At the airport in Nairobi the lines to get a Kenyan visa were lengthy. I guess it was an hour before I paid my £30 and got out of the terminal with all my luggage. Faithful Murungi and a friend were waiting for me. They had picked up Stephen Turner at 3 p.m. in a downpour of heavy rain, flooded streets and very slow traffic. It had taken them 3 hours merely to get to Donholm, whereas 8 hours later it took us half an hour.

So here we are back on this familiar church compound, houses densely all around us, the road outside being upgraded well, but not where it meets, at the shops, the local busy road. There at the T-junction there are more huge potholes, and with the rain they are like little lakes, some so deep that cars are up to their axles in water. Navigating the roads is an adventure, cars coming from all angles avoiding these ponds. It is also quite cool. Stephen brought a pullover. I never thought I would need one and so Wednesday morning wore two shirts. It is fine. The flat where Stephen and I have our bedrooms has also been upgraded by the church. It is good. There is a common room with a three piece suite and breakfast table, and kitchen with a refrigerator, and a bathroom. Since last year the water cistern has been connected and the toilets flush when there is water in Nairobi! The wifi is working and so I am able to download all my letters and to send them out. I can pick up my *Times* on the kindle each morning. The three-piece is comfy. The staff  have done wonderfully in preparing for us, and it a real retreat to retire to, to rest and prepare and write and chat. It would be worth coming just to spend a week with lovely Stephen. The dogs bark in the night, but none are to be seen on the streets. The ibis fly overhead, very low, cawing very loudly, I mean *loudly*. A lovely sound, but there is none of that dawn chorus of songbirds I heard on Tuesday morning in London.

The lecture room is 20 paces away, surrounded by familiar books. I thank God for sustaining this witness for 40 years. We both and the 10 students meet together at 9 for morning prayer. One of the students in turn speaks to us. They vary in their gifts as they do in their subsequent praying. Some are particularly spiritual and educated men, graduates. Others are not. We sing three over-familiar hymns and whoever precents inevitably pitches them low. We wing in our boots, and then we share topics of prayer. There is a high tubular steel seat to sit on in the lecture room here which helps in the three hours of our daily sessions, but I occasionally wander around. Stephen is taking them through Gaffin’s New Testament theology for three days, and then he is to give them three days’ survey of Romans. After he speaks we all go down to the dining area and eat rice and vegetables and beef from 1 to 2 p.m. We eat it in bowls on chairs and talk. At 2 p.m. I am taking them through modern church history from the Puritans until today. I gave them all copies of Phil Arthur’s Banner of Truth booklet on why we should study church history and we went through it in 20 minutes. Then into the Puritans and their building on the Reformers, then an exemplary life of one Puritan, John Bunyan, and on to Thomas Brooks’ pastoral masterpiece on the “Precious Remedies” we have from the devices of Satan, and finally I ended by opening up the abiding value of the Puritans, and their understanding of preaching. The students ask good questions and venture wise opinions.

Wednesday evening we ate with Vincent and Maggie in their flat, 20 minutes’ walk away through packed streets and shanty shops, along very rocky paths above open drains – all so fascinating. I fancied some fruit. They live below the apartment where Peter and his family of three little children lived. He was not on the church’s staff but was very involved in the activities of the church and this suicide has rocked the church from the bottom to the eldership because it was so unexpected and he seemed a well-balanced man. We might have a meeting with the three elders in the next few days to talk with them as they are quite perplexed, even divided over the event. They had a day-long session on the subject Thursday. It is a very delicate and troubled time. They have Stephen and I just now and we are praying that we may help. Keith was on Skype advising them on this grief. There is a collection for Peter’s widow and so with some of the money given to me at Aber. and Ulster I gave as generously as I could to that fund then, to move on briefly, I spoke to one of my students today. He is getting married in August. “Where are you going to live?” “My father died and he left me the ruins of his old house with a rotted thatched roof. I am having to buy corrugated iron for it,” he said. “How much does that cost?” “Fourteen sheets will cost £48,” he replied, and so I was able to pay for his roof with that same money at that very moment. I need to go to the bank tomorrow or Saturday to change more of the sterling I brought here. The needs are vast, and I have not met any of the poor women yet. That will come on Saturday and Sunday.

