

Prayer Letter from the Underhills

2023/4, 2nd. June

Dear Brethren,

Thank you for praying for the **visit to Kenya** the first two weeks of May. In God's providence I was able to do all that had been planned and I was kept strong throughout. Priscilla was well cared for back in Liverpool and we were able to talk on the phone almost every day.

There were two special providences which were so encouraging.

- I took the internal one hour flight from Nairobi to Kisumu and back. On both occasions I had the opportunity to talk at length about the gospel to the occupant of the seat next to me. Matilda is an investigative journalist in Kisumu. I gave her my contact and directed her to the church where I was to preach. Anthony is a young contractor, doing very well in the world, but eager to resume church going. But which church considering all the nonsense that is around? I directed him to a church in Nairobi and gave him 'Ultimate Questions'. I found a refreshing openness.
- One day I was driven north the 140 miles to Meru where I met with two brothers I first knew when I came to Kenya in 1968. I taught with Paul Kianji in Miathene Secondary School. He was converted some years later and became of the pastors in Miathene TBC.



David Mutembei was one of the local Christians who is now 92 years old! See PL 2023/1. He was converted in 1946 in the East Africa Revival. I was able to video him speaking of what the Lord did in the convention of 1958 at Kahuhia which is said was attended by 30,000 people. He described scenes of deep conviction of sin, and of the joy of sins forgiven and reconciliation. He finished by singing the trademark song of the Revival, 'Tukutendereza Jesu' = let us praise Jesus!

FAITHFUL TBC NAIROBI MEMBERS

In the couple of days I was in Nairobi I was able to fellowship with long standing church members. How encouraging to have seen people converted, come to understand the doctrines of grace, rejoice in a church that seeks to submit to the authority of the Scriptures, finish education, start working, get married, raise children, take responsibilities in the church, and even retire. And the Lord has graciously kept them in the faith, now looking to the end of the journey and the glory which is to come. I first met John in 1970 as he had been a student at the Miathene School where I taught. He married Ruth in 1978 and they became founder members of TBC Nairobi. John has been a long-standing deacon and has often brought the word to the church. Elizabeth was one of the earliest members, joining in 1983. Catherine was converted and joined in 1995. Her husband has been a faithful attender, with whom I have spent a lot of time, and we continue to pray for his salvation. Ruth became a member in 2000 and faithfully struggled to raise her three boys as a single Mum, two of whom have become stable Christians and married in the Lord. Wilfred was converted in 2002 after the

tragic loss of a son, and joined the church together with his second wife. We are thankful to God that some of their children have been saved and continue as members of the church.

One struggle that older Christians face is the culture of leaving town upon retirement and relocating to where their wider family lives 'up-country'. There may be no church there that they feel comfortable joining. This is Wilfred's problem, and he is seriously thinking of returning to Nairobi to be part of the church again. I had the joy of visiting Lucy near the Uganda border, now a widow, her husband Joseph having been a member of the church with her since 1981/2, a deacon, and office manager. She is seeking to be a witness for the Lord amidst a sea of ignorance in a highly religious rural society.

One other brother, much younger, is Huston. He accommodated me and drove me around for those couple of days I was in Nairobi. He was the first of the dozens of young people who have become part of the church since 2010.

FORMER TPC STUDENTS

In the last 40 years more than 100 men have been trained in the 'Trinity Pastors' College'. It was a great joy to meet up with many of them where they are ministering. There were two in particular with whom I spent most of my time.

Elly Achok Olare. I spent 4 days with him and his family in Mumias. Since starting the TPC in 2010 his spiritual life and ministry have been turned upside down. From being a 'successful' prosperity preacher he faced a mass exodus of people from his Gospel Missions Agency (GMA) church. These years have been a great struggle to bring reformation to the church so that even today there are not quite 20 members. He called his students who have graduated from the Wisdom Training School that has been such a large part of his ministry. He wanted me to speak to them 6 times on the subject of church planting over two days. The first day I sought to lay the foundation of incessant preaching (2 Tim. 4:2), prayer, and the goal of discipling. The second day was more 'practical' as regards the task: the necessity of missions (Matt. 28:18-20), the planting of churches from Acts, and the raising of men to plant churches.



There was also a Q & A session, something I really like as it shows me where my listeners are spiritually. Here are some of the questions:

- From today's preaching about prayer, is fasting part of prayer? If so, do we have true and false fasting?
- Why did Paul circumcise Timothy and not Titus?
- How can I preach to one who believes that a person must be well materially, like David, Solomon, Job?
- Many pastors after preaching lead the congregation in a prayer of repentance. Do they have the same faith? Is it acceptable to be led in prayer by repeating?

