

Berean Christadelphian Assistance Fund

NEWS UPDATE

JULY, 1988



"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

REGISTRATION PROGRESS

KENYA:

The progress of registering our members with the Kenyan government continues, but very slowly. The Constitution, (or that part of it known to us as the "Ecclesial Guide") revised to conform to the peculiarities of the Kenyan situation, has been sent over to the lawyer in Nairobi. Communication is a slow tedious process, but by now we are used to that. However, in the meantime, life for our members in Kenya is difficult. It would appear that they are under the constant scrutiny of the authorities. No activity undertaken by them is "legal" - not even visiting amongst themselves. Any assembly of any nature by any unregistered group of individuals - even a simple family rendezvous - is strictly forbidden.

Needless to say, therefore, almost everything has ground to a halt, and is in a state of limbo until registration can take place. Some things can still be accomplished, but only with great care and planning by those over there who are familiar with the customs and conditions of the country, and particularly with the mentality of the opposition. We know that there are some "Judas's" among them (although not in fellowship) and that they are being closely watched; perhaps even their mail is scrutinized. Certainly this is a time of trial for them; some of the individual correspondence that does manage to filter through to us speaks of the

situation as being a great test of their faith, with some of the members showing signs of succumbing to the pressure.

The lawyer now has the necessary material and funds to proceed with the application. What are the chances of the application being accepted? About 50/50 we were told last spring, and the longer we wait, the less likely it will be that it will be accepted. The reason for this is largely the "Mwa-Kenya", a subversive militant anti government underground element that has used innocent and unsuspecting religious organizations as a cloak for its devious activities (e.g. smuggling weapons into the country).

Another reason is that Catholic and Protestant church officials tend to be very outspoken against restrictive and oppressive government policy in the area of human rights. Christadelphians, of course, do not become involved in such things, but the authorities do not realize this, nor do they take the time to understand. They lump all Christian religions together. They are most suspicious of any new groups that are unregistered, because they know nothing about them, and have no convenient means of monitoring them. They do not welcome or particularly desire to register any more "new" religious groups because they feel they have their hands full now controlling and monitoring the religious societies already registered.

We are not saying the matter

is hopeless; but the road is fraught with difficulty and we feel that the brethren and sisters in developed countries should be kept posted so as to be aware of the problems of their less fortunate brethren and sisters in Kenya regarding this matter. While the lawyer mentioned "chance", we know there is more to it than that. If God wills a thing to be done, then "chance" has no part in the matter whatsoever. Your prayers are urgently required. May God's will BE done.

There is an alternative which was suggested to us by the lawyer when we were in Nairobi last spring. This would involve registering a group in Canada as a non-profit charitable organization (e.g. the B.C.A.F.). Under this arrangement, the Kenya membership would be allowed to function as the foreign subsidiary of the Canadian parent organization. This might work, but it would be more complicated and time consuming; therefore we are considering it only as a last resort measure in the event that the application to the Kenyan government for registration is rejected. One of the side benefits of this alternative would be the ability to send used clothing and articles to Kenya duty-free, as it would be considered an internal transaction between a parent non-profit corporation existing in Canada, for example, to its subsidiary in Kenya.

One of the questions asked by the lawyer was whether there was any affiliation with any

other group or organization. We answered "no". The C.B.M. (Christadelphian Bible Mission) is active in Kenya, but it would not be correct to mention it as an affiliate because there is no fellowship between the two. The government would want both to operate under one registration, which would be a form of fellowship that would violate the consciences of the brethren and sisters there.

Of all the activities that are taking place with regard to Kenya, this matter of registration has certainly taken the spotlight in the long list of priority items. Again, your prayers, patience, and understanding are urgently required.

