

## **POKOT NORTH VISIT SEPTEMBER 22<sup>nd</sup>. TO 28<sup>th</sup>. 2017**

It was a hectic visit because of the shortness of time available, but the Lord was kind in giving strength to accomplish it all, including preaching 19 times in the 5 days! The work is going ahead, but there are definite problems and weaknesses, as is surely to be expected. But overall it was encouraging to see the opportunities the Lord has opened up for the gospel. I visited with a member of TBC Nairobi, Gaitano Mbatia, and a young man from U.K., Benedict.

### **The churches in general**

There are now 14 places where worship takes place on a Sunday, most with a baptized membership. There are more than 150 who have professed faith in baptism. All but one of the churches have schools attached to them at various levels of development. The 3 places where there are fully developed Primary Schools with boarding facilities for those in Class 4 and above, and now a Secondary School (Kasei, Kamketo & Chepkinagh), have each a trained leader and a 'missionary' who acts as school chaplain.

One thing that 'remains to be put in order is the appointing of elders' (Titus 1:5). Although we officially started this work in Pokot North in 2001 there have been no leaders chosen by the local churches. One reason for the delay is that we prefer that there be a plurality from the start to try to obviate the 'chief' mentality and there have been difficulties in identifying more than one. But we have now arranged that the 3 churches with a trained leader have a members' meeting by the end of 2017 to go through the qualifications as set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 & Titus 1:5-9. Then in 2018 those who are put forward will be each discussed in the light of the Biblical data. The third meeting will be to vote and we look for unanimity.

In the light of there being so few trained leaders we are encouraging the brethren to set up a Bible School training in Kamketo which can be done in the Pokot language if necessary. There are men who could be very useful in the churches if there was such training, but they could not attempt the TPC in Nairobi.

Polygamy remains a huge problem. Sadly, we are perhaps the only church that will not allow a polygamous man to be a church leader. If one of the members adds a further wife, or becomes polygamous, that is automatic excommunication. Two long standing Christians have recently entered into polygamous relationships, men we had considered as reasonably mature so that they have acted as bank signatories for the churches in Pokot North. Almost all men who are converted in adulthood are already polygamous so there are very few men available to be leaders.

Through generous gifts we have been able to purchase 2 motorbikes, so that now each of the 3 trained men has one. They each have a number of churches to look after and this will help them to use their time more efficiently. Motorbikes are now the preferred method of communication off the main roads, where even tracks can be used. PRAY that these men may be faithful preachers of the gospel and that the Lord will raise up more leaders.

### **New churches**

**Kapenguria** is about 100 kms. south of our area of Pokot North, and is the main town for West Pokot County in which Pokot North is located. Here are medical, banking and tertiary educational facilities, as well as the County offices. We are praying for a mature couple to work in church planting here together with the few who presently gather each Sunday.

**Kiwawa** was started in 2016 and Andrew Chemolok goes to preach every Sunday [see 'Pray for Kenya' October 2016 (2)]. A few hectares of land have been given by the Administration for church and school facilities. Through contributions, we have been able to put up a building that presently houses the School for young children (ECD). This will gradually develop into a Primary School of 8 classes. This work is situated on the Ugandan border, and many Pokot people live here and into Uganda, and have shown interest in the church planting work.



A traditional hut and fireplace.  
The roof is made of mud as  
raiders would set fire to thatch.



ECD = Early Childhood Development

## Local Churches

(1) **Kasei**. Joshua Sitet (family photo to right) is the leader here together with 'missionary' Isaiah Juma. Their large church building is now useable although it clearly needs finishing touches. They want it used for both the Primary and Secondary students. We were able to give them a fairly substantial gift to help in this.







Kasei Trinity Baptist Church



Greetings circle after the service

## (2) Kamketo



Each of the local churches has the opportunity to minister to the students in the school we sponsor. There are 230 students enrolled in this Primary School of 8 classes. Mbati spoke to these upper class students on Matthew 7:24-27. 'Missionary' Patricko is here with his family, and is especially responsible for work amongst the Primary and Secondary students.

## (3) Chepkinagh



Wherever we are of an evening there is always an after supper 'devotion' and it is refreshing to gather outside in the cool. I preached on Luke 8:14 and growing cold in the faith. This obviously applies to some of the longer standing Christians, but there was the encouragement here seeing and conversing with some older men who have become concerned about their spiritual state. It is easy to overlook the older persons as they are illiterate.

This is the church house we are building for missionary Samuel Waswa. We provide the iron sheets, doors and windows, and the church members construct it.