Why does Mary pray for people? After the birth of Jesus, is she still a virgin and holy? Does this mean she has no sin yet she was a human being born of flesh?

Is it you to know that you are saved, or is it other people to tell you that you are saved?

Why is the message of the cross neglected these days? What contributes to that?

I am pastor in a Pentecostal Church. I am very uncomfortable with my people whenever I try introducing Biblical teachings. Can I start preparing to plant a reformed church or should I stay put?

If I plant a church is it a must that I just use hymns or can I introduce praise and worship songs? I ask because many reformed churches only use hymns.

You can find much detail on his Facebook page. Here is what he wrote on 10/5.

I can honestly say few meetings have been as practical, relevant and as immediately useful to our delegates like this CHURCH & MISSIONS CONVENTION closing today. I trust God will use these Biblical messages and challenges to spur the fledgling work of God among our people to greater usefulness. We are very grateful to God for the ministry of Keith Underhill and his willingness to come to us and be used this way. He laboured among our people for forty plus years, now he visits to water the seed, prune the plant and encourage the work.

Tonny Karwa is pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Kisumu. He is the young man I 'met' in the hospitable bed next to me in 2014. In this short time of less than 10 years he became part of TBC Nairobi, has gone through the TPC, and been the pastor in this church for a few years. It was a privilege to stay in his home for these days and be with his wife Susie, and two boys.



This is what he reported in his latest prayer letter about my four days with him..

Last Lord's Day, we had the special privilege of Pastor Emeritus Keith Underhill preaching to us both in the morning and evening from Ephesians 2:8-10. He sought to demonstrate the biblical balance between salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and the necessity of good works. We found this to be quite refreshing.

The few days he spent with my family were incredibly profitable to us all. He opened to me the Scriptures (1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 & 2 Timothy 4:1-8) and encouraged me to **Preach** the word in season and out of season, **Pray** at all times, and to be **Patient** always with everyone—what I refer to as the 3 Ps of ministry. He also spent some time with my son, Junior, reading for him the Spurgeon stories and teaching him the Catechism. Please do remember my sons—Junior and Levin—in your prayers that the Lord would save them.

Mwalimu further emphasised the need for the Reformed Church of Kenya to work together by deliberately promoting unity amongst us so that the Lord would continue blessing our labours with much fruit. There was so much to learn within that short time. Kindly pray that we would experience the blessings of Ephesians 4:1-6 in Kenya. [<https://www.gracebaptistkisumu.church>]

Others former TPC students I met with (and year they started the TPC):

- Joseph Mucheru (2010) was called to be one of the pastors in Miathene TBC, and Eric Kahure (2018) is church planting in nearby Meru town.

- Simon Ochieng' (2005) is a pastor in Funyula where he started a church some years back and is seeking to establish a firm leadership.
- Eric Ngala (2007) leads a church in Bumala and is seriously engaged in training for ministry, what he calls the NET Foundation. [See Facebook page of Eric Ngala Mutumbi]
- There were a number who have gone through the TPC at the Convention. Isaiah Juma (2010) is church planting in Chwele, having spent 10 years helping in Kasei (Pokot North). The GMA Church in Mumias itself has sent a number of its own men for the training, Noah Ikari (2013), Geoffrey Isambo (2014), Justus Olang'o (2018), Alice Oginga ((2019)
- Other leaders came to visit me while in Kisumu: Moses Miyawa of Othoo (2002), Ernest Ochieng' of Migosi (2000), Charles Abwok of Siaya (2007).

Pokot North progress

The roofing of the church building in Chepkinagh has continued to stall. For unknown reasons the brother acting as the contractor has not been able to return from Uganda to complete the work. Having to employ someone else is also raising the costs. Andrew needs much patience and wisdom in this situation.

The 20+ extra teachers that have been employed through TRAIN(Kenya) have been doing their work and this is a short report form the Head Teacher in the school at Chepkinagh.

We are doing well here at Chepkinagh. The Junior secondary has picked up well. We are really grateful for your support. May God bless you and all those who have sacrificed to help us. We have benefited in the following areas:

1. More learners have come to school.
2. The community have felt the benefit of your support and hence they have come to church.
3. The word of God has reached the community through their children who have received the word of God.
4. Children who have come to school have changed their habit of cattle rustling to Christianity, and hence a good future society.

The Book is finally out!!

Planted by the Providence of God finally came off the press last week. It is published by Broken Wharfe and you can go to their website for details. More important than anything is that the Lord will be pleased to use it in the work of His kingdom. The publishers have gone to great lengths to produce a very presentable book.

In Christ's service,

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Other websites

TBC Nairobi – <https://www.trinity.or.ke>

TPC – <https://www.tpc.or.ke>

TRAIN(Kenya) – www.trainkenya.com

