

March 4, 1985

Dear brethren and sisters;

After the visit of bro Epaphras Wekati to Canada and the U.S.A. during the summer of 1984, sis Delma and I decided that if we were permitted the time, health, means and the opportunity, we would endeavor to travel to Kenya for the purpose of visiting and assisting our brethren and sisters there. Many have given expression to concern that we ourselves have felt regarding the state of health and well-being of the Kenyan brethren and sisters as reports of severe drought and famine in parts of N.E. Africa have reached our ears. We could no longer forbear as it became increasingly apparent that a move should be made to explore and investigate the situation in Kenya as to both the physical and spiritual need of the brethren and sisters, and as much as possible to provide immediate assistance to such needs wherever found.

We would like to make it very clear at the outset that this trip was undertaken on a strictly voluntary basis. Travel expenses including air fare, hotels, meals, etc., for sis Delma and myself were all personally funded; not from the general Fund and not from private donations that brethren and sisters entrusted us with to be used in Kenya at our discretion in connection with our purpose of assisting our members there. We feel strongly that these donations are for the brethren and sisters in Kenya and as much as possible should go to them for their benefit. The expenses associated with our travels to and from as well as during our visit in Kenya is our contribution to the cause and we expect no reimbursement.

While on the subject of donations, we would like to use this opportunity to express appreciation to all brethren and sisters who involved themselves in this work and displayed their thoughtfulness and concern either by means of the many generous donations sent to us prior to departure for the purpose of the assistance effort in Kenya, or by means of the time and energy spent in helping us to accumulate and pack articles, material, wool, along with ideas and instructions for sewing and knitting that sis Delma could pass along to the Kenyan sisters. We are fully aware that this has involved effort and sacrifice on the part of all concerned; and upon occasion there is the exceptionally touching and heart-warming situation where we KNOW that certain contributions represent great sacrifice over and above the call of duty. Consequently we felt a great burden of responsibility as we departed for Kenya bearing these offerings of love. We felt like labeling each and every donation "FRAGILE--GIVEN IN LOVE; HANDLE WITH CARE!" We endeavoured as much as we were able to convey this sense of responsibility to those were at the receiving end in order that they in turn exercise care and efficiency in their use of the assistance they had received.

DROUGHT CONDITIONS

On final approach to Jomo Kenyatta International (Nairobi's airport), it quickly became very apparent that drought was no longer a problem. As we descended through the overcast and light to moderate rain, we looked down upon a very lush, green, and wet landscape. Apparently the rains had begun about two months prior to our arrival, ending eighteen months of drought. These favourable conditions prevailed throughout our travels in that country as we experienced weather conditions varying from hot humid sunshine to torrential rain in violent thunderstorms resulting in severe flooding in some parts.

However, when a country has suffered through a drought such as Kenya has, it does not recover overnight. We observed crop storage facilities that were still empty, and new crop produce will not become generally available for use until May 1985. Livestock were also in very poor condition and it will take considerable time for any measureable improvement to occur in this area also.

We travelled among the ecclesias by means of a rented Toyota wagon, and where ever possible we put some of the donations to use in purchasing basic food supplies such as "ugali" (maize flour), margarine, cooking oil, etc., for distribution to the ecclesias. This operation was not without its moments of anxiety. Roadblocks were everywhere, and many cars and vans were stopped and their contents inspected for the purpose of discouraging the movement of food from one area to another, and particularly to stop illegal trafficking and blackmarketing of food supplies. In those areas where ugali was in short supply, a bag of ugali could be easily sold for several times its regular retail price. What we were doing was the very opposite of blackmarketing; we were buying the ugali at retail value and distributing it as a gift to our members. However, we were quite certain it would be difficult to say the least to try to explain this to very suspicious authorities; but time after time as we approached each roadblock we were allowed to pass on through with a nod of the head or a wave of the arm. It was almost as though they sensed what we were doing, and more than once we had the feeling of a guiding hand from a higher but unseen Source.