COMMITTEE REORGANIZATION:

CANADA:

After the spring visit to Kenya, some reorganizing of the B.C.A.F. committee in Canada was undertaken with bro Bob Philip assuming the duties of chairman & treasurer, and bro Ed Truelove that of secretary. There are plans to further expand the B.C.A.F. committee by adding three or four more members to serve initially in an advisory capacity in order to assist with some of the decision-making that has to be done from time to time. It is hoped that with this restructuring and delegating of duties the committee will be better equipped to oversee and co-ordinate the general operations and functions of the B.C.A.F. particularly with regard to Kenya.

The B.C.A.F. committee would like to take this opportunity to invite input from as many in the Berean ecclesial world as would like to participate by asking questions and offering suggestions, and anything else that may assist in giving the committee direction in these matters. Remember, the purpose of the committee is to assist you to help your brethren and sisters in need in other parts of the world.

SPIRITUAL AID & ENCOURAGEMENT:

KENYA:

Regardless of the difficulties, some things can still be done, and are being done; and it is our purpose to relay this information to you.

In December, a gathering was held for the brethren and sisters in one of the schools. The members were becoming spiritually depressed due to all the difficulty and problems, therefore it was vital that something of this nature be done. In the words of bro Phillip Wekati, "It is not proper to seek to improve our physical welfare on the expense of the spiritual which is

of paramount importance to us." The reports we have indicate that the gathering was greatly appreciated by all who were able to attend. It was held on December 16th - 20th, 1987. Estimated expenses - approximately \$1300.00 Cdn.

Topics included:

The Nature of Man; The Promises; The Kingdom of God; Baptism; Man Mortal; One True God; Whom We Should Marry; Should We Join The Forces; The Holy Spirit; The Sabbath; Fellowship; Resurrection and Judgement; The Return of the Jews a Sure Sign of Christ's Return.

These topics represent a wealth of spiritual information and encouragement, and it is wonderful that they are able to locate a haven of rest free from molestation in order to carry on such beneficial activities. We had been able to detect a note of renewed zest and enthusiasm in the writings of bro Epaphras as he reported to us on the activities of the gathering.

One other thing worthy of note under this heading is the completion of the translation of the "Instructor" into the Swahili language. Much thanks to brother Epaphras who did the actual translation, and to sister Donna Crownover for typing the manuscript. This has been a work that will, if Christ remains away, be appreciated over a period of many years by 100's of Truth-seekers in Africa. Hopefully, if God wills, more projects such as this can be undertaken in the near future.

REQUESTS FOR HELP:

AFRICA:

Such requests have been received by various brethren and sisters and no doubt will continue to be received. These requests come from throughout Africa, and may take the form of a request for funds, or for literature on the Truth. Sometimes there may be letters received expressing dissatisfaction with the manner in which things are being done. It is advisable to have these letters responded to by forwarding them (or copies of them) to the secretary. Requests for financial assistance will be considered by the committee and most likely forwarded to the committee in Kenya to look after. Requests for information on the truth will either be dealt with in the same manner, or else delegated out to committee members to look after; or, after perusal, they may be sent back to the brother or sister to whom they were originally sent, with instructions to reply. In any case, all letters will receive individual attention. If anyone would like to follow up on what has been done in response to a letter which has been received and forwarded, please do not hesitate to ask.

WELFARE ASSISTANCE:

KENYA:

Again, difficult, but ongoing. The reports we have received indicate that clothing, blankets, and food (e.g. sugar, salt, and cooking oil) are required for 11 individuals - most of them sisters. The figure quoted to provide this assistance is approx. \$3500.00 Cdn. per year. In addition, there is still a requirement to continue to supply the daily needs of the orphan children; and bro David Njoka, who is existing in extreme poverty in the Kitui area will require assistance if possible. Needs such as this are being given priority at this time.

Of course, a dark cloud constantly hanging over the heads of all our members is the threat of famine. The Kenya committee in their December report suggested, rightfully so, that something should be set aside for this possibility. They indicated that "the coming year is going to be a hard one; 48 packets of Maize flour should be purchased for every member next year". This would see them through the period of February through August when "famine is life". The required amount for this purchase is projected at \$2500.00 Cdn.

