

An Update from the Dunkard Brethren Mission in Kenya

The Church in Ortum

*Ortum church building
(attendance around 60)*



The town of Ortum is nestled in a narrow valley at the foot of Mount Sondany. This mountain rises 4000 feet above the town and is covered with terraced fields. Here, local farmers are able to grow maize to eat and onions to trade in the town for other necessities. The valley itself is a contrast of lush green fields which are irrigated with water from the river and arid slopes where little grows except cactus and thorns. Ortum is an important trading center on the road north from the mission to Lodwar and Lokichogio. It has several boarding schools and a mission hospital.

A big challenge for this town and the surrounding area is how to get enough clean water for drinking and irrigation. This is true in many places throughout Kenya. Another challenge is growing enough food to meet basic needs, especially since many of the people have only small shambas (fields) where the soil is stony and poor. Opportunities to earn other income are limited.

The people of Ortum are almost exclusively from the Pokot tribe. Their strong tribal loyalty stems from

an intricate and difficult language and age-old traditions. They are mostly a pastoral people whose lives and culture revolve around their animals. Traditionally, the men were responsible to watch and protect the herds; while the women built and maintained the homes, took care of the children, and grew whatever crops they could. In Pokot society, the oldest men are highly respected as leaders and make many of the decisions for the clan and family.

Their unique culture and strong tribal loyalty have presented many challenges to establishing a church in the West Pokot District. For many, it is hard to identify with the body of Christ where there is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Christ Jesus. Men have long been detached from family life so it is hard to find strong family units with which to build the church. Polygamy is also a factor in some families as a man married multiple wives to care for homes in the various areas he visited to find pasture for his herds. As missionaries, we must be students of the people we preach to in order to understand how to apply the truth of God's Word to their lives.

The church at Ortum does not have a local national pastor. A missionary goes there each Sunday to help conduct the services. Several men from the church take part in the service which is often held in three languages: English, Swahili, and Pokot. Singing is a mixture of Swahili hymns and Pokot choruses.

The New Testament has been translated into Pokot, and we have begun reading a chapter each week as a part of the worship service. In this way, many who do not have a Bible or cannot read have a chance to hear the Word of God in their own language regularly. After the morning service, the ladies and youth serve a light lunch during a short break between services. The afternoon preaching service usually begins about 2 PM so we can finish in time for people to walk back to their homes. Many of them walk a long distance down from the mountain, and those who came from the mission have a 90 minute drive back home.

The church members are currently working together on rebuilding the fence around the church compound and are planning to plant maize and beans this year. This food could be used for the Sunday lunch and to help support some of the older church members.

Pray with us for the Church at Ortum. We desire to see lives changed by the Word and the Spirit of God. Our prayer is that transformed men can be trained and called to lead the church in the future.

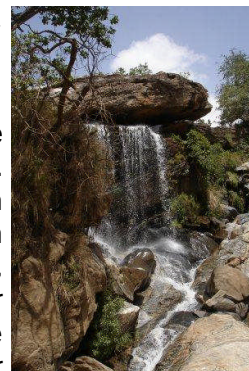
Brother Ray Noecker



Children's Sunday School class at Ortum

The Nation of Kenya

*A waterfall
in Kenya*



The nation of Kenya is located in the region known as East Africa and borders the Indian Ocean. The Equator runs through the nation. The land of the country varies greatly from semi-arid and arid areas to beautiful mountains and plains. Kenya is famous for its wildlife which includes lions, elephants, giraffes, zebras, wildebeest, warthogs, rhinoceroses, and hippopotamuses. Many people from around the world travel to Kenya for safaris to see these creatures in their natural habitat. Tourism brings in significant revenue.

Formerly a colony of Great Britain, Kenya gained its independence in 1963. Unfortunately, Kenya's leaders have exhibited many of the problems which are prevalent in African nations. A recent example was the presidential election of 2007 when the standing President Kibaki, who was apparently being defeated, announced that he had been re-elected while the votes were still being counted. Such actions typify the deep cultural problems of corruption, self-seeking, lying, and stealing. These sins are widespread regardless of social class or tribe. On the positive side, Kenyans generally are hospitable people. Receiving such kindness and generosity brings much joy.