Back in Vincent and Maggie’s we ate casserole, spinach, rice, avocado pears and some mango, delightful Kenyan food. Then we went down to the ground floor at 8.45 where another couple from the church live to attend a regular Bible study which was built up of ten younger men and women. Finally the discussion revolved around being a Christian in the workplace, facing the pressures of modern society. They shared some of their experiences. What a splendid thoughtful group. We got home - through the ponds and potholes - by 10.30. p.m. This was our first full day in Kenya and thus it ended.

So the pattern was established and the next afternoon I moved from the 17th to the 18th century and spoke of the evangelical awakening. I gave three papers, the longest on John Wesley because through both his family and through his wife’s there are the strongest links with the Puritan period. Some of their grand-fathers were at the Westminster Assembly and they were the finest of Puritan preachers, pastors and theologians. Then I spoke at the next hour on George Whitefield and then at the last hour on the man he influenced, John Newton. What wonderful men, and I laced the lectures with contemporary anecdotes and application. I guess, like many preachers, I find myself at home among these 18th century men and their contemporaries such as Daniel Rowland of Wales and Jonathan Edwards of America. I had material on Edwards, but could not fit it in.

We ended the day by going at 8.40 to the third elder’s home, to Eric, the butcher, who has just moved his business around the corner from the church so that he can have more time to give himself to church duties. He wanted to know what counsel we could give concerning Peter’s death.

We have an hour of devotions at the start of every day with the students who take it in turn to lead. After the hymns and message we are encouraged to share with one another our needs. There is a Somalia student, an older married man, an earnest Christian, but not his wife and family. Kenya has now changed the rules for refugees from Somalia. “You must return to Somalia,” they say bluntly, and they have closed the refugee office in Nairobi. He is between a rock and a hard place. He is now an illegal alien. If the police see him and catch him then they want money, or they throw him into one of the prisons which are not nice places. He cannot legally work and anyway jobs are hard to come by. If he goes home then his neighbours and even his family will kill him. His application to be accepted by the USA is somewhere in the system, another statistic. Poor man. I prayed for him at the prayer time this morning and I may be able to give him a little bit of help. What trials many people are going through – quite devastating trials, and I can lose a bit of sleep over a virtual sneeze.

Friday I spoke on the 19th century, on J.C. Ryle in this year of the 200th anniversary of his birth, Spurgeon (who was 18 years younger than Ryle and died 8 years before Ryle) and M’Cheyne. Then they ask curious questions, one has asked me several times about dreams. I told him that society here has not been ploughed enough by Scripture and so dreams are given too much significance, but, when the Bible goes UP then dreams come DOWN. I had told them of the brilliant dream of Newton’s when the man gave him a ring and he was persuaded by another figure to throw it into the sea and then the first person returned and after diving into the sea recovered it. Newton put his hand out expectantly to receive it but the man told him, “I think I will hang onto it and then occasionally show it to you. You might be tempted to get rid of it again.” God is able and better in keeping that which we have committed to him against that day. We ended the day with supper at Steven and Grace’s home – Steve is a pharmacist. Since we ate with them a year ago they have become the parents of twin girls who are now 7 months old. What a time the six of us had together. One is actually named Priscilla after Mrs. Underhill.

That is enough for this week in Kenya. It is as ever inspiring.

By Saturday we were half way through our time in East Africa. This was our day off. We missed the Underhills being here; they would have arranged some things for us, or asked if we wanted to do something. In fact we had no plans or desires. But no one asked us . . . anyway . . . though quiet, it was a really delightful day. There were morning prayers and then Stephen and I sat and talked and read until lunch at 1.20 eating the inevitable rice and stew with the men. The young men of the church worked through the morning cleaning, washing the floors and windows of the buildings and walk ways. Dust is everywhere in Donholm. Then our afternoon was identical, a nap, a read, and lots of happy conversations with Stephen Turner. He has been picking up and reading Sinclair Ferguson’s *The Whole Christ* which I have told him I have found so helpful. He has become engrossed in it while I was giving my lectures and then he asked me if he could have it – he’d buy it from me! Of course! There is no shop selling such books in New Zealand. I have given him my copy gladly. I must buy a third copy from Amazon as our Book Shop is having difficulty in yet getting hold of copies. I am captivated by a new book, by George Marsden’s *C.S.Lewis and* *Mere Christianity*, a survey of the book, its message and influence, how it came to be written and the reaction in England and then in the USA when it first appeared after the war. George and I were students together in Westminster ’61 through ’64. Because of reading and enjoying this book I went to the web to listen to the only remaining recording of C.S.Lewis reading one section of *Mere Christianity*. Originally the book was a series of six 15 minute broadcasts on the radio during the Second World War. His voice was fine; a little trace of his Ulster accent sweetening Oxford academic poshness.