Besides food supplies, we also bought clothes (new and used--depending on price and quality) to be distributed to those in need. We did this as we were nearing the end of our stay in Kenya--after we had travelled around and determined the extent of the need for clothing. We purchased the clothes in Nairobi using some of the donated funds and the assistance of sister Mary Agnes Kariuki in the actual purchasing, the reason for this being that as soon as merchants see us "tourists" coming, the prices immediately increase substantially. Likewise with the food--we stayed in the car while bro Epaphras went inside the shop and did the bargaining. We would like to commend them both. They are fine individuals and both did a super job for us whenever required. After we left, bro Epaphras went back to the Bungoma area with most of the clothes (we had left some with sis Mary Agnes for her family as well as some for her to distribute to bro David Njoka at Kitui) which he distributed to those in need there.

POVERTY IN KENYA

We speak of the poverty in Kenya in distinction to the drought conditions because even in the best of times there is still poverty in the countryside of Kenya that would be difficult in the extreme for the lowest class citizen of Canada or the U.S.A. to comprehend. Drought simply makes it worse. And let us not forget that Kenya is one of the better developed countries of Africa! We shudder to contemplate the suffering that is being endured in Ethiopia, Sudan and other less fortunate countries.

Although there was little apparent evidence of malnutrition among our members, there was much evidence of poverty, very similar to that which we observed two years previous during our first visit. This time we took it upon ourselves to investigate some of the reasons for this poverty. We would like to share with you some of our observations.

(1) Population: If there is any basic common denominator at the root of all sources of poverty in Kenya this is it! In the habitable areas, particularly in the lush fertile countryside of western Kenya where the majority of our members are located, there is a population density as high as 1500 per square mile! Regardless of how much produce, resources, and land is available, by the time it is divided among so many people there is simply very little left for each individual.

Prospects for the future in this respect are dismal if our Lord tarries his coming. Kenya's population growth rate is a staggering 4% per annum--the highest in the world, we are informed! This means that, based on a present population of 17 million, Kenya's population will increase by an additional 7 million in the next 10 years; and we can be reasonably sure that within that time Kenya will likely experience an emergency situation of catastrophic proportions because there is simply no way that the land can provide--even under ideal conditions--for any more hungry mouths. Kenya's ability to provide for its present population is marginal at best. As we contemplate the consequences of a 4%/annum growth rate in Kenya we become very keenly aware of the need for Christ's return and the inauguration of Divine control of world affairs and government. It is the only solution.

It is an ancient tradition in Africa that still lingers in the minds of the uneducated that large families are a sign of wealth and prosperity and social standing within their community. Many of those in the country have not travelled farther than a few miles from their home, and have little conception of the nature and immensity of the problems being caused by large families. Therefore it would appear that in the meantime, if there is anything within the realm of man's ability to cope with the problem, education is the key. It is the means to broaden the perspective and the perception, to dispell traditional myths and pre-conceived notions; and thereby perhaps become the means of encouraging the new generation to voluntarily reduce the size of their families.

(2) Unemployment: Opportunities for employment in Kenya are remote for the uneducated and the unskilled. The majority of Kenyans--which includes most of our members--fall into this latter bracket (unskilled). There is no unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation, pension plans, or welfare to fall back on when out of work. Living in a city is an impossible situation for those who do not have employment; and even in the case of many of those who do, the earnings are insufficient for them to live in the city with a family to provide for. Many cab drivers and tour bus operators that we have talked to are in this situation. Although grade seven education is now mandatory and cost-subsidized by the government, very few can afford to continue beyond that level to grade twelve--the very MINIMUM required for most lower wage scale employment opportunities. The better paying jobs usually require grade 14, college, and/or specialized training. The following indicates some examples of wages and salaries relative to level of education.

