
1998 KENYA VISIT

The seeds of my trip to Kenya this year were planted innocently enough one evening after Bible Class. Bro. Ed Truelove had come over to our house for a few minutes and the topic of the upcoming trip to Kenya came up. Ed was in the process of contacting some Bre. & Sis. to see who could make the trip with him. Sis. Christine wasn't really serious when she said that I would be able to do something like that.

Meantime, we were busy on our farm, finishing up harvest and preparing for the Winter, our conversation about Kenya all but forgotten. But about 2 weeks later Bro. Ed suggested I might want to keep my options open for making the trip. Now we had to think seriously about it. The trip would be an experience I would never forget, a chance to do something more meaningful than the everyday things of life, an opportunity to grow spiritually and to see life as it is for our Brothers and Sisters of Africa. At the same time I would be leaving my sister wife alone with our three little girls, our little herd of goats and various responsibilities of home and farm, with the coming of winter shortly, and whatever challenges that might bring. It was truly an act of generosity that she encouraged me to go ahead with it, knowing that it would mean difficulty for herself. I also knew that I would be leaving Bro. Gordon Jones with whatever outdoor work, etc., that was necessary on our grain farm.

So I owe a debt of gratitude to those who encouraged me to go and who helped out with things while I was away. As we went about our work in Kenya, I knew Bro. Dan Jackson had been right when he said if I didn't go I would wish I had, and if I did go I would be glad I had gone.

My education began as we made preparation for the time spent in the African environment. It became clear that life is much more fragile in their country, as I sat through an interview with the health nurse, who explained the many diseases and health risks that exist there, and the dangers that lie within their hospital facilities themselves. Without the faith that we have One to care for us as we go about His work, it might have been tempting to stay home at that point. But with that knowledge, and some advice and encouragement from Bro. Ron Crocker and Bro. Dan Jackson, who've made the trip before, I packed my bags and set off on Nov. 23rd with Bro. Ed & Sis. Delma. Our flights took us from Saskatoon to Calgary, then over the top to Heathrow Airport in London, England. We had several hours to wait there, as well as to transfer to Gatwick Airport for the final flight to Nairobi, so we took the London Underground to Piccadilly Circus, where we strolled through a few shops and markets, had a bite to eat, and then made our way to the British Museum where we had arranged to meet Sis. Kaye Yuen.

At the British Museum we toured about only a small part of the total area, taking in art and architecture from early Egyptian, Babylonian and Assyrian times. After a time we made our way out to Gatwick Airport and boarded our final flight, London to Nairobi.

Our flight to Nairobi was about the same length as the one to London, so we settled in for a long night. Fortunately, we had a little extra room on flight, so we took turns stretching out for some sleep.

It was morning when we taxied up to Nairobi Airport. We came through customs without incident and were met by Epaphras and Lucy, wife of James who drove the trip last time Ed and company visited Kenya. We also met a young

African by the name of David Gatua, who we learned later was to be our driver for the whole three weeks.

James is a man with lots of ideas. He struggles with the idea that we are not out to amass great numbers. But he did make clear that he feels the momentum of the Truth is lost here between the visits from North America, and he wishes someone could come and stay in Kenya for a while to teach the Truth. It would be a great work to do for someone with a good grounding in the Truth, and who had opportunity to go for a while.

One thing that struck me about the people of Kenya right from the beginning was to see the conditions that exist there, poverty, pollution, etc., and to see that almost every face had a smile or at least a pleasant look on it, hardly what you see when you look at most North Americans. But even more amazing is the interest shown in things of the Bible. Kenyans are taught the Bible in school, so to establish its' authority is not the great difficulty that it is in other parts of the world.

Wherever a telephone was handy, Bro. Epaphras would get busy and call people he knew and invite them to meet with us. Many of them were young people, 14 - 18 years of age. On day 2 we met a couple of young girls at the hotel and were treated to a demonstration of teaching like we would see many times in the next few weeks. Under the guidance of Bro. Epa, the girls went through a series of Bible quotations to show that our real hope is in the gospel of the Promises to Abraham. Their Salvation Army Foundations appeared to crumble in the light of scripture, and they left bearing a load of literature, with intentions of meeting us again. As they left we told them how nice it was to meet people so keen to know the Bible, and that most people in our part of the world don't want to know about it. They looked at us in disbelief.