At 7.15 when we went to Abi’s home, the recently widowed wife of Peter Kivati. We were led there by Victor, along Donholm’s rocky paths until we came to the flats or tenements and climbed up the stairs to her home. Poor grieving Abby has to raise three children under four, the youngest four months old. The boy is called ‘grace alone’ in their language and one of the daughters is ‘joy’ in that tribal language. There were her friends helping her with the food and looking after the children. I had an opportunity - when the children had been taken out and we men were with her - to refer her to some of the enormous comforts and hopes of the gospel in a fearful providence like this. She is remarkable. She looks 16 years of age, petite and composed. She did shed a few tears when I mentioned King David’s grief over the death of Absalom – ‘would to God that I had died instead of you.’ She wiped the tears from her cheeks. I told her I was being tempted to feel like one of Job’s comforters, and that the best thing for me to do would be to be silent and weep with her, but I dare not do that. We are told to comfort one another with words and I am under that constraint. There is no widows’ pension in Kenya. She will be helped by her friends and the church, and at this moment is dependent entirely on that, and the time will come when she will have to get a job. I have been given £100 from someone in England who heard of her plight and I have passed it on to the one gathering such gifts together. What an honour that she invited us to her home on Saturday.

I have never seen Trinity Baptist Church so full as on Sunday. Every seat taken at 11 a.m., the overflow room for mothers and babies also packed, and people standing or sitting outside, under the roof, listening. 200 folk plus. What a superficial contrast there also was with last Sunday in Newtownards F.P. church. There every woman wore a head-covering and every man a tie. In Nairobi scarcely a single woman wore any head-covering, and I was the only man to wear a tie. Part of the reason for that is my scrawny neck; being tieless does nothing for my appearance. My own ambience is with the folk of Ulster, but who is going to major in such points? The contrast in two grace-loving congregations was great.

So we first began here with the Sunday school; the lesson taught by Murungi was on the return of Christ. Then the service started at 11. The pre-sermon pieces went on too long so that I did not begin to preach until 11.55. We will talk about that with Murungi in the next few days. The edge is taken off the preaching when there are lengthy prelims whether they are 40 minutes of modern songs (not in Nairobi) or lots of words spoken in long readings, comments on them and prayers. Remember that in addition to this service about 100 of this congregation had already had 45 minutes of Sunday School. There was no stress on singing, in fact we sang just three hymns plus one in Swahili. A lot of words, exhortation and information. Another negative factor is a very large, high, dark brown pulpit behind which you see the head and shoulders of Murungi. The pulpit does nothing for him, in fact it dwarfs him and it must be put on one side and another shorter lectern be made for Murungi. Finally I got up there and preached on the privileges of being a Christian and engaged evangelistically with them.

While I was preaching here Keith Underhill was preaching in Aberystwyth. What a devilish attack was made on him and the work here in Kenya eight years ago, but he survived and the church more than survived, and it is flourishing. It has a buzz. Keith, who loves righteousness, was accused by eight men in a letter of committing some ‘great sin’ - but they refused to tell him or me what that sin was, and they still do! We do not know what it was, but the Lord stood by him, and the Lord stands by Trinity Baptist Church. And how can there be fellowship restored until that matter is dealt with? I learned for the first time that one man wrote that letter; the other men were named as identifying with his sentiments. What some of them are saying is that this is all water under the bridge, and that it must be forgotten and henceforth work together. But the accusations have created great divisiveness on so many levels. Cooperation can only exist if there is trust especially in what we do not know.