<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>REQ'D EDUCATION</u>	<u>SALARY RANGE Cdn \$</u>
Elementary teacher	Grade 12-14	42.00-125.00/mon.
High School teacher (gov't)	College/University	280.00-450.00/mon.
" " " (private)	" "	350.00-750.00/mon.
Secretary (gov't)	Grade 14/College	125.00-200.00/mon.
" " (private)	" "	200.00-500.00/mon.
Truck & bus drivers	Grade 12-14	60.00-300.00/mon.
Clerks, Typists	Grade 12	75.00/mon.
" "	Grade 14	95.00/mon.
Messengers	Grade 12	45.00/mon.
Cab drivers	Grade 7	35.00/mon.
Paper Mill labourer	Grade 12	35.00/mon.
Farm labour	None	8.00-115.00/mon.
Road Const. (manual labour)	None	20.00- 25.00/mon.

In some of the more lucrative jobs a house allowance is included; other-wise room and board is extra.

(3) Simply presenting examples of wages and salaries has little or no meaning unless it can be related to the cost of living. We have also some examples in this regard, although it must be realized that in many cases it was difficult to arrive at an accurate and representative figure--prices varied depending upon location, circumstances, who you were, and

how much time one was prepared to spend bargaining for a better price.

FOOD: City residents buying food in the shops require at least 35.00/month to exist; 50.00/month for basic good nutrition; 100.00/month or more to enjoy the kind of meals that we are generally accustomed to. Those living in rural areas that have "shambas" (small farms 5 acres or less) on which they are able to grow their food can of course get by on much less outlay of cash. The produce, however, still has a value almost as good as cash because whatever is not consumed for food can be traded or bartered for other goods. In the country areas we would put the cost/value of food required for basic nutrition at approximately 15.00-25.00/month. These costs are all based on the amount of food required by one individual. Because of greater efficiencies involved, the cost of providing food to a moderately sized family would be 10% to 25% less per individual. Again, we must be careful how we use these figures--particularly in estimating needs and requirements for assistance, because of the regional differences and seasonal adjustments. It is interesting to note in passing that Oxfam and World Vision both estimated the cost of EMERGENCY RATIONS sufficient to sustain life for one person at 15.00/month.

HOUSING: For those living and working in the city or attending college the cost of an unfurnished 10'x10' room is approximately 40.00/month (often a small room like this is shared by up to six people!). Cost of renting a two bedroom house--unfurnished--is about 80.00/month; and a three bedroom house about 120.00/month. To buy a house in Nairobi one has to pay about 6500.00-9000.00; in Bungoma, about 1300.00. Homes such as these would be adequate accommodation, but definitely not up to the standards of the average type of houses that we in America are accustomed to.

CLOTHES: On this subject we had made some comments in our report re the 1982 trip which should still be applicable. Generally, we found clothes to be reasonably priced and of good quality with a good selection. If one cannot afford new clothing, there are shops in Nairobi selling a selection of used clothes, although apparently these are becoming increasingly difficult to find. Prices for clothes are approximately as follows:

	<u>NEW</u> (Cdn \$)	<u>USED</u> (Cdn \$)
Dresses	4.50 - 12.00	4.00/dozen
Shirts	4.50 - 15.00	2.50/ "
Slacks & trousers	20.00 - 40.00	4.00/ "
Corduroy slacks & jeans	not sure	4.50/ "
Jackets	" "	70.00/ "
Shoes	20.00 - 40.00	N/A

MEDICAL: Government medical treatment centers administer free basic and emergency treatment, but are extremely over-crowded. We have been told that even for emergency treatment one often has to wait in line for many hours, sometimes up to two days! Government Hospitals are located in the larger towns and cities, are generally better equipped with facilities and staff, cost only 1.50/day; but they are also hopelessly overcrowded--often two to three patients per bed. It would appear that they are also handicapped when it comes to treating some of the more serious and complex diseases. Medical attention such as we are accustomed to in Canada and the U.S.A. is available in the private hospitals located in the large cities. They are not crowded--the reason being that they charge 40.00/day, a rate that the average Kenyan can simply not afford. Sister Tunai Nanjala (the mother of the orphan children that are being supported by the Fund) apparently was admitted to a private hospital as a last resort before she fell asleep in Christ. Bro Philip Wekati had to mortgage at least a portion of his property before the hospital would admit her; and it was for the purpose of paying the hospital bill plus charges associated with the transporting of the body and the funeral that the additional 1000.00 was required in August, 1984.

