

Dec 16, 1982

Dear Brethren and Sisters:

Loving Greetings in the One Hope of Eternal Life.

Before returning to America we hasten to prepare this report and send it immediately on our return so that the brotherhood may be informed of our findings and progress in Kenya.

Before we left for Kenya we were naturally apprehensive of what lay ahead, but as it was the will of our brethren and sisters that we make the trip our prayers were that whatever happened it would be according to God's will and our hand would be prospered if He decreed it to be so. This first report will be brief, but we will endeavour to give a longer account in greater detail at a later date.

Our first contact with with Bro Epaphras Wekati and his father, Bro Philip Wekati. After four hours discussion we were impressed with their sincerity, and their interest in becoming part of a fellowship that maintained the Truth according to that set down by the pioneer brethren. We discussed in depth their understanding of the Truth in regard to errors, doctrine and fellowship. They answered our questions freely regarding Kenya laws concerning marriage. At their request for fellowship into the Berean Body we could find no reason to withhold fellowship and therefore, extended to them the right hand of fellowship on December 5th.

You will be interested in knowing that these brethren and others were unhappy with their position long before anyone had contacted them from Australia. They were looking for answers to their questions and Bro Ivan Jackson in the course of his normal contact with these brethren was able to give them some hope that their problems could be solved. So after two weeks of travel, interview and teaching of the word we know that God's hand was at work for so many things happened that went beyond the bounds of coincidence.

One thing in particular stands out. We were to travel to Bungoma near the Uganda border and expected to drive ourselves. We were advised against this and were able to make an arrangement for the rental of a 9 passenger bus and an experienced driver for a week. The driver turned out to be a patient, competent and accommodating person who went out of his way to transport us and the brethren and sisters and friends to the various villages, where our work was carried out. The driving was over the worst roads and terrain imaginable and we feared for the condition of the bus many times. In our trip we covered approximately 2,100 miles from the sea at Mombasa to 30 miles from the Uganda border.

The results of our interviews and meetings are overwhelming. We now have accepted into our fellowship 17 brethren and sisters who gave a good account of their beliefs and reasons for requesting to be with us.

We examined five candidates for baptism, three of whom were subsequently immersed into the saving name of Jesus. These are included in the 17 mentioned above. One candidate awaits baptism, but we recommended the other give further study on a few points before arranging a further examination. There are also 41 "friends" (as they are described) who are candidates for baptism and wish to be examined as soon as possible. In addition 27 brethren and sisters who are presently standing aside wish to be interviewed with the view to become part of the Berean fellowship. Travel difficulties and a shortage of time prevented us from conducting more interviews ourselves.

We have stressed with Bro Epaphras Wekati that it is not right to leave those who have applied for an interview and baptism in this state, and they should be examined as soon as possible. We have provided him with funds for the senior brethren to travel and accelerate the interviews. In the interviews re baptism, we were pleased with the answers

received from those accepted and aside from the language difference in expression, the answers varied little from those given in our own countries.

There is a tremendous amount of work to be done in Kenya. The harvest is plenteous but the labourers are few. Travel between towns and villages is slow and haphazard. Communication is also extremely difficult as most have no telephone. Letters travel slowly within the country. There are many cases of extreme poverty with little or no money to travel. The brethren and sisters are not complaining, but they do ask for help.

You cannot help but be impressed with their warmth and desire to please. They gave us what they had much of—their love and respect. They want to hear more of the Word. They want to teach others the Truth. At every opportunity they talk the Truth to others and are proud to be associated with the Truth. The experience took us back to the days of the apostles in their efforts to preach the Good News. In all we lectured to 116 brethren and sisters and friends who are suffering from famine of the hearing the Word of God.

We have discovered that the supply of literature on the Truth available to the Kenyan bre. and sis. is virtually non-existent. We took with us as much as we could carry, but this was just a token as to what is needed. They are desperately in need of first principle publications for distribution to interested friends. They need the works of the pioneer bre., Bibles in the Swahili language and also English Bibles for their own development.

We are convinced God's hand is in this — He has heard their cry for help and the Berean Brotherhood has responded. We are grateful for the support of the brotherhood in making it possible for the three of us to make this trip. We now have the nucleus of a number of small ecclesias in Kenya upon which can be built a community of believers who like ourselves watch and wait for the coming of the Lord.

We recommend that the Kenya fund as we know it, be maintained for their assistance in providing the literature, books, some welfare and travelling expenses in the work of spreading the Truth. Another report with further information and recommendations will be sent to you as soon as possible.

Many pictures were taken and some conversations and music recorded. These will be, Godwilling, assembled so they can be distributed to the ecclesias that you be made more completely aware of life in Kenya. Bro Ed Truelove is compiling a list of names and addresses which will also be available to any brethren and sisters who desire to communicate with them.

In all, this has been a very enlightening and rewarding experience. We return with confidence that our Kenyan Brethren and Sisters are knowledgeable and sincere in endeavouring to uphold the Truth in its purity. As our Lord has blessed us in our feeble effort to serve Him so will he bless the effort of the brotherhood to assist them in Kenya.

Bre Philip and Epaphras Wekati send their love to you all in the Bonds of the Truth.

Your brethren in the Hope we share

Ed Truelove  
David Sommerville  
Bob Philip