Later that day Bro. Epa and I had a brief visit with Sis. Beatrice Wangila. Next day we got a welcome call from home. Sis. Christine told me the weather was warm. Nice to hear and know that at least the cold has held off for a while. Nice to hear her voice from so far away.

Sis. Mary Agnes and David (our driver) arrived later and we did the readings with them. Sis. Mary Agnes Kariuki traveled everywhere with us and proved a great help.

Later at the office of Planet Safari, the touring company that James and Lucy operate, we met James and his staff, and made our arrangements for the vehicle and were about to leave, when I had a unique experience. As we stepped out of the office, a well-dressed businessman tugged at my sleeve: "I hear you have come to Kenya to preach the Word. I would be very glad to hear what you have to say. Maybe you could save me, or it would be better to say you could give me the Word and the Word would save me!" He handed me his business card and off he went. Unfortunately, we didn't get to see him again, but left his name and number for Epaphras to follow up later.

On Saturday, Nov. 28th, we left Nairobi to go to Kitui, south and east of Nairobi, stopping along the way at a carving factory, where wood carvings of African animals are made and marketed. The country along the way was green, and the roadside marketplaces were full of fruit and vegetables. Bro. Ed & Sis. Delma told me that they had once seen this country in drought, dry and brown, cattle starving. Existence here is very much hand to mouth. When there is rain they eat

well; when there is no rain, they go hungry.

We spent a while at the home of Bro. David Njoka, then went back to Kitui Tourist Hotel. Bro. Epa wasn't feeling well, possibly malaria, so we decided on an early night. After supper we did our readings around the table at the Hotel dining room. We were joined by David Gatua and Josaphat, the man who ran the Hotel. He would like us to send him correspondence lessons.

Next day, we went back to David Njoka's house for meeting, and a short lecture, and also to examine his son Stephen for immersion. During an intermission the local children gathered round and treated us to some beautiful singing. We did the examination with the help of Bro. Epa's translation. It was a real experience in the difficulties of language, but we accomplished our task and started back on the long, rough road to Nairobi.

Monday, Nov. 30th, we traveled to Webuye, which would be our "home" while up in Western Kenya. Dave, our driver, did readings again with us, and we had a good night's sleep.

Tuesday we went to Bungoma. This is a town found only on a real good map, but Bro. Epa told us it is home to about 300,000 people. It is interesting to compare Kenya with my home province, Saskatchewan. Here we have a population of somewhat less than one million people; Kenya, which would fit into Saskatchewan about 3 times, contains between 35 and 40 million people.

At Bungoma, we had lunch with John Wafula, Arphaxid and Joan Wekati, toured Bungoma Hospital, met some more people, and saw the school there that our fund has played a part in establishing. They have a garden there, and a cow, in an effort to become self-sufficient. The school is supported by school fees and funds raised in the community as well. Bro. Epa took a few minutes to show us the records for the school, in the tiny office room.

The next few days were filled with visits to various Brethren and Sisters, the Kimikungi School, another one developed with the aid of our fund.

These are schools up to Kindergarten level and we were told that children from there seem to enter the next level at an advantage to children from other schools. They would like to expand this one to the next age group. The feasibility of this would need to be examined, but we do know that children are taught the Bible at school, so this provides additional opportunity for the Truth to be taught. Both schools are painted with the name Fana (B) Fana, meaning excellent, and B signifies Berean.

Wednesday, we went to Epa and Faith's house, where we were fed a beautiful meal, and had opportunity to arrange which talks we would cover at the upcoming Bible School in Siricia. We also went to where Bro. John Wafula and wife Carolyne have their house. They have a couple of projects on the go as well as their small farm in an effort to improve their life and support themselves and hopefully pass on help to others. John is one of the young brethren who was sent to agriculture college with the help of the BCAF, Arphaxad Wekati is another. These are young brethren with a good grounding in the Truth and should prove to be very helpful in the effort to promote the Truth in Kenya. It is a pleasure to know them.

