

# CORRESPONDENCE

## THE TRUTH IN KENYA

Dear Brother Editor,

Brother Philip Wekati's article about the beginnings of the Truth in Kenya reminded me with pleasure of that visit there which he recounts, and I hope the following recollections will be of interest.

In 1957 I was asked by the Bible Mission if I would go out to Africa to give help and encouragement to the two small ecclesias in Salisbury and Nairobi, and also endeavour to make personal contact with some of the natives of those countries who had been receiving Christadelphian literature and courses of instruction. This latter part of my commission led me to several places in Rhodesia, Malawi (Nyasaland as it then was) and Kenya - very much off the beaten track. In due course I found myself in Mombasa, the large Kenyan port on the Indian Ocean, and this little story will, I think, indicate how God sometimes works in strange ways in order to bring about results which will redound to His glory.

One of the people with whom I wished to make contact was a certain Mr. J. K. Brown, whose address as given to me was simply P.O. Vipingo, Mombasa. I discovered that Vipingo was a village some twenty miles to the north of Mombasa and that it could be reached by a bus leaving the City at 2 p.m., next day, 21 November, which was to be my last day in Mombasa. Partly owing to my own faulty memory, and partly to a misdirection, I caught the bus only by the skin of my teeth just as it was on the point of starting. It was already so loaded that it was doubtful whether another person could have been squeezed inside. Providentially, there was a spare seat, a very hot one, alongside the Kenyan driver, and thankfully I climbed into it, the only European on the bus. The journey was interesting, and we were soon passing through an area covered with tall coconut palms and banana plantations. We passed through one or two villages of scattered huts with mammies nursing their piccanninies on the doorstep.

Vipingo was reached at last and one of the first things that met my eye was the small thatched white-washed post-office. In I went. "Can you direct me to the house of Mr. J. K. Brown?", I asked the Indian clerk behind the counter. "That is me!" was the reply, and we shook hands as soon as I had announced who I was and what brought me to see him. He told me we would not be able to discuss matters until he had closed the office in about half-an-hour. Spotting a man of his acquaintance on the other side of the street he called him over and asked him to take me along to a cafe where we could get a cup of tea. There the Indian proprietor was curious to know what brought me, a white man, into this out-of-the-way village of Africa. That led, of course, to some talk about our Christadelphian Bible Mission and what we stood for. Returning to the Vipingo post-office my companion told me that he was a Salvation Army officer and his name was Philip Wilfred Wekati. Mr. Brown was awaiting us and invited us into his yard or 'compound' adjoining the office and shielded from the dusty road by a high brushwood fence. For about an hour, with Mr. Wekati sitting alongside, I ran through the chief points and difficulties arising out of the question papers he had received from the Mission. Our talk being ended all three of us resorted to the little cafe up the street to enjoy a cool drink, at the same time keeping a look-out for the bus which was to take me back to Mombasa. When nearly an hour had passed by, but no bus, my companions thought I had better try and get a lift, and presently I found myself sitting on the seat of a lorry alongside the Arab

driver and his mate, neither of whom could speak any more English than I could Arabic or Swahili. In due course I found myself safely back at my hotel in the city.

And now for the sequel. I regret to say that I did not hear anything more of Mr. Brown, and it appears that after a time he stopped taking lessons. You can, however, imagine my surprise and delight when, a few years after my visit to Africa, I learned of the baptism into Christ of Philip Wilfred Wekati, the one-time Salvation Army-officer, and that he had become a most zealous teacher of the Truth in Kenya. He has written telling me of the baptism of his eldest son, Epaphras, some few years ago, and of several of the other members of his family, and that in the region of Bungoma, near Lake Victoria, where he lives, there is an ecclesia of 23 members and many contacts who have applied for baptism.

Summing up, it would appear that it was by the merest chance that I caught that bus to Vipingo; that it was just a chance that Mr. Brown had no time to deal with me at the moment of arrival; it was just a chance that

his friend, Mr. Wekati, happened to be passing by; just a chance that this man listened to an hour of simple instruction on Bible teaching.

Chance, did I say? Perhaps, but with God over-ruling all the chances! Your brother in Christ,

PERCY LANDER