TAXES: Income Tax = 10% of wages or salary; 5% with family of five or more.
 Hospital Tax = 2.00/month for those earning in excess of 80.00/month.
 Property Tax = approximately 2.00 per acre per month.
 Boarding School Fees = approximately 15.00/month. (Boarding schools are the rule rather than the exception in Kenya.)

Land values in the Kenyan countryside are estimated at about 425.00/acre, but there appears to be very little if any being bought or sold. Most Kenyans that own parcels of land ("shambas") have inherited them from their ancestors. Such would appear to be the situation with all of our members who are landowners. During favourable weather conditions an average "shamba" is capable of yielding a value of production in the vicinity of 15.00 - 20.00/month.

Most convenience items we found to be priced "out of sight". For example, electric kettles were 50.00 - 70.00; simple cassette tape recorders were 175.00 - 250.00. This seemed to be the rule for all appliances, cars, bicycles, motorbikes, etc. Used items, however, were reasonable.

In summary, for those fortunate enough to have lucrative employment, it is not difficult to enjoy a relatively good standard of living in Kenya. But, as noted previously, the majority of Kenyans (and this applies also to the majority of Berean members there) have no formal employment, and therefore little or no cash. While they may be able to grow their own food when the weather is favourable, it is a struggle if not impossible to scrape up the necessary cash to pay their property taxes, school boarding fees, buy clothing, and any of the other necessary amenities of life.

While on the subject of poverty, there was one incident which we witnessed that touched our hearts very deeply and became indelibly inscribed in our memories. On the occasion of the Sunday memorial service at Kimikungi the collection bag was being passed around and each member was contributing in the normal manner as able--except that one member's offering was TWO COBS OF CORN! It was a moving and humbling experience in the extreme. It was obviously all he had to give. I could not help but think of the widow's two mites; and at that point I felt that there was nothing in my possession that could be of greater value than those two ears of corn. Many times since, as the collection bag has passed from hand to hand, sis Delma and I have looked at each other in silent recollection of that occasion--and dig a little deeper into our wallets! What a way to be reminded of what giving is all about! "Freely ye have received, freely give." Undoubtedly the Kenya experience in its entirety has been beneficial for every one of us, causing us to become more keenly aware of the needs of others and of our own relative prosperity in the manner in which we have been blessed in the things that we have received, things which collectively we often take far too much for granted.

THE ORPHAN CHILDREN

One disappointment during our visit was that we did not have opportunity to meet the four orphan children of sis Tunai Nanjala that are being supported from the Fund. However, we were able to establish that they are receiving adequate attention and upbringing in the care of (if we understand correctly) a widowed sister whose own family has grown up and are no longer with her. They attend Sunday School at the Kimikungi ecclesia.

A priority in the purchasing and distribution of the clothing was to provide each orphan child with enough clothing to last each of them at least one year, after which if necessary a fresh supply can be purchased for them. Since returning home bro Epaphras has sent photographs showing three of the four children in their new clothes, as well as some of the brethren and sisters receiving clothing. We will attempt to photocopy these pictures to include with this report; the quality will be poor, but for those not having opportunity to see the originals it will be better than nothing.

Food for the orphan children will have to be bought and paid for on a continuous basis. We have established that 500.00/year should be a reasonable and sufficient amount to supply them with food, clothing, and medical attention.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Upon several occasions we have been asked by brethren and sisters, "Is there any way that we can help them to rise above this situation of poverty that they are in?"; or, "I would be willing to provide an additional quantity of funds if I could be assured that it would go towards a project that would provide them with something substantial; e.g., better housing, greater food production from their land, or anything that would help them to help themselves".