There are always challenges in maintaining the Truth, and Kenya is no exception. We came to the realization that the name Christadelphian is not a very distinctive one there. We came across various members of the C.B.M.

(Christadelphian Bible Mission) there, who were seriously astray on fundamental doctrines, and we corrected some there who had been told that Bereans in North America are in fellowship with those who organized the C.B.M. The importance of keeping things on the straight and narrow, and in taking extreme care for the purity of the Truth is underlined when you realize how many people can be taught the Truth in that environment by one person or taught error if that person is not themselves well grounded.

On Thursday, Dec. 3rd, we went to the opening of the Bible School held at Siricia, to the north of Bungoma. Roads are extremely rough and, of course, transportation can be difficult to arrange, so the first day was just to get acquainted. It was a nice facility with rooms for people to stay in, a dining room, meeting room and meals were catered.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday were fully packed with Bible talks on basic doctrines. They were attended by people from many parts of Kenya; Busia, Bungoma, Kimikungi, Kimilili, Webuye and also by Steven Njoka and Philip Makwele all the way from Kitui, a long, hard ride. In all there were about 15 talks scheduled, delivered by Brethren Epaphras, John Wafula, Arphaxad Wekati, Philip Wekati, Humphrey Odaba, Ed and myself. Sunday we said goodbye to many and exchanged addresses. Correspondence is greatly appreciated by these people, even though they may have difficulty answering the letters from over here. We noticed that most of the news available in Kenya is internal as they have little information of world events. We were met that evening at our Hotel by Bro. Rodgers Musebe and his wife, Sis. Carolyne, also an enthusiastic young couple. We all engaged in discussion with a young woman from Bungoma who had showed up.

On Dec. 8th, we visited the Odiado Ecclesia at Busia. On the way we stopped in Bungoma to see the welding school that the brethren have set up there. They were making wrought-iron window frames, which looked quite nice. The object is to provide some revenue through school fees and also to make available some training for any in the ecclesia who are interested.

The trip to Odiado is a long one, rough roads nearly all the way. When we got there, we were taken into a small building which was their old hall. It's really quite a beautiful little building, made of adobe, with a metal roof, nice and clean and bright inside. We were treated to soft drinks and cookies, and to the sounds of singing, coming from the new hall next door. The new hall is made out of bricks made from the local red soil and held together with concrete. The metal roof is supported by well made truss rafters. Their singing was accompanied by a drum and an instrument that had rice inside to make a swishing sound. After the singing we listened to talks given by Bro. Humphreys Odaba, Epaphras and Ed, translated in a very dynamic way by either of two brethren who each had the name Francis. Epa spoke on the Holy Spirit, Humphreys gave a talk on the nature of man, and Ed's topic was "One Bible, Many Churches", to which he was asked to add some comment on the number 666. After the talks, and a bit more music, we were shown around the farm, where they grow an interesting mix of peanuts, kale, tomatoes, rapeseed (they eat the leaves), malise, etc. This farm has been looked at by the Government Department of Agriculture and held up as an example of good practices. Bro. John Wafula had accompanied us that day and was able to explain some of the crops and practices to us as we went along. Bro. Humphreys commented that they had in mind to set up a small irrigation system some day,

but for now they are content to busy themselves developing the well. The well was dug by hand to a depth of 70 feet and a 30 inch bore. They were waiting to get a metal casing for it, and then they will cap the head with concrete, chlorinate the water, install a hand pump, and have good water in the yard. When asked about the need for any further assistance to finish the well, their reply was "No, we will be able to look after that."

Another interesting discovery was that one of the sisters at Odiado was once in the Islamic faith. We discussed this with Epa later and he told us that she had married out of the Islamic faith, which is unusual for a woman to do. But we were surprised to find that we actually have more in common with Islam than with other "Christian" groups. This is because they believe there is one God, and also place their faith in the promises to Abraham. In fact, Epa says, many of them would class Christadelphians as part of Islam because of this common ground. They part with us in the application of the promises, since they believe they are to be fulfilled through Ishmael, rather than Isaac. They also recognize Christ, but only as a prophet.