The people of Kenya come primarily from more than forty native tribes. Each tribe has its own language and traditional customs. Most people do not view themselves as Kenyans but as members of their tribe. Historically, these tribes warred against each other. These longstanding animosities continue to manifest themselves in strife and crime. Tribalism is the loyalty to one's own tribe with the desire to harm those from other tribes. It is like an iceberg wherein a small part is visible, but the largest amount lies below the surface. When some problem comes to an area or the nation as a whole, tribalism erupts again.

Beyond the tribal tongues, the national languages are Swahili and English. Most Kenyans speak at least two languages fluently. Swahili is a language that has evolved over time. Its roots are in the area around Mombasa, the major port on the Indian Ocean. The language was originally used by traders; and as a result, it spread along trade routes. It is not as specific and clear as the English language. Swahili has assimilated numerous English words and continues to grow. Beyond the early grades, the schools teach all subjects in English except for Swahili language class. Some children in cosmopolitan areas are no longer being taught their tribal tongue. Instead, they are raised with Swahili. Over time, a common language may help to reduce tribalism as people will no longer be tied together by their tribal tongue.

Most of the people in Kenya are poor, but there is an upper class. The rich have acquired their wealth primarily through education (which leads to higher paying jobs), land, business, and/or corruption. Their needs are met. They can educate their children. They enjoy the finer things that money can buy. In stark contrast, the countless poor struggle daily for survival. Poverty is a complex social problem, but some general observations can be made:

- 1) Sinful living leads to poverty. The families of the drunkards and adulterers always suffer and continue to be in need.
- 2) Learning the wisdom of financial management helps people escape poverty and keeps them from returning.
- 3) Work is the way that people can meet their needs. When a person's willingness to work is coupled with a job opportunity, one can make progress.
- 4) Attempts to solve poverty which ignore these realities always fail. No amount of monetary gifts can change a person's heart, teach skills, or create wisdom.
- 5) The poor can be helped best by teaching them truth and wisdom and by helping them find or providing them with opportunities to work.

The majority of people still make their living from agriculture, mostly through subsistence farming. The staple crops are maize (white corn) and beans. Others include greens, onions, cabbage, mangoes, lemons, oranges. The raising of animals (cows, sheep, goats, chickens, etc.) is also common. The trades (tailoring, carpentry, masonry, etc.) also provide income for many. Lawyers, doctors, nurses, teachers, and other professionals receive relatively high pay. Many others seek to earn a living by buying and selling fruits, vegetables, or goods. It is disturbing to see the many people who either do not want or cannot find employment. The economy, especially in rural areas, seems very underdeveloped compared to Western nations.

Kenyans see education as the solution to life's problems. The fallacious belief that a child's life will be worthless if he does not get some type of post-secondary education pervades the culture. In some ways, education is the highest priority in life even superseding the provision of basic needs for the family. It begins with preschool which parents must pay for. After that, the government provides 'free' primary (grades 1-

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8) education. Parents are not required to pay school fees for primary education, but they must buy books, uniforms, and pay testing fees. Boarding schools are very popular. Parents who choose this option hope that the school will train, discipline, and guide their child. Students must pass national tests to advance to the next grade. Students who successfully pass the tests for grade 8 receive a primary certificate which is a prerequisite for secondary education (grades 9-12). Students may also choose a different track with a trade school. The government does not pay for secondary education. Providing school fees is one of the greatest challenges the average family faces. Successful completion of grade 12 earns a secondary certificate. From there, a student could enter a college or university, but the expense is out of reach for the average family.