REPORT ON PROJECTS:

KENYA:

SANITATION: One of the major health problems in Kenya revolves around sanitation. This can only truly be appreciated and understood by those who have been there. In order to help our members overcome the problem, it was decided that some funds could be allocated for the purpose of building sanitary latrines. The latest report on this was that the cost per latrine would be about \$250.00 Cdn. No estimate has yet been provided as to the amount required. We would estimate that five would be a reasonable preliminary figure.

EDUCATION: Our reasons for establishing this fund are outlined in the 1985 report. These reasons, we feel, are still valid. This project has worked reasonably well since it was started. Response has been good. Unfortunately the administration of the school fees has been somewhat disjointed. We are attempting to remedy the reasons for this. At present there are 10 students enrolled in the plan. This is more than we had anticipated taking on in the first few years; however, once enrolled, it is difficult to cut them off. The cost per student varies from \$50.00 Cdn. for the lower grades of High School to \$900.00 Cdn. for the finishing grades, and averages out at about \$380.00 Cdn. Presently two students are attending college and the rest are completing high school. If this project becomes too heavy a burden on

the fund we will be forced to drop some students, unless we receive volunteers who would like to directly sponsor the education of a student.

WELLS: The amount quoted for the construction of wells including pipe to bring the water to the residence is about \$185.00 Cdn. Two of these wells have been constructed. At least three more are required.

FOOD: Some agricultural projects have been discussed, but at this stage there has been no commitment to any specific related project other than the occasional purchase of fertilizer and seed as required. Due to the heavy expense involved in starting up these type of projects we have shelved the matter for the present time, unless we are able to develop a more feasible program, or keep it on a very low scale. Perhaps as a higher level of education is achieved, and students are able to obtain better & higher paying jobs, they will be able to help to fund their own projects. That is, of course, the objective in view with the educational program, rather than pouring money into an expensive welfare program that is a never ending vicious circle that simply breeds more unproductiveness.

SEWING MACHINES: The purchase of two machines has been tentatively approved for distribution to two of the largest ecclesias. These machines are treadle driven and will be of great use and cost effectiveness in the manufacture and repair of clothing, as well as the possible earning of revenue by doing work for others. Total cost of the two machines is about \$900.00 Cdn. A normal projection of revenue would be as much as \$8.00 Cdn per day for each machine. Not bad in Kenya terms!

OTHER: There were many other suggestions which we feel should not be undertaken at this time. There were, however, a few miscellaneous items that are perhaps worthy of mention. Bicycles were said to be in need of repair. As we have stated in previous reports, bicycles are a major source of transportation in Kenya. The visiting of ecclesias by the committee brethren was not undertaken as planned due to bicycle failure. This can be very frustrating to them as they have no alternative means unless they have ample funds for riding the "mutatus" (mini-buses). Repairs were said to cost about \$25.00 - \$35.00 Cdn per bike.

Also of importance to their spiritual growth and vitality is the maintenance of the tape recorders, particularly the purchase of batteries.

Emergencies (sickness, funeral arrangements, and related transportation) were also given consideration. The cost per year to look after these needs for an 80 member group was projected at about \$1200.00 Cdn.

AS we have indicated several times, all of these plans revolve around registration taking place, which is, of course, thankfully in the hands of the will of our Creator. If such does not happen, we might try something different. It all depends upon circumstances in effect at the time. "Take no thought for the morrow" is our Saviour's advice. Today we will dwell on solutions for the problems at hand. The problems of tomorrow we will deal with tomorrow if it be God's will.

In the meantime, we will be pleased to answer any questions that you have regarding the efforts of the BCAF.

On behalf of the committee,

Bro Bob Phillip
Bro Ed Truelove

*The bridges we cross
before we get to them
are sometimes over rivers
that do not exist!*

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