We had been served a beautiful meal of chicken, ugali (from maize), potatoes, carrots, gravy and fresh oranges and bananas, and it was time to say our goodbyes. We started back to Bungoma, a long, rough ride at the end of a busy day, and Epa knew some "short-cuts". For the rest of the trip, "No more short-cuts" became the cry, whenever we set off for somewhere. Epa took a lot of ribbing during the trip, over such things as short-cuts, and all the "cousins" he seemed to meet up with.

On Wednesday, Dec. 9th, we were out visiting again, this time to the home of Manuel, grandfather of Bro. John Wafula. Manuel and Jerida Wanyama and family as well as his son Zadok and family (with the exception of John and Carolyne) had left off meeting with the Bereans. They were among those who had been convinced by C.B.M. that Bereans and Central were one fellowship in North America, and so had chosen to attend a C.B.M. ecclesia, which was closer to their home. We assured them that Berean and Central here at home are definitely not together, and that furthermore, many in Central in North America would be shocked at C.B.M. doctrine taught in Kenya.

From there we went to a small place near Kimilili, and met with Bro. Shawn Tyler and a small group he had assembled. Shawn seems to be a hard worker. He had some printed material to hand out with signs of the times on it, and three hymns which he has arranged, so they can be sung in Swahili and English simultaneously. Epa gave a talk, and fielded questions from the audience. Judging from the caliber of their questions, we could see that Shawn had been teaching these people already. As usual, Dave, our driver, sat in and listened; by this time he'd gotten pretty good at looking up the quotations.

Next day was Dave Gatua's birthday, so we presented him with a shirt and card which Kay and Mary Agnes had found in Webuye. Then we traveled for once on nice highway up to Kitili, where we stopped at the private hospital where Pinon Wekati works as a lab technician. It is nicely equipped and attractive place by any standards we saw there. We also met Tim Wekati there, and then we all went to where Pinon and his wife "Zippy" live, with their little 3 year old daughter. While we waited for the excellent dinner to be served, Epa began teaching a few people gathered there. As time went on, the room filled up. At highest count there were 14 of us in that hot, little room, about 8 X 10, which contained a bed,

couch, coffee table, two large chairs, two cupboards, and a few small stools. Everyone was intent on Epa's teaching, even David, who had heard all this many times before. He had told us that when he got back to Nairobi he would be asking James why he had known about these things for 5 years and not told him about it.

Back at Park Villa, I was able to grab a much needed shower. This was fortunate, since the local water system was shut down due to lack of funds for most of our stay there. This had also been the case at the hospital in Kitale for some three weeks. I got in the habit of checking for water and showering whenever there was water. They would haul in water on bicycles to put in the reservoir upstairs, so twice I ran out of water just as my shower would finish. We tried to catch our shower water in a basin, so we could reuse it for washing clothes.

At supper we finished Dave's birthday celebration with a cake that Kaye and Mary Agnes had asked the Hotel kitchen to prepare. This was obviously a thrill for Dave, and we all had a piece of cake and gave some to the Hotel staff as well.

Friday, Dec. 11th, we visited Makuma in the morning, where Steven and Peter Watiti and their families are located. Here we find that there is much need for work on several issues, notably fellowship. They sang a hymn from the C.B.M. book they had there. We found that the book contained many church hymns, which do not express properly the Truth as we know it.

After lunch we were happy to head up to Kimikungi where we met with a number of that ecclesia at Epa and Faith's house, for readings, refreshments and a reluctant goodbye to the Brethren and Sisters there. Three of the Sunday School there are ready to be examined, but we didn't have any time left, so Bro. Epa will have to see to that when we are gone.

Saturday, Dec. 12th, we were set to leave Webuye. Rodgers Musebe and his wife Carolyne came to see us off. Again, goodbyes were hard, we had enjoyed our visits with them very much. Kaye had engineered a meeting with Carolyne and the Hotel Manager about displaying some of Carolyne's art work at the Hotel.

Next day we took a drive down past the tip of Lake Victoria, past the tea plantations and out to Nakuru, where we spent the night. Next day was Sunday, so we made plans to have meeting next morning. Dave has a 3 year old daughter that lives in Nakuru with his mother, so he went off to spend the evening and part of next day with his family.