It is such questions and statements that has prompted this section. We can sympathize with the sentiments of these brethren and sisters and many others like them who no doubt are silently contemplating the same questions. We see the situation there and as long as we are in a position where we are better off than they we simply cannot turn our backs on them and take our ease. Their plight and our responsibility towards it brings very sharply into focus our Lord's words in Matt 25:40 "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me", or conversely (God forbid!), v. 45 "Inasmuch as ye did it NOT to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me".

We can also understand the theory and rationale underscoring these sentiments. The amounts that have been and are being sent over from the Fund are of sufficient quantity to enable our brethren and sisters there to be more comfortable within the parameters of a hand-to-mouth existence, but nothing more, except to provide them with the necessary spiritual aids. Within these limitations, the Fund has been accomplishing its objective reasonably well. To do more would be desirable, if possible. We were impressed with a quote in the Berean Magazine for October 1984, page 84, with regard to Jewish poverty 100 years ago. The lesson is applicable to poverty today in Kenya or wherever poverty is found;

"The Jews have learned the vital truth that their paupers must be taught the value of independently striving to maintain themselves. Their new generation of poor are furnished with the tools and knowledge of trade, or furnished with the first capital of commerce. The strong are organizing not merely to help the weak, but to enable the weak to help themselves. The trouble with our own charities is that they relieve but for the moment, and do not leave the sufferer in any better position than he was before."

This is still true of worldly charities and welfare funds in general. Although the Fund is not a "charity" or official welfare fund as such, the symptoms that burden it are similar. The need is there. It has been well defined. We cannot, dare not, do less than we are doing; but at the same time we must realize that there is no light at the end of the tunnel. The amounts that are being sent over are needed and appreciated; but these amounts are not enough to help them to improve themselves to the point where they could begin to support themselves in a better way of life. At this point we need to think about whether or not we should be disturbed by these limitations. There are several things we should consider.

(1) The costs and complexities of undertaking any type of effective project that would provide some measurable and immediate improvement in their living conditions would be overwhelming for a group as few in number as we are. Tens of thousands of dollars could be sent over there and it would seem to us to vanish into thin air with no substantial or apparent effect on their living conditions. This may be difficult for some to understand, but anyone who has been involved in providing aid to third world countries has experienced the frustrating feeling of inadequacy--regardless of the sums involved.

(2) There is a distinction to be made between "welfare" and "assistance". We must, under these circumstances, continuously remind ourselves of this and shape our objectives accordingly. We, as Berean Christadelphians, are not in Kenya as a "charity" or a welfare organization the primary purpose of which is to provide for the material needs of people.

Our primary concern and top priority has to do with the spiritual growth and development of the lightstand of the Truth in Kenya as represented by our brethren and sisters there. It is their salvation and the salvation of many interested friends towards which we must direct the greatest effort; then ministering to their physical and material needs becomes a binding scriptural obligation incumbent on each of us. While thus keeping things in their rightful place, we must be cautious not to put too much distinction between what is to be used for spiritual aid and what is to be used for material assistance. There is a delicate balance here. All the material aid in the world will do nothing for the salvation of one who is spiritually destitute; while a person suffering from malnutrition has great difficulty maintaining spiritual perception to things Divine. (see James 2:16)

(3) Having said these things, there are certain areas in which we could provide additional help and financial assistance. These represent rather small scale projects quite within our limited capabilities, projects that could be administered through the fund generally, or on a one to one basis either directly or through the medium of the fund sec-treasurer.

One such project in particular that we have given some thought toward and which has perhaps the greatest potential of long-term benefit has to do with the matter of education. For the sum of about 200.00 - 300.00 per year, one Kenyan brother or sister could be provided with the opportunity to equip himself or herself with the necessary qualifications and skills to obtain employment that would be lucrative enough to at least enable that member to be self-supporting; and perhaps even have some extra to put aside for the support of less fortunate members. A suggestion would be to advance the necessary funds to an individual on the basis of an understanding that upon obtaining a job after completing the necessary training the funds would be paid back at a reasonable and affordable rate in order that ~~the~~ another young member's education may be sponsored. If such a procedure could be made to work effectually, it would mean that every dollar advanced toward such a program would be almost perpetually productive.