Most Kenyans claim to be Christian, Muslim, or followers of traditional religions (witchcraft, worshiping dead ancestors, tribal rituals, etc.). The traditional relig-

ions use the forces of darkness. The schools offer a course in either Christian Religious Education or Islamic Religious Education. Christian denominations include Catholic, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Seventh Day Adventist... While multitudes profess to be Christians, the claims often lack evidence. Someone described the church here as being a mile wide but only an inch deep. The sins of lying, stealing, sexual immorality, and drunkenness continue to plague the church. Too many in leadership positions have the very same problems. Even so, the gospel of grace continues to save and transform those who surrender themselves completely through faith and repentance. It has been a great blessing to meet and to get to know men and women who are faithfully following Jesus Christ.



Kenya's Flag

Brother Steve Clapper

These are a Few of Our Favorite Things...

A concern that missionary couples have is how their children will adjust to the culture and the challenges of life in another country. Most children adjust well to the new experiences, new faces, and new places. There is a certain excitement in discovering another culture. I think that is the case with the "missionary kids" (MKs) here on the Makutano compound. Recently, I polled our MKs to see how they feel about living in Kenya. Here are some of their responses:



"I really like the Kenyan school schedule. We have a couple weeks off every few months. I like the food, too. Chapatis, mandazis, and beans are my favorites. I like having Kenyan friends, too."

Valerie Clapper, age 10

"I like going hiking on Pine Needle Mountain."

Michelle Noecker, age 11

"I like wading in the river at Ortum."

Juanitta Noecker, age 8

Playing with the Noecker girls is at the top of Monica's list of favorites. *"I like that it is hot all the time, too."*

Monica Clapper, age 6

"The food is really good here. My favorite dishes that the Kenyan cooks prepare are ndengu, ugali, chapatis, and greens."

Cherilyn Noecker, age 14



Kimberly likes giving out water to the community folks who come morning and evening. Both Kimberly and Veronica mentioned that they like to play with the neighbor children during school break.

So there you have it... a survey of favorites. I am thankful that God created children to be so flexible and adaptable. Despite the "upheaval" at times, they can feel secure in their parents' love and in the knowledge that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever; and He is Immanuel – God with us!

Sister Mary Lou Clapper

KENYA MISSION FINANCIAL REPORT

July 2008—December 2008

Income

Investment Income	\$ 13.00
Donations	\$ 24,534.00
Transfer from General Mission Board	\$ 20,000.00

Total Income \$ 44,547.00

Mission Expenses

Auto Fuel	\$ 3,779.00
Auto Maintenance	\$ 2,848.00
Bank Fees	\$ 121.00
Electric	\$ 1,897.00
Fixed Assets	\$ 144.00
Food	\$ 6,187.00
Guesthouse and Meals	\$ 1,211.00
Household Expense	\$ 294.00
Legal Fees	\$ 852.00
Medical	\$ 168.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 198.00
Missionary Allowance / Vacation	\$ 2,176.00
Repairs and Maintenance	\$ 2,125.00
Telecommunication	\$ 459.00
Total Mission Expenses	\$ 22,459.00

Church / Outreach Expenses

Medical Assistance	\$ 2,468.00
Relief	\$ 1,027.00
Church	\$ 674.00
Transport	\$ 679.00
Education	\$ 461.00
Total Church / Outreach Expenses	\$ 5,309.00

Total Expenses \$ 27,768.00

Running the Race

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." -Philippians 3:14

Are we pressing on? To some people running a race is very important. They work very hard to make sure they are going to win. We are in a race spiritually. How are we running?

I was made to think on this after seeing a young man training here. We can see this man running every day. He runs, runs, runs. He lets nothing get in his way. He is not distracted by things around him. He keeps his face forward and keeps on to his destination. The perspiration is pouring off of his face as he runs from one town to the next. He is determined to win something.

It made me think about the race we are running. Do some of us find ourselves standing still, distracted by the things that are happening around us? If our destination is heaven, we need to be pressing on. We need to be working toward that goal. Our whole life should be wrapped up in our pursuit of heaven. The blessing of this prize is that more than one person will win. Therefore, we should work at getting more people into the race, so that we can all receive the prize together.

Sister Cheryl Noecker

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If you would like to contribute to the Dunkard Brethren Mission in Kenya, please make your check payable to "African Mission Board" and send it to:

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