Here is the house being mudded. It is possible to put a cement facing over it to make it more durable and nicer looking.



#### (4) Kwirir



This is a fairly new work [see 'Pray for Kenya' October 2016(2)]. We have helped them to put up a meeting place, which also doubles as an ECD. Unusually the teacher is not a young man – typically older men are illiterate.



William (left) is sent from Wasat to lead the Church, and the Mzee (right) is the ECD teacher. Both requested to be given a Bible in the Pokot language. I preached twice here, on the New Birth (John 3:1-8), and on the Christian Life (Ephesians 5:1-2).

#### (5) Wasat



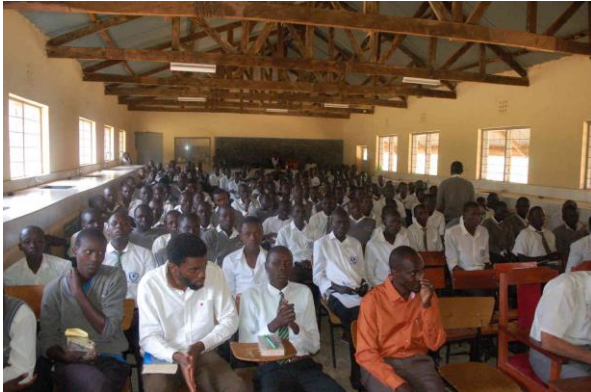
The Church at Wasat is most encouraging. We arrived late afternoon from Kwirir and first we had to feast on rice and chicken. At 9.30 p.m. they were finally ready and about 40 gathered in the classroom. I preached the same 2 sermons as at Kwirir. I asked why no one slept and how they were able to get up so early next morning and prepare tea and pancakes for us. 'We are used to being half awake in case of raiders descending on us.' And there are many widows and orphans.

### Secondary Schools

(1) On Sunday at 8 a.m. until 10 a.m. we had the opportunity to minister at the **Kasei** Boys Secondary School. Because it is a boarding school, all students are present. Our missionary/chaplain Isaiah Juma is in charge and usually preaches. I preached on the Rich Fool from Luke 12:14-21. Afterwards we had tea with the Principal in his office and an opportunity to challenge him with the gospel.



(2) On Monday morning we visited the **Kamketo** Trinity Girls School. The Principal (Mary) took us around to see the refurbished dormitory that we have enabled through donations. They have urgent need of another dormitory, and in the meantime are using the church building with church meetings taking place in the Primary School hall! The Constituency Development Fund have also put up 2 classrooms as they had promised, so the School is gradually becoming fitted out. In fact there was recently a big opening ceremony for the classrooms with officials right up to the Governor of the County present, where promises of more facilities were made.



Kasei Boys Secondary School students at their Sunday morning service, usually conducted by Isaiah Juma.



Kamketo Trinity Girls Secondary School students on Monday listening to a testimony and exposition about conversion.

(3) While at **Chepkinagh** on Tuesday we looked at the land the community have set aside, next to the Primary School, for a new Boys Secondary School. Andrew Chemolok has since phoned me to say that all stakeholders have now agreed that it should start in early 2018. Of course they want our help in constructing of 2 classrooms and initially supporting teachers. In the meantime they will use the Primary School facilities. There is the promise of an access road and bore hole to supply much needed water.

These are wonderful opportunities to bring so many young people from the area under the sound of the gospel. In each of the 3 places we have a chaplain, a man who has been trained in the TPC in Nairobi. We have emphasized that there is no point in sponsoring such institutions unless we take the opportunity to bring the gospel in them.

### **Prayer for Pokot North**

- ✓ **Labourers.** Please pray for the Lord to raise up a church planter for Kapenguria; for the plan to set aside Pastors in the 3 main churches in 2018; for the development of training local brethren in Kamketo.
- ✓ **Schools.** Pray for the new Boys Secondary School in Chepkinagh for 2018, for fruit from ministry in the Schools, and for the 3 Chaplains, Isaiah Juma, Samuel Waswa and Patricko Odhiambo.
- ✓ **Finances.** The Lord has continued to provide for 6 gospel ministers and the 40 teachers we support monthly. There is a need to increase the support in line with Government policy and the burgeoning cost of living. At the same time we are planning a long term exit strategy for which we need much wisdom, realizing that the flow of money cannot continue always.
- ✓ **Polygamy.** Pray for the leaders to deal decisively with those who fall into this sin and for young converts to be kept faithful to the Scriptures.