

## My First Time in Vote

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I set out to Vote for the first time on Monday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of October for a reconnaissance. The main objective of the visit being to see the proposed site for the construction of the proposed church hall, find out what materials we can and cannot get around the place and to confirm the availability of masons and other casual workers. This would help in planning and budgeting for the construction project.

Vote is a small village in Kitui County, Mutomo sub-county. It is located 7 kilometers off Kyatune, which is along the Kitui - Kibwezi road.



The journey from Nairobi to Kitui town was relatively smooth as compared to the rough ride from Kitui to Kyatune. The place was dry and the ride very uncomfortable but I was grateful to have gotten there safely. I was well received by Pastor Benson Nyamai who prepared me a place to sleep and kept me company through the evening.

The following day, we visited the site and deliberated on where to place the building, then left for Mutomo to find out the prices of materials. The materials were cheaper than we anticipated. Masons were also readily available, something I was very grateful about. Having done that I left for Nairobi.

## The Second Visit

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Having planned for the project with Pastor Murungi Igweta, and getting the finances required to start off the project, we left Nairobi for Vote for the second time on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 with brother Eric Kahure. He was very helpful throughout the construction project but above everything else I enjoyed and very much benefited from his fellowship. My stay with him was a period of nourishing each other. We talked about several life issues, shared our devotions and prayed together. We also shared in the frustrations, hardships and joys of the construction project as a whole.

## The Reception and Hospitality

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We were very well received by the members of the church when we visited. They had prepared a place for us to stay for the period that we intended to spend there. The women of the church were very kind to us and hospitable. They offered to prepare all our meals for the time we spent there. They did this with joy, every day, waking up early and walking long distances to come and prepare our breakfast, being there in time to make our lunch and even staying late to prepare our supper. We very much enjoyed their service to us which made us more productive on site. We felt much encouraged and challenged by their devotion to serve us.

## The Construction Project

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Throughout the project, the members of the church were very happy about the new building and we were very much encouraged by their joy. Pastor Benson especially was very glad and thankful, something he expressed every single day during our stay there.

The project had been scheduled to take one month to its completion which through the grace and providence of our Lord Jesus Christ we were able to achieve.

We are thankful that God answered our prayers by miraculously providing for all we needed for the success of the project, from holding the rains until we had purchased our materials, leading us to suppliers who gave us materials at good prices, to providing good masons and casual workers to work with.

The women at church played a very big role of fetching sand, ballast and water for us to last us the entire construction period.

Some of the challenges we faced during the project include:

1. Delayed delivery of the masonry bricks.
2. The foundation stones were hard to find, and when we did find them they were quite expensive. Their delivery was costly too.
3. Inconsistency of the masons. We worked with three masons throughout the project. Vote is a small village and lacks in skilled labourers. We suffered at the construction pace whenever a mason didn't show up for work.
4. Interruption of the work by heavy rains. There are times when the pour was too heavy that work had to pause for an hour or two.
5. Stubborn Masons. The masons at Vote aren't so skilled and disciplined. They are also not used to doing quality work. We had a rough time supervising and correcting mistakes. They required constant and thorough supervision.
6. Delayed delivery of the doors and windows.

We had hoped to complete the project up to painting the building, but we ended up incurring more expenses at some stages than we had budgeted for. We were not therefore able to complete the whole job as had been intended. We were not able to do the external wall plaster, the key and painting the building.



Below is a pictorial presentation of the project from the beginning to completion.







## The Church

Vote Trinity Baptist Church is a very small church, with only 4 members and less than 20 attendants on Sundays. In our stay there I noticed that all the church attendants were women. The four church members apart from Pastor Benson are ladies.



*On the Left, Pastor Benson and the Church members + attendants*

The church has only one mid-week meeting, the Friday prayer meeting.

Sunday worship starts at 8:00 am, Sunday school, to 9:00 am, followed by the main worship service from 10:30 am to 1:00pm. Various meetings/Bible studies are held in the afternoons sometimes then the people disperse.

Sunday school is attended by approximately 15 children (most of whose parents do not attend church). A lot of time is taken to teach them and to recite bible verses. To keep them coming throughout the year, the children are motivated by gifts given to them at the end of the year or after some given period of time. Most of the children leave immediately after Sunday school, at 9:00 am.

The main worship service includes singing hymns, choruses, prayers, reading of Scriptures and the preaching of the word. The preaching is expository and biblical. The members however should be encouraged to form a bible study meeting where they can fellowship together in the word of God.

### Challenges and Difficulties in the Church

The members and church attendants at VTBC have a very difficult time understanding the whole concept of Church Membership. The regular attendants consider themselves members of the church so when the pastor calls a members meeting, disputes arise in the church why other people



were left out. This is particularly difficult because the four church members happen to be relatives of Pastor Benson Nyamai. A church members meeting is therefore viewed to the rest of the attendants as a “family meeting” to discuss issues affecting the whole church. Much prayer and biblical council for Pastor Benson and the church at large are needed regarding this matter.

Other doctrines from scripture like secrecy in giving, rules for holy living, and doctrines associated with Baptists and reformation theology are not well embraced by the community at large. This has very much affected the members of the church. VTBC way of doing things seems to be so different from other churches which have greater influence in the area. This has resulted to losing some attendants to the other churches. It also weighs Pastor Benson down at times. We need to be in constant prayer for the church.

### The Church and the new Building

The Pastor, members and the regular church attendants were extremely happy about the new building. They expressed their gratitude in all ways they could. We could notice words failing them in trying to express their joy. They were thankful to God for answering their prayer, to the people who gave their finances towards the project, to TBC Nairobi for their constant prayers and to us for being there with them and helping out with the construction.

One elderly lady, for the Sundays we fellowshiped with them, kept telling us how she had faith that the Lord would answer their prayer and give them a church hall, but she did not expect it would be that big, and in her life time. The rest of the members had their stories to tell too about the old building verses the new one. We couldn't help but share in their joy and thank God together with them.

### The Congregation

The congregation consists of local villagers from Vote and a few women who walk several kilometers to VTBC. Their main economic activity is farming. The area is semi-arid, receiving rains either once in a year or not receiving any at all, at times for years. This leaves the members needy, at times relying on relief food from churches and other organizations. Congregants in the church have previously moved churches to either Catholic, GNCA or churches that give relief food often.

### The Pastor

Pastor Benson Nyamai is a godly man, a husband of one wife and father of 5 children. He is a very hardworking man, very committed to serving not only the members of the church, but also the community at large. His commitment to the church and love for the congregation is to be admired. During our stay there, his life testimony and actions were a big encouragement for Kahure and I to get involved in the service of God and of the saints. Through Pastor Benson, the Lord sure taught us that He never forsakes his own even in the hardest of times.

His commitment to the community too is great. He chairs or is part of several committees in the community involved with the wellbeing of the community at large.

For the upkeep of his family, he at times does the boda boda business.

He has big heart for children, orphans especially and is involved in the upkeep of several of them. He has a dream of putting up a children's home someday, should it be God's will.

## Conclusion

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I thank the Lord for the time I spent at Vote, serving and being refreshed in the Lord. I'd encourage TBC members to remember the saints in Vote in prayer, always praying for their strengthening and provision for their needs. I'd also encourage our involvement in their lives by calling them, visiting them and giving to them in times of need. We thank the Lord for all who gave, prayed and got involved in one way or another towards this project. May the Lord bless you all.