At the present time many very intelligent and capable young people are forced to drop out prior to grade 12 for financial reasons. Their parents simply cannot afford it. The likelihood of any of these ever obtaining worthwhile employment is virtually nil. The number of brethren and sisters academically equipped to become self-supporting can almost be counted on one's fingers. To put it very bluntly, those members with grade 12 or less will likely continue to live in extreme poverty for the rest of their lives; and as long as a fund is maintained for the support of such as we have been doing, they will continue a dependency upon the Fund. Those who are able to complete their education and job training will likely not only cease to be a recipient of the Fund, but could very well themselves become contributors to the Fund; and perhaps in time, if enough are assisted in this manner, they would be in a position to organize their own fund to help care for their poor and carry on with projects such as this.

There are other small projects by which we could render tangible and meaningful assistance. More water wells are needed. In many areas the sisters have to walk a considerable distance to obtain water for washing and cooking. The water table is generally close to the surface and wells can be dug (by hand--pick and shovel!) and developed for a cost of approx. 200.00.

The grass-thatched roofs on their homes are becoming harder to maintain. Generally these have to be replaced each year and sufficient quantities of grass is increasingly more difficult to obtain as Kenya's population expands. The answer is the more permanent tin roofs which can be obtained for about 150.00. These tin roofs could also be useful in the future to collect rain water into storage tanks for a more convenient and sanitary supply of water, particularly where wells may not be viable. Obtaining good quality water is a problem in many parts of Kenya; unsanitary water accounts for much of the problems of sickness that they endure.

Such are but a few of many small projects that could be undertaken if and when the means and opportunity presents itself. Whatever is done in this regard must be done quietly and discreetly and as much as possible with fairness and equality to all concerned. Above all, we must at all times keep our objectives sharply in focus and continue to exercise caution and wisdom in administering assistance. We do not desire to create the situation where people in Kenya attempt to join our numbers simply for obvious material benefits.

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

From a spiritual perspective, things are progressing relatively well in Kenya; "relatively" because of the fact that there are many new members, the ecclesias are collectively young in the faith and inexperienced in matters of ecclesial conduct and organization, and it is understandable that minor problems will arise from time to time. The ratio of spiritually mature and experienced brethren to those that are "babes" in the Truth is even less than two years ago; but there is much potential--many members with the necessary ability and intelligence and knowledge. At the same time there is an ever increasing need for exhortation, instruction, and teaching of basic fundamentals to interested friends. As we travelled among the ecclesias we estimate that we talked and lectured to more than 300 people. At last count the number of Berean brethren and sisters in Kenya was 102. This represents a growth of 80 brethren and sisters in two years. The number of baptisms occurring each month indicates that this growth rate is continuing at an undiminished pace; and when we contemplate these figures along with the ever increasing number of interested friends and new contacts we begin to visualize and appreciate the great potential that exists in Kenya for the proclamation of God's Word, as more and more Kenyans perceive the glorious news of the Kingdom and the things of the Name as the ONLY thing in this life worth living for, and the ONLY real and lasting solution to all the problems associated with this troubled order. This must be the objective that has priority over all other efforts of material assistance. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God" must be the guiding principle in all things; all other causes must be kept in perspective.

Although there are still only a relative few brethren to carry the burden of the work, we were favourably impressed with their overall performance. The extent of knowledge and understanding of first principles continues to be at a very acceptable level prior to administration of baptism. We had occasion to witness one candidate for baptism requested to undertake further study on certain points before returning for re-examination. This was done without any prompting or advice from us and we felt that the incident was handled with wisdom and care with both the welfare of the Truth and the candidate in view. We were also impressed with the attitude of the candidate. She expressed that the Truth was the most important thing in her life and that she wanted her knowledge of it to be sufficient and correct. Based on this experience and others like it we are satisfied that those who are being immersed in Kenya KNOW the Truth; and relatively few baptismal candidates require additional study before baptism.

