a trained leader, one Sunday a month they all get together for a joint service, circulating around the different churches.

Rendille ministry

“It's hot, boiling and extremely dry in Korr as it is in most parts of the country, as it's long drought spell continues. The situation is dire, the outlook forlorn. The future of Rendille and neighbours looks bleak for facing disaster, great hunger looms at a time when most of people have lost all their livelihood - animals. The sun has been merciless these past four months. Majority of Rendille people were hit hard by a devastating drought and chances of any timely recovery are dwindling with each passing day as the sun rises with a vengeance early morning. But in all these, the Lord God is sovereign, gracious and faithful. To Him be the glory. We are grateful for His protection and providences. Please, pray for the situation, pray for us in our evangelistic efforts and as we reach out to these villages with the gospel. Pray that the Lord would raise people who would consider providing food aid to these vulnerable people. Grace to you.” (Stephen Silamo, February 22nd. 2023)

Book publication scheduled for end of March

I hope that by the time I next write the book, ‘Planted by the Providence of God’, sub-titled, ‘The Story of Trinity Baptist Church Nairobi’, will have been published. It has been 2-3 years in the making. May it be of great encouragement and challenge for the coming of the kingdom of God.

Visit to Kenya

I am not now going in March, as was planned, to teach for the last time in the TPC. Some misunderstandings with Nairobi, specifically over the support of schools in Pokot, brought about the cancellation. God willing, I shall be going for a couple of weeks in May, mainly to visit a few brethren in west Kenya.

Ethiopia

(1) EBST Board. We had our first introductory meeting with 4 of us, to get to know one another. This Ethiopian Bible School of Theology is run by the Addis Baptist Church and its pastor, Gedion Asgew.

(2) Abdi Osman continues to minister the gospel over the radio in his mother tongue. He recently met with other Somali Christian leaders to establish a Forum where they can cooperate to encourage one another and spread the gospel amongst their own people.

Ministry

The Lord continues to give many opportunities for ministry in the UK. In addition to some Sunday preaching there are the fortnightly meetings on Thursdays with ‘Young Adults’ here, and some not so young! We are presently thinking about our ‘Speech’ as a key indicator of our spirituality based on James 1:26, how to control it, and specific types of speech to be careful about. We are now going through the various directives in Ephesians 4:17ff. and on into chapter 5. I found the little book, The Tongue – Our Measure, by Simo Ralevic, very helpful.

I am writing about the ministry the Lord has pleased to give because I know some of you want to pray for me. It is good therefore also to give you some feedback. I give full names of churches so you can look up their websites if you wish to do so. I have had the following opportunities in late January & February.

22/1 Ramsbottom, Trinity Grace Church. Matthew 28:18-20 'The Great Commission'. This church is knowing the blessing of God in substantial growth. The preaching was received with thoughtfulness and much prayer.

5/2 Stanley Park Baptist Church. Ephesians 5:1-2 'Be Imitators of God', and Acts 20:22-27 'Facing the Future'. It is a delight to preach in this church in north Liverpool that a few years ago was almost closing but now has 30+ in attendance with many having professed salvation.

12/2 Charlesworth, Trinity Baptist Church. John 17:9-11 'Confidence in Prayer'. This church was founded in 1835 at the endorsement of William Gadsby. The Ramsbottom Church have been seeking to re-invigorate the church. The few times I have been going I am preaching through John 17.

26/2 Belvidere Road Church. Matthew 19:27-30 'Following Jesus: Is It Worth It?' I was given this text as the pastor is preaching through Matthew. In the various trials of the Christian life it is so important to embrace what the Lord promises for encouragement.

5/3 Warrington Fellowship. Galatians 6:14 'The Cross is the Only Thing that Matters'. This is a church plant, encouraged by the Ramsbottom Church, that has been meeting of a Sunday afternoon for a few months. They are in a town about 30 minutes east of Liverpool. There were about 30 in attendance, half of them children who listened so well! Interestingly they meet in an old church building dating back to 1830 and belonging to the Quakers/Friends.

Here is ministry scheduled for the rest of March & April.

19/3 Parbold Evangelical Church. I am preaching both morning and evening and to give some report about the work in Kenya. It is a church that has been prayerfully supportive for a number of years and is located a few miles north of Liverpool.

26/3 Borehamwood, Cowley Hill Free Church. This is a small church just north of London that has been deeply supportive of the ministry in Kenya for more than 30 years. It is going to be a joy to be reunited with them in fellowship.

April, all 5 Sundays at Southport, Grace Baptist Church. It is about an hour north of Liverpool. This has been a large, vibrant church that has experienced difficulties and now has no formal leadership. May my ministry, together with many others, bring the needed healing. Being over Easter I will seek to focus on themes to do with the cross and the resurrection.

I am planning to be at the Banner Ministers' Conference in April 17-20.

Belvidere Road Church, Liverpool

It has been a time when the elders have been bringing reformation into the church in the matter of baptism, church membership and the Lord's Supper, something many churches are in the process of doing. The pattern is Acts 2, the first church in Jerusalem. Instead of church membership being totally separate from baptism, baptism is now seen as the very entry into the local church. The Lord's Supper is going to be celebrated in a totally separate meeting and baptism will be a requirement for participation instead of just having a profession of faith in Christ. This will cause those who have been participating without baptism to think seriously about believers' baptism. We pray this will mark a growth in the spiritual lives of many as these things that the Lord has instituted are taken more seriously.

In Christ's service,

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