Sunday Dave had trouble with the Land Cruiser, so we waited much of the day at Hotel Waterbuck in Nakuru. After a while he showed up with his brothers and sisters and his daughter. Epa had some time to talk to the older ones about the Bible and then we headed back to Nairobi, to the Fairview, Dave back to work, Mary Agnes home to her family.

On Monday, Mary Agnes returned with some of her family and we sat for about 3 hours with them in the Hotel lounge and Epa spoke with them about the Truth. Later we went downtown to do a few odds and ends. We noticed that some of the stores were using gas lanterns for light even though they had electricity, so there was a good chance they had been unable to pay the electrical bill. This is the case in many businesses and even government departments in Kenya. The general consensus there is that Kenya is about to enter an economic depression. Our prayer is that our Brothers and Sisters there will be spared too much hardship on account of it.

Tuesday, Dec. 15th, we packed up our cases ready to go, then went downtown

to a large marketplace. Here you could buy lots of souvenirs, etc., all at whatever bargain you can drive with the proprietors. I bought a few small items, but I think Sis. Delma proved to be the most thrifty bargain-hunter of the lot.

Back at Fairview we had lunch with Lucy, and Wayne and Montana, her children and a niece and nephew, then when they left, one of the girls we'd met on our first day in Kenya showed up with 3 friends, and Epa set to work again. They had been studying with a Bro. George in Nairobi, whom we had not met. He was in the hospital, Epa thought it might be typhoid. I was feeling very much in need of some exercise, so Kaye and I went for a walk while Epa and Ed and Delma continued their talk with Stella and her friends. After we got back, Sis. Mary Agnes came along to wish us goodbye. She made acquaintance with the girls, so now she can stay in touch, then Kaye, Delma and I walked a ways with her toward the bus. She left instructions that she would meet Epa at Planet Safari next day at 11:00 A.M. "and not Kenya time either." Then, with a quick hug, she was gone. She had been our valued assistant and companion for all of our 3 week stay in Kenya, and we will think of her often.

Later, we met with James and Lucy who treated us to a meal at "Carnivore." We ate beef, chicken, lamb, wild boar, zebra, giraffe, ostrich, baked potato and dessert. It was quite an experience to end off our visit. We parted with James, Lucy and Epa in front of Nairobi Airport and boarded our flight to London without incident.

Our layover in London was much pleasanter on account of the company of Bro. Arthur and Sis. Barbara Hughes, Elizabeth Hughes, Bro. Philip Hughes and one of his sons, and Sis. Alison Hopper, who made a long journey up to see us at Heathrow Airport and spent several hours with us, making our wait much shorter.

We parted with our visitors and with Sis. Kaye Yuen at that point. Sis. Kaye had been a pleasure to travel with, as of course had all in our group. Each person has much to contribute to the whole effort in many ways great or small.

We arrived in Saskatoon to warm weather (well, sort of). It was about -5 degrees C (+19 F), but only stayed that way for a day or two before sinking into the -30 degrees C range (-20 F). We were home, in the land of the great white cleanser: winter. But our thoughts go back to our Brethren and Sisters in Kenya quite often, a land of gentle people, warm handshakes, and the remarkable absence of the profanity we can hear everyday here in North America.

It was an experience to remember for many many years. How can a person ever be the same after it? All the problems we are burdened with everyday in our lives and in the ecclesia, and in the fellowship are placed in perspective.

I'm thankful to our Heavenly Father that He preserved us from harm, provided us with such an enriching experience, and brought us safely home to our loved ones. I write this with the feeling that but for the grace of God, and an effort to keep our priorities right, we could easily see many of our Brethren and Sisters in Kenya enter the Kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and we ourselves thrust out. Let us never lose sight of the mark we are pressing towards.

Bro. Sid Jones
Richard, Sask, Canada

SUBJECTS SPOKEN ON AT THE SIRICIA BIBLE SCHOOL

1. Kingdom of God
2. Nature of Man
3. Fellowship
4. Signs of the Times
5. Bible our Guide
6. Promises to Abraham
7. Nature of Christ
8. Where are our dead friends/relatives?
9. Satan
10. Should we fear demons?
11. Hope of Israel
12. Baptism - is it essential for salvation?
13. The Devil
14. Resurrection and Judgment
15. Spirits and Healing