There are some things that we can do to assist in this work of the proclamation of the Truth in Kenya. Travel is still very much of a problem. If ecclesias and isolated members are to receive the necessary communication so vital to spiritual development and well-being, a number of brethren will need assistance in developing a method of traveling from one place to another that would be effective and inexpensive. Public transportation, for several reasons, falls far short of this criteria. The most popular method of conveyance in the Bungoma area is obviously the bicycle; and since the vast majority of our members are located within a 25 km radius of Bungoma, it is quite apparent that this would be the most effective and efficient method of enabling brethren to travel and visit among the ecclesias and isolated members. Bicycles cost very little to operate and maintain; they

to reassure all who may be thus concerned by positively restating our basic objectives, and attempting to clarify any misunderstandings.

The basic objective as stated in the 2nd Kenya report issued in the spring of 1983 still applies: "We do not believe it is the intention of the brotherhood to set up a formal organization to look after the brethren and sisters in Kenya that would involve a constant appeal for funds. What is important, we feel, is that everyone be made aware of the need that exists in Kenya, and that there be an informal channel through which all voluntary contributions from individuals or ecclesias can be collected and forwarded to the brethren and sisters in Kenya in as efficient and effective a manner as we are capable of. We would like to stress the term "voluntary", for "God loveth a cheerful giver." This is the basis upon which donations and contributions have been made to the fund in the past, and this should continue to be the basis in the future."

That objective remains as relevant today as it was then. The proposed change endeavors only to allow the Fund the latitude and scope to assist, IF AND WHEN NECESSARY, in other circumstances of need similar to that of Kenya, where a situation of need is reasonably beyond the ability of an individual ecclesia's ministrations. The Fund continues to operate upon a strictly voluntary and spontaneous effort. There is nothing official or formal about it. We have confidence in our own brethren to effectively, efficiently, and conscientiously administer the donations to the best of their ability and knowledge of the situations, using wisdom and discretion. Consequently we feel confident that we can assure the brethren and sisters that in this Fund there is available to you the most efficient method possible under this order of things to convey your gifts of love to those in need--spiritual or physical.

We would like to assure our concerned brethren and sisters that there are some things that this Fund, under the B.C.A.F. designation, is not, will not become, and will not do.

It is not, and will not become, a universal center established for general ecclesial assistance. The present system of each individual ecclesia's responsibility to care for its own needy members is scriptural and effective. It is not the intent of the proposal to change or in any way interfere with that, providing there are enough members in an ecclesia capable of providing the necessary support, and providing those requiring assistance are in reasonable proximity to an ecclesia. This system is, in fact, ultimately the goal we would like to help our members in Kenya to achieve--the ability to obtain jobs and become self-supporting to the extent that their own ecclesias may be enabled to provide support for their needy.

In the Dec 5, 1984 report brethren and sisters were advised that the B.C.A.F. would be assuming from the Houston ecclesia the rather heavy burden of administering relief to the Martinez family in Chile. Since then we have been advised by the Houston ecclesia that they would like to continue with the project. We readily agree that this is quite acceptable under the circumstances and take this opportunity to advise brethren and sisters that all donations toward the Chilean cause be directed to Houston as in the past. Any donations earmarked for Chile that have been received by the Fund in the interim will be forwarded to the Houston ecclesia. The B.C.A.F. will not interfere with or attempt to overshadow such ecclesial projects unless specifically requested by the ecclesia concerned to do so.

The B.C.A.F. also will not undertake the expenses of recruiting new members in other countries where there are no established Berean ecclesias. We feel strongly that any such application for a visit with a view to establishing a new ecclesia in a new country should be dealt with on an individual basis and be individually considered and approved by the brotherhood, very similar to the method and procedure employed in managing the Kenyan application. Thus the Fund would become available to a brother or sister or ecclesia in a country only after Berean membership has been established.

