



## Expanding Christ's Kingdom in Kenya

17 December 2020

### 2020 — What a Year!

Dear friends,

In the words of Scottish poet Robert Burns: *The best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gley*. 2020 has indeed been a year of best laid plans going astray! As we mentioned in our [mid-year update](#), this year started out so full of promise, before being derailed by the pandemic. But we have made adjustments as best we could and continued with our work.

### CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT / MATERIALS PRODUCTION

We are now looking at publication date of early next year for the Maa language introduction to the Bible; the good news is that the editorial process has finally resumed. In the meantime, work has progressed on the much-requested new edition of the Maa “red song book.”



“Nix” Lekorere with his son

I (Joshua) have become friends with Nicholas Lekorere, a Samburu pastor who shepherds the Marala AIC (Africa Inland Church) congregation. We have been discussing our *Enkinosata Oroi le Nkai* (Eating the Word of God) curriculum. This month I'm sending him some copies of the books (some in Maa and also a copy of the Swahili edition). Nicholas is excited to begin teaching these lessons in the congregations in the Maralal area.

Toroyian Sinkua (whom some of you know as James), a Maasai pastor from Oletukat and the administrator of MIEA, has written a book entitled *Leaders Hunt With Lions*, to teach Maasai church leaders more effective leadership strategies. He has asked Ruth and I to serve as editors for this project. I (Joshua) am also editing *Opened Eyes: Seeing Jesus and His Kingdom*, written by Victor Bajah, a Nigerian church leader.



Toroyian Sinkua



Victor Bajah

## CONTINUED LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Gaining facility in Swahili has remained a goal. I recently was falsely accused of fluency in kiSwahili. While I might find that an undeserved compliment, it is encouraging evidence that we are making progress. I continue to use Maa weekly, and have just had an academic paper, “My God is enkAi,” exploring the ways Maasai talk about God accepted for publication in the *Journal of Language, Culture, and Religion*; it explores the ways Maasai talk (and think) about God.

## PLANNING FOR 2021

In the past couple of months, we’ve resumed virtual meetings with James Sinkua and Francis Yenkeo about re-starting courses for MIEA (Mission Institute East Africa) and MDTI (Maasai Discipleship Training Institute). Now that the government has relaxed pandemic restrictions to a degree, I’ve been able to resume meetings with Benson ole Kurraru, our AIC partner who preaches at the Oreteti AIC congregation and overseas AIC church planting efforts in surrounding Ololaiser area here in Kajiado County. (Whereas the US is divided into states overseen by elected governors, Kenya is divided into counties overseen by elected governors.)

As the pandemic is not yet past, and as Kenya, globally speaking, is as likely to be as far behind the curve in having access to vaccines as they’ve been ahead of the curve in addressing the pandemic so far, Ruth and I are exploring the possibility of offering some of our courses in an online format, at least until normalcy returns.

## JUST LIFE

We’ve been able, as a family, to get out of the house a few times.



In the foreground is the new edition of the Maasai Bible, for which Joshua was a translation consultant.



Shalviah (5), holding big sister’s hand, is a bit subdued with the mask requirement.

But check out how fashionable her mask is! (Designed by Ruth, sewn by Ruth and the older girls.)

I admit that sometimes I've complained too much about Nairobi traffic jams when we've had to go to the city. But sometimes there's a legitimate reason to slow down.



### **AFRICAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY GROUP**

When we last wrote, this newly founded group had around 635 members, comprised primarily of African pastors, ministerial and seminary and doctoral students, lecturers, and professors. It has now grown to over 1430 members. Professor Knut Holter, who trains African doctoral students and edits Peter Lang's [Bible and Theology in Africa](#) series, wrote me last month to say "many thanks for what you are doing in relation to African Theology!" Dr Stephanie Lowery, an MK and a lecturer at Nairobi Evangelical School of Theology, wrote me just yesterday, "Thanks for these articles! You are really a great resource."

### **NEWS FROM THE BUSH**

#### **Rekero Community Christian Church (CCC)**



When we lived in Endoinyo Erinka, the Rekero CCC was a tiny congregations meeting in a shanty about the size of an American bedroom. We have preached there a couple of times. They've grown in the past decade. This just month they celebrated the dedication of their own building. (photo credit: Kenson ole Otuni)

## Olpusumoru CCC



Our former student, Peter ole Nanteya, is now a church-planting pastor in the Mara Central area. He sent us this picture of the women's conference which Olpusumoru CCC hosted in October.

### TRIALS

For various reasons, our financial support levels have taken a hit this year, which has made things a bit tight budgetarily. And then last month the transformer on our compound\* caught on fire in an overvoltage event that caused about \$2070 in damage (\*in Kenyan English, “compound” just means yard — ours is surrounded by a hedge, not a wall; the transformer is on our compound for greater security for the utility company, as people often steal the transformer oil). Most notably our dishwasher and instant hot showers are finished — only cold showers for us these days! Shortly before that, the power company informed us that instead of having a zero balance (as they had done a month previously), we actually have an outstanding electric bill of over \$4200! Apparently, for years and years (we've lived here for eight years) they've been estimating our usage instead of reading our meter. For our part, we would get a notice via SMS that we owed so much and we would pay it in full. Needless to say, we were quite, um, *shocked* by this news!

So now we're trying to figure out how to deal with these unexpected crises; our decreased support means we don't have extra funds sitting in an account to cover these losses of over \$6,000.

*Would you consider becoming a support partner with us in 2021? Or helping us to meet these unexpected expenses?*



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## O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL !

*Christ has come! Christ is coming again!*

Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany have always been a favorite time of our year — in part because we love the music of the season. One of my favorite Advent/Christmas songs is Travis Cottrell’s “Redeemer King.” The first verse sings:

*Lift up your eyes, salvation is coming!  
Lift up your hands and surrender your praise!  
Lift up a song of joy in the morning,  
Dance in the dawn of redeeming grace.  
Who is this King coming to save the day?*

We lift up our eyes, for we know our salvation is coming. Our sorrow may have lasted a lifetime, but we will dance in the dawn of redeeming grace! Our Savior was born to set the captive free. He is our Redeemer King.

*Mainosa ilomon! ... neaku taa lelo.*

*(Let’s chew the news! ... And that’s the way things are.)*

*grace and peace and thanks to you in our Lord Jesus,*

*Joshua & Ruth*

*joshua & ruth*

*with alitzah, hannahgail, eliana, zerachiah, ahaviah, & shalviah*

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This locally made nativity places Mary, a shepherd, and two magi worshipping the Christ (no longer a) Child at the foot of the cross.