

TRAIN(Kenya)

Newsletter 3 – March 2025

Dear Brethren, Greetings in the Lord Jesus Christ from the trustees of TRAIN(Kenya). In January two of the trustees, Keith Underhill and Oliver Allmand-Smith, were able to visit Pokot for six days. The time was most profitable and greatly encouraging for many reasons. These four are particularly significant:

1. Cultural Impact

Polygamy has been a way of life amongst the Pokot people for generations. While we might think of the problem as primarily one of sexual immorality and unfaithfulness, amongst the Pokot the main issues are status and wealth. Each wife brings dowry and additional animals to grow the husband's wealth, along with increasing influence in the community. Since each wife has her own home, the husband moves from home to home, but the wealth and status are his.

For these reasons even young men who are committed to monogamy for biblical reasons are put under great pressure to comply with social norms. Often, the fathers of the young men refuse to support the concept of being faithful to one wife, even in the church context, which is one of the reasons why there have been so few "church" weddings. Another challenge is that of sexual activity before marriage, which is very common.

On previous visits we have been frustrated that even after more than two decades of gospel preaching, church planting and discipling, there has been so little impact upon this aspect of the culture. It was therefore a great encouragement to meet at least seven younger men who had married only once and were seeking to be faithful to their one wife. We learned about the challenges they had faced from family and community, but we also saw their determination to honour Christ and be faithful. It was especially gratifying to see one of the men, David Chemolok, showing real affection to his wife "in public", something that is almost unheard of! Indeed, you can spend several days amongst these folk and not even know who is married to whom – it's part of the impact of the polygamy on the culture. This is a wonderful answer to prayer, and demonstrates a significant breakthrough in terms of the impact that the churches are beginning to have in the community.



2. Ministerial Training

The need for basic ministerial training in Pokot has been acknowledged for many years. Only the three men (Andrew, Thomas and Joshua) had ever completed the TPC course in Nairobi, with many others attempting to do so, but being unable. The gap between their level of education and the classes in Nairobi was too great. The need was for something more basic in Pokot itself, to lay a foundation. It became clear during the visit that one of the reasons for delaying this had been a lack of confidence on behalf of the three trained men who would have to do the teaching – but by God's grace they took the step in faith and astonished themselves by completing the first course on Scripture just a few days before we arrived.



The course is based on the Wisdom Training Centre studies developed by Elly Achok in Mumias and elsewhere. Nine men completed the four days of study, and we met a number of them. Indeed, they were amongst the faithful one-woman-men that we have mentioned! This is some of the encouraging feedback from students concerning their learning at the Bible Light College in Kasei:

- 1) The Bible is basic for the Christian's life and practice.
- 2) All the books of the Bible have a systematic flow.
- 3) The Bible is God's word written directly (like the 10 commandments written by the finger of God) and indirectly.
- 4) The Bible is complete, with no space or room for addition or subtraction.
- 5) The Bible is God's word.
- 6) The Bible is a Christian's rule of faith and practice.
- 7) All questions must be under Scripture.
- 8) General revelation talks about God, while special revelation reveals God himself.
- 9) The Bible is God's breath.
- 10) God used men to write the Scripture.

3. Sacrificial Giving

Another area of concern has been the over-dependence of the churches upon the financial contributions received from us. While we are happy to give generously, and encourage our supporters to continue such giving, it is vital that the believers in these regions begin to take responsibility for their own financial needs over time. Until recently, there had been very little evidence of a "culture of giving"



amongst the believers. How wonderfully and how radically that has changed in Wasat.

In November there was a 'fund-raising' meeting and we were told that 1.5 million shillings was raised (£1 = 160 shillings). That is an incredible amount of money for a church that is mostly made up of women, and almost all of whom are illiterate. As hard as it was to believe, when we arrived in late January there it was, walls, roof, window frames and metal doors in place! We were told that the church members had agreed that the men would each contribute at least one cow (30-50,000 shillings), the women a goat (5-7,000

shillings), and the children a chicken. In all the years we have been involved in this work we have never seen such contributions. We here in UK did not contribute anything. May it be the start of a movement to take responsibility for the work of the Lord.

4. Gospel Opportunity

Towards the end of our time, while in Wasat, we met with some of the older men gathered in the centre of the village. One of them remembered Keith's first visit to the place in 2008, but he had forgotten the gospel message shared with him. There followed a wonderful opportunity for Keith to share the good news of Christ once more. How gracious is the Lord, that 17 years after this man had spurned the message of grace, the same messenger returned with that same message! He listened carefully and engaged well. Although nearly blind in his physical sight, this man had the opportunity to see with the eye of faith through the power of the gospel preached to him so clearly. Pray for his salvation!