Whether we like it or not, we as a body of believers have to come to terms with the fact that with the introduction of members in Kenya and Chile, the Truth as held and maintained by the Berean fellowship has spread to include 3rd world or underdeveloped countries. This is a fact that we must accept as being apparently of God's will. Nor do we know what the future holds in this regard. It appears that there may be more such situations on the horizon, and if it is of God's will we dare not act any differently than we did in regard to Kenya. This opens up to the Berean fellowship an entire new realm of spiritual and material needs never before conceived of or experienced. Let us not be fainthearted, but in faith and conviction prayerfully rise to meet this new challenge in ALL its aspects.

As this work of the Truth expands and takes on international dimensions, we have to admit that there are an increasing number of situations that are beyond the capabilities of individual ecclesias to adequately provide the required assistance. In an international context, the formula of "the next closest ecclesia" becomes rather spurious and unmeaningful. Even in our own countries, on the "home front", in these worsening economic times in which we live, there may every so often arise a particular isolated situation where an ecclesia may find themselves financially inadequate to meaningfully assist a needy member.

The theory behind the proposal of the B.C.A.F. is simply to allow the Fund that we have to operate as it has done up to this time, but with the latitude to take these additional and diversified challenges in its stride, rather than the alternative of many separate and sometimes conflicting efforts of a piecemeal nature with all the associated inefficiencies. By having one agency to manage all situations that cannot be assisted ecclesially we are enabled as a body to function more efficiently, calling upon the resources of wisdom acquired through experience, and consolidated effort to bring about the greatest benefit with the minimum amount of preoccupation. The principle underscoring the motive of the proposal is well stated in Acts 6:2 "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables."

The message is clear. We must carefully avoid a dangerous preoccupation in these necessary but secondary matters of the Truth's work. We always run the risk of seriously overburdening ourselves in the administration of these things. On one hand this can occur by the tendency to go to the extreme and exceed scriptural teaching in developing a massive centralized welfare organization with, as one brother rightly stated, "a constant appeal for finances and quotas and endowments and assignments of wills, etc., to cover an accretion of established funds and self-appointed enterprises." To be sure, such is an excess that must be avoided. But on the other hand we can go to the other extreme where similar preoccupation would occur through a well-meaning but disconcerted, unorganized, and piecemeal series of efforts happening in many places at the same time, requiring much effort from many individuals attempting to address needs that are expanding far more rapidly than the ability to cope with them. This too must be avoided. Somewhere between these two extremes is the scriptural balance.

We are endeavoring to come as close to this balance as possible. We do not profess to have all the answers. We have attempted to at least define some of the needs and suggest some methods by which we can address ourselves to them. We need help--if criticism, then CONSTRUCTIVE criticism--well thought out advice and suggestions, alternatives, etc.

CONCLUSION (FINALLY!)

We apologize for being so long-winded. We did not originally intend this to be such a lengthy document. Yet it is difficult to say all there is to say in a short space. We hope this information will enable each of you to better understand the situation of our members in Kenya. They definitely need our support and our prayers. We urge everyone to in some way become involved--materially, spiritually, physically. It is a challenging and exciting work.

Yours in grace,
Bro Ed & sis Delma Truelove



From left to right: Bro Duncan Mululu, Bro Zadok Mabina, Sis Damara Simiyu, Bro Epaphras Wekati.

Bro Zadok Mabina receiving clothing on behalf of the Chenjeni ecclesia from Bro Epaphras on Dec 21, 1984.

In the background is the one-roomed house where they live.



These are the orphans with the clothes bought for them. (They are dressed in them, and carrying the remainder in the packages. The youngest is not in the picture.)



These are the brethren of the Kimikungi ecclesia dressed in clothes purchased from the donations sent over.

From L to R: Brethren David Simiyu, Gabriel Kuto, Duncan Mululu, Daniel Wasike, & John Wekesa.

(A similar photo of sisters has been sent but not yet received)