At 3 p.m. on my only Sunday in Kenya I spoke until 4 to sixty godly women on not worrying, from Matthew 6 and Philippians 4. I was very relaxed and believe good was done. Don’t you think that men are more prone to certain sins like violence and vain ambition and lust, while women are more prone to such a sin as that of worry? Abby was there and I had offered to give the notes on my sermon to anyone who thought they would be helpful. She found me in the church at the end of the afternoon service; “I have come seeking you out and to hold you to your word. I would like your notes on the sermon because the children got restless at the end and I didn’t hear the last part.” I was delighted and gave them to her most willingly. I can reprint them from the A.P. website. At 4 we had the evening service, and again what a growth in numbers, maybe 100 there with Stephen Turner preaching on John the Baptist and we even sang a Welsh hymn tune which they sang well. Back in my room I looked at my watch at 6.30 and thought, “4.30 at home. Oh, *Caniadaeth y Cysegr* is on” (the Welsh hymn singing programme). Even with my elementary I.T. knowledge I could tune in immediately and I am listening to it as I write these words. We ended the day at an old friend’s home for supper. He has even been to Wales a number of times (though not Aberystwyth) and helped Keith most - of all the men in the congregation through these crisis years. He encourages me very much on each visit.

The second half of our six days here began on Monday with Stephen lecturing on the first chapter of Romans while I taught them about Ichabod Spencer, A.W.Tozer and Arthur Pink. Why in the world should I teach them about Schliermacher, Barth and Tillich? Yesterday’s heretics. Then at the end of my lectures the customary debate took place among the students. Last year it was on our appearance on Sundays I think, while this year it was theological, that God wanted everybody to be saved. Much depends on the linguistic ability of these men in their second language and also on their theological grasp. It was a happy 40 minutes and we had to pass our judgment on their performance as to which side won. Some of them were witty and a number were not too good in putting their arguments forward and Vincent had to encourage them to do this more clearly.

In the night we both took one of the pastors, Vincent, out to a restaurant which was a mile and a half walk away on a mild evening, walking on those rocky pavements alongside the deep ditches, passing by lots of stalls. I wish I had worn sturdier soles other than my comfy slip-ons as these non-tarmac pavements are full of sharp stones and edges, but slip-ons are ideal here in another way. When we enter a house we take our shoes off and leave them outside. Stephen is a long time lacing and unlacing his boots, but he strides on ahead of me on the sidewalks as we visit folk. We enjoyed a few hours together with Vincent. He told us that Abby was having a bad day today. She has been sustained with such expressions of love over the last week. It is no wonder that she starts to measure the fearful providence of ten days ago and faces the challenges and uncertainties of the future. It has been another worthwhile day.

My next three hour stretch on Tuesday was all on Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, his life and lessons learned from it. Then the three elders came and we spoke for an hour about the death of Peter and the aftermath for them and the grieving church. Stephen was most helpful. He made the undeniable point that he must have been in deep depression to have taken his own life, or there was terribly guilt for some iniquity he had done. But we are fairly confident that there was none of that. His wife Abby did not think that he had depression, but we can hide our dark feelings from those who know us best. How could he have been anything other than desperately depressed? Abby does not want the emphasis on the wickedness of the action to tarnish her Peter’s reputation. Of course he was a good man, but he did a wicked act, didn’t he? All of us know that possibility.

We ended the day in Keith Underhill’s former Manse, where I have spent many days, there along a little path on the compound, where now Murungi and Charity and their three children live (the children are attending a Classical Christian School), we had supper there and a long happy conversation, Murungi full of memories of two years ago when he spent a month in the UK and attended the Banner of Truth conference and came to Aberystwyth for a week-end.

So the week drew to an end to the final Wednesday. We had water from the tap today, but we had no electricity. It is a good thing that these machines of ours all work on batteries. I was hoping that it would be restored by the end of the afternoon to recharge my Kindle for the flight home, but it was not. In fact I had to pack my cases by candlelight and the light of Stephen Turner’s torch. In his final lectures Stephen completed the 3rd and 4th chapters of Romans and felt they had gone well. I had another chat to one of the elders about the death of Peter and thought he was miles ahead of me in analysing it all and what needed to be done in the months ahead.

We had the usual stew and rice and I returned to my room to finish off the rapidly melting ice-cream at the bottom of the tub as the power is off. At 2 P.M. I spoke on the rise of the ecumenical movement and of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, and then I went on to tell them of the life and fabulous achievements of J. Gresham Machen. We had the customary photographs and I gave some help to a couple of the more needy among them especially the brother from Somalia. Maggie made us some chicken and chips and I packed and then was driven to the airport at 8, got there at 9, got through immigration and security and got the one remaining seat with extra leg space but in the centre of the plane, which is full. While I waited until 11 for the departure I could get my e-mail letters. Plenty of electricity there. So, off we flew to London,…