



The Tate's

Starting N.T. Churches in Kenya



Missionaries to Kenya, East Africa

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Pastors NOT Welcome (Let me explain)

If my monthly newsletters had a title (and this one does) I would entitle this month's letter "Pastors NOT Welcome". Well, with a title like that maybe I should explain. So, when I speak of pastors I am certainly not referring to American pastors. The American pastors I know are Godly, Christ-like and Biblical. They have the best interests of the church members at heart. They are concerned about the Kingdom of Heaven and furthering the cause of Christ. I'm not saying they aren't without their faults, but the ones I know are good people who want to lead others to a deeper relationship with Jesus. No, the pastors I'm talking about are Kenyan pastors. It seems whenever they show up, I end up with problems.

We have a group meeting in the house of a man living in a local village. The group is small and though we have been meeting for nine months it has been extremely difficult to get anyone to attend our meetings for more than about three or four weeks. Thus, the group has remained small. We have spent much time in the last nine months teaching them about salvation, baptism, following and loving Jesus, serving others and many other major Bible doctrines. We have also taught them to remain meeting in the house instead of buying property, we taught them how to remain independent, self-reliant and self-propagating,

and we taught them to use their offerings to help the poor, the sick, the widows and the orphans in their community. All along the group has agreed with all the teachings. They seemed to agree whole-heartedly. Then, a few weeks ago I walked into the house to begin the group meeting and there sat a man. I introduced myself. Then I found out he was a pastor. I groaned within myself. I knew what his presence in the group meant. It meant the whole tenor and attitude of the group would change. I knew that the focus of the group would change. I knew that problems would begin to occur and I knew exactly what those problems would be. It would involve money, sponsorship, buildings, quarrels and dependency. How did I know this? Because that is the way it happens every time a local pastor gets involved with our works here in Kenya.

The very first week the pastor attended our group meeting things began to change. At the end of the meeting I was informed why the group was small and why a lot of people were not coming to the meetings. I was told it was because people didn't want to meet in the house, that meeting in the house made them feel uncomfortable and not like a "church". I was informed they wanted to start looking for a place to rent for a meeting-place. I asked them where they would find the money for such an endeavor. The answer was "God will provide". Can you

guess who "God" is in this answer? If you guessed "Roger" then you guessed correctly. The next week I was informed that the group had been "given" a piece of property. I was taken to the property and shown how ideal it would be for a church building. I was shown where the building could be built, where the toilets would be put and how much extra land there would be for growing crops. When I asked how much this would cost I was told 1,000,000 shillings (you could probably actually double that to get the true amount). This was coming from a group whose weekly offerings amount to 50 shillings. To give you an idea of what this is like, compare it to a church in the States which collects a total of \$50 a week in their offerings who wants to build a church building worth \$2,000,000. I asked where they would get the money to do this. I was told "God will provide". Again, substitute "Roger" for "God" in this sentence and you will understand what they really mean. Where will this end? I have a prediction. It will end with quarrels, struggles over who gets what share of the pie, resentment of me for not giving them what they want and ultimately the death of the group. Is the pastor the culprit or the symptom? I don't know but either way *He's NOT Welcome.*