



The Tate's

Starting N.T. Churches in Kenya



Missionaries to Kenya, East Africa

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A Trip to Kasei

For the past many months I have been praying for an opening back into the land of the Pokot people. The way had been closed to me for a long time but God may have opened a way back. The Pokot people live north of Kitale. I don't want to call them primitive, because they aren't. But these people certainly live "off the map" and "off the grid" in a land that is very hot and very dry. Oppressive even. This month I took my tent, my sleeping bag and my backpack and took the 7 hour drive over dirt roads (aka - paths) to the Pokot town of Kasei. I spent 5 days there talking and walking with Daniel Loyelel and with many of Daniel's people. Daniel is a 47 year old pastor of a Baptist church in Kasei. Daniel was saved and baptized under the ministry of a pioneering Baptist missionary to Pokot back in the 1980s. When the missionary left, Daniel decided to take up the call to his own people and plant a Baptist church in Kasei. He had no building and no money so he decided to place 60 stones on the ground under a tree for people to sit on while he preached the gospel. But nobody came. The next week, again, nobody came to hear the gospel. So Daniel began to pray, "Lord, turn these stones to people" and continued that prayer. In a couple of weeks he had 10 people under the tree listening to the gospel. Now, Daniel's church under a tree has a semi-permanent mud building to worship in and 200 men, women and children worshipping in it. But even beyond that



"Downtown" Kasei

Daniel and his people have seen the need to send the gospel to the rest of his people. They have sent their own men across the nearby mountains and have started a number of other Baptist churches in other villages. They are truly carrying on the great commission there from Kasei. Given Daniel's start under the tree I am reminded of John the Baptist's words to the Pharisees, "God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones" (Matthew 3:9) and Peter's message to the pilgrims of the Dispersion, "You also, as LIVING stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5), and also God's message to the Israelites of his power to "take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26). What a great and awesome God we serve who can "turn stones to people". To walk and talk with some of these folks and discuss their changed lives and their glorious Savior was a joy. Let me briefly share a few entertaining stories of my trip.

Story #1: My new Pokot name. So, I was given a Pokot name from some of the Pokot people. My new name is Limakou. It means "a bull with spots on his head". When I asked why they had given me that name all I got in return was chuckles and laughter.

Story #2: The coffee experience. I had taken with me some instant coffee in the off chance I might have an opportunity to enjoy some caffeine. So my new Pokot friends heated some water over a fire and asked if they could drink coffee with me as they had never tasted coffee before. I enjoyed my instant coffee from a rusting tin mug but my Pokot friends didn't enjoy it quite as much as I did. They kept sticking out their tongues and frowning after each sip. Then they would add more water and sugar in an attempt to dilute and sweeten their nasty drink. I guess coffee is an acquired taste and the Pokot haven't acquired it yet.

Story #3: The jimmy-rigged vehicle. Some friends of mine from Kitale

graciously agreed to drive me to Kasei in their Land Rover. We were 4 hours out into the "bush" when the vehicle broke down. The missionary way of repairing vehicles out in the bush can be quite comical. It took twisty ties, binding wire and lots of electrical tape and sweat but two hours later we were back on our way.



Enjoying a warm Coke with new friends

Story #4: The ride home. My ride home from Kasei was in a public vehicle shuttle. It left Kasai at 2:30am. I was so tightly packed into the shuttle with other people that I couldn't move. The driver drove and bounced us over the path faster than a whirlwind. The person behind me vomited 7 times. The 3 chickens in the back squawked the whole time. The drive blared the radio the entire trip on WKMC, the home of Africa's greatest hits. Every song sounded exactly the same to me - Thunderous beat, repetitive riffs, indecipherable lyrics. Oh, well, at least I made it home safely.

Now that I'm back home the challenge will be to see if I can work with the people of Kasei. I want to help them in their ministering and their walk with Jesus but I also don't want to get in their way. They would like for me to return and teach them in various Biblical seminars. They also begged me to bring Julie and Chloe with me but I just don't see how that could be accomplished. I will pray and ask God to show me what he would like me to do and if the way is open.