

JOSHUA & RUTH BARRON

MISSIONARIES TO THE MAASAI OF KENYA

PO Box 59322
00200 City Square
Nairobi, Kenya
East Africa

Email: joshua@stzenosgarden.com
Website: www.maasai.net
Phone (from US): 011-254-733-790810

August 2008

Dear Friends,

For those of you who haven't signed up for our email updates, it has been a while since we last wrote. Much has happened since then with meetings, teaching classes, curriculum research and writing, and family life. Scattered throughout has been a lot of questioning and learning.

WHAT ORKUAK DO WE WANT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO HAVE?

In March Joshua had the opportunity to share our work with and to seek input from the MAC. The MAC is a group of Maasai church leaders who meet twice yearly with our missionaries to help us stay advised of the needs of the churches.

Now those of you who are married know that it takes more than a year to know your spouse; indeed, it takes a lifetime! Joshua and I still have so much to learn about our brothers and sisters in Kenya. As we thought about what to ask of these leaders during our time together, we decided to ask them about the character (*orkuak*) they want their young people and children to have. Joshua says that when he asked these leaders this question, it was as though a switch had been turned on and a current of excitement swept through the room. It was the



Ruth, Bob & Shari Barron, Joshua, Alitzah & Hannah & Eliana. We were blessed by a visit from Joshua's parents in April. These grandparents were happy to meet their new granddaughter! Bob and Shari are also members of West Hills Christian Church in Bristol, VA-TN.

right question, and they had much to say on the issue of character. Joshua, himself, was very excited when he returned.

In April we spent some time talking with Dan, our team leader who has worked here for 20 years, about our ministry. We discussed how much we can reasonably expect to accomplish this year and what type of curriculum will work within this culture. We talked about how to select a translator and testers for the material. Dan stressed the importance of using a translator who is fluent in the language, but also that we should be versatile in the language so that we are able to check the translation to be certain it has the correct meaning.

WHAT IS THE ORKUAK/ORREKIE OF THE MAASAI CHURCHES?

In May we were given a four-hour time slot at a Maasai Pastors' Fellowship meeting to discuss the curriculum needs of the churches. Joshua and I spent a great deal of time talking and praying about how best to use our time. We decided to ask them about the character (*orkuak*) and trail/conduct (*orrekie*) of the Maasai churches. We

introduced the question by reading three of the letters to churches in Revelation and introducing our home churches from the States. We pointed out that, like people, churches will have character with strengths and weaknesses. As we develop curriculum, we need to know the Maasai Church with all her strengths and also her weaknesses. We left that meeting with copious notes from over twenty pastors, from several regions, about their congregations. There were some weaknesses which were mentioned universally, such as the giving of tithes and offerings. However, there were also areas where one pastor would say his congregation was weak while another would share with us that his congregation was strong, such as evangelism or interdenominational fellowship. It will be a tremendous resource to us in curriculum writing to learn from the strengths of some to help shore up areas of weakness in others.

WHICH PARTICULAR LESSON OR PART OF A LESSON WAS MOST HELPFUL TO YOU?

The following week, Joshua taught a class on spiritual disciplines at the Narok Bible Training Institute (NBTI). During the months leading up to the class while Joshua was working on his lessons, I took on the work of praying for him and for the students. Joshua was helped by the writings of many teachers of the church both past and present, including one of CMF's former missionaries, Paul Highfield, who wrote a small book in Maa on spiritual disciplines. As Joshua thought about what the "Spiritual Disciplines" are, and as we talked and prayed together, we decided to add "Family" to the list of what is normally considered the "Spiritual Disciplines." The Apostle Paul included right family relationships in his list of qualifications for elder and deacon, and right family relationship is not simply natural; therefore, we decided it must be a discipline. The students and the principal of NBTI cited the lesson on family as one of the most helpful and needed teachings in the churches. Joshua ended up spending more time on this than he had planned, since the students had many questions.



NBTI course on the Spiritual Disciplines in March.



The Discipleship Training School; Francis Yenko (the director) and his family are on the right.

"DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE READING?" ACTS 8:30

One week and a major car repair later, we spent a week teaching at a Discipleship Training School (DTS), modeled after a YWAM (Youth With A Mission) ministry. The DTS is a 10-week program that focuses not only on imparting knowledge, but also on faith-in-action and on attitude, with a heavy focus on humility and servanthood. We were there for the second-to-last week and taught on Inductive Bible Study (i.e., how to read the Bible with understanding). We were all very blessed by our time there. The Maasai couple who direct the DTS have a four-year-old girl and a two-year-old boy with whom our girls greatly enjoyed playing. I was able to minister to one of the students, a woman who knows English. Joshua found Francis Yenko, the director of the DTS, to be a wonderful friend and of similar heart to himself. The class went well as Joshua taught the students what questions to ask of Scripture and how to use various resources such as the Maasai Bible concordance. He taught them how the Spirit can truly bring the Bible to life for them as they listen and search the Scriptures.



Westley (a Kalejin) and Patrick Sayielel are volunteer mentors at the DTS. Patrick is also an elder in his congregation and the chairman of the MAC.

WITH SO MANY SUGGESTED CURRICULUM PROJECTS, ON WHAT SHOULD WE FOCUS NOW?

As we have thought and prayed about how to focus our work, we have decided to concentrate on two or three projects for the remainder of the year. Joshua has quite a bit of work done already on "How to read and understand the Bible," from his section on "Eating the Word of God" at NBTI and from the course at DTS. He is putting his work into the form of a curriculum for congregational use, and has begun working with a translator, James Ole Sakat. He is really enjoying working with James and pouring over the translations with him. His versatility in Maa is growing as he works on these projects.



Jackson, a Samburu student at the DTS, honing his Sunday school teaching skills, working with Ruth. Here, Francis Yenka's daughter Yamat is about to be Moses finding the burning bush, while Alitzah and Hannah are practicing being sheep.

A second curriculum on which we are currently working is for young people, a teaching on respect. As we talked with various Christian leaders about orkuak, respect (enkanyit) was mentioned repeatedly. Many of the young people

have been to school, while very few of their parents have. Many of the Christian youth have non-Christian (and practicing pagan) parents. What does it truly mean to respect your parents?

HOW CAN WE BEST TEST OUR MAA MATERIALS?

One big question we have had is how to test our material. In Maasailand, Sunday school is for children. For youth and adults there are only occasional seminars, the Sunday morning sermon, and the offering and communion teachings. Many of the young people have to work herding the animals and don't have a lot of opportunity

for other activities. As we have thought and talked with our community regarding this issue, we have decided to give the lessons to a couple of the local teachers. They will welcome young people in the surrounding villages into their homes for teaching and fellowship. The local church is very excited about this idea.

PRAYER AND PRAISE

As we have been working on curriculum for the Maasai believers, we have put together a list of the prayer needs for this work and its effectiveness for the churches in Kenya. If you would like to commit to pray for these weekly, please contact us (email: joshua@stzenosgarden.com; address: Joshua & Ruth Barron, PO Box 59322, 00200 City Square, Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa) and we will share these needs with you.

All of you, please

- *pray for us to have wisdom and insight as we minister and write curriculum, that all materials we produce will be used and meet real needs in the churches, helping to edify the Church and to make disciples and to glorify God.*
- *pray for James ole Sakat, who is our primary language consultant for our projects.*
- *pray for us to persevere in faithfulness.*
- *pray that we will have sufficient support.*
- *give thanks for God's provision! In spite of a support short-fall for the first half of this year, we have had sufficient funds on the field to live and minister.*
- *give thanks for God's provision! West Hills Christian Church is replacing our derelict computer (which is plagued with many problems). Pray that our old one will hold out until we receive the new one, and that the new one will be safely delivered to us.*
- *pray for us as we make plans for our coming furlough, January-July 2009. We will need to find a place to live and a vehicle to drive that can hold all five of us. We also need to work out our schedule of visiting with our supporters.*
- *pray that God will continue to prepare the hearts of the yet unreached Maasai for the Gospel and to strengthen the hearts of the Maasai believers.*

In Christ,

Ruth for the Barrons





Friends: Yamat, Alitzah, Melita, Hannah, Eliana.



Planning committee for new evangelistic outreach in the Talek area, a joint venture between the local churches, the CMF clinic system, CMF-Maasai missionaries, and the Connection Pointe Christian Church.



Return Service Requested

317-578-2700
 INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46250-6020
 PO BOX 501020
 CMF INTERNATIONAL
 Joshua & Ruth Barron

CMF International

Nonprofit Org.
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 Permit No. 2975
 Indianapolis, IN