

Rendille ministry

March 1-7, 2022

I had this opportunity to spend a week amongst our Rendille contacts in north Kenya, together with brother Murungi. I billed it as perhaps my last visit, having visited about twice a year from 1998 to 2015. You will be able to read an account of this ministry to what was an unreached people in my book, *Planted by the Providence of God: The Story of Trinity Baptist Church Nairobi*.

There is a small church in the town of **Korr** around which most Rendille live and where we spent most of our days. There are about 15 members, but on the Sunday we were there up



to 50 were in attendance. This greater number was probably because there were visitors and the expectation of famine relief as there was an unusually serious drought. Much food was sent days later. The commitment of brethren, and others, is encouraging. On a Sunday they start sharp at 9 a.m. with memory verses and singing, followed by a Bible study, and then a service, with a second service at 3 p.m. During the week there is a Bible study and a prayer meeting. Women and children are the most open to listening to the gospel. We long to witness the salvation of wazee (= married men) who have proved so resistant to the gospel.



Ogom & Silamo at goob Nahgaan

There have been 3 evangelists in Korr for many years, Joseph Ogom (L), Godana and Nadesol. Recently, Stephen Silamo (R) has joined them. Their responsibilities include the church in Korr but at least two days a week they are out on the motorbike preaching in the goobs (= circular settlements of huts). They also travel far to Lekuchula (25 kms.) where we long to establish a church.

National elections are due in early August and there is great temptation to enter the race, for to enter politics is a mark of prestige and a source of wealth. Wazees approached Stephen to stand for office and he toyed with it. Thank God he ultimately refused and wrote the following on Facebook:

"It was indeed a big push from the elders for me to try this leadership position in the county! But having listened to my pastors and for the sake of the gospel ministry, I have made a decision to let it go and live for Christ and His Gospel. And preach to the Rendille the unfathomable riches of Christ."

"I praise God for His word and great privileges to preach the gospel. For the last many months, I have been preaching through the gospel of Mark (now halfway) I'm reminded (Mark 9:1-10), once again who to listen to!

So Listen to Him! The disciples were slow to believe Jesus. Who's Jesus? What's a Christian? Why did he come? Why did he die? Peter even argued with him and told him off! Now, God tells them from heaven: "Listen to my Son!" Oh, Lord help me to listen to you and not to any other voice! Not even wazees!"

In the last letter I informed you of the passing of Eysimardana. We were concerned for his widow, **Mbaso**, as she stays away from Korr in the Nebeey goob a few miles north, because that is where her husband was laid to rest. She is not getting the Christian fellowship she needs there, so we asked her if she is going to move back to stay near the church compound in Korr. With the grave right outside the hut she is living in, there are many temptations to perform such rites as pouring libations on the grave. She assured us she has resolutely refused to do such, just as her husband was faithful. But yes, she will relocate when the goob next moves (as it does frequently for various reasons).

One of the great difficulties in bringing the gospel to the Rendille is their stubborn attachment to their traditions. We had two examples from the visit.



Celebration of the evening appearance of the **new moon**. As soon as it is sighted each month men take an animal horn and give blasts on it because the moon has come back to life. They actually address the moon in prayer. In the morning men and boys appear with mud across their forehead, nose and chest.

Four times a year an animal is slaughtered outside each hut by the wazee called the **sooriyo**. Blood is put on the hut entrance and on the prized camels. You can see the dried leafy branches put above the entrance as the mark the sacrifice has been made. It is such an important tradition that animals are brought back from wandering and the family is together.



We were able to visit contacts who profess to be Christians in a few of the surrounding goobs. **Nahgaan** is some miles to the west of Korr and it is a long walk in the hot sun but Ali Leeba and His wife, and Timo Galgithele and her daughter Salome, were all present for the service Korr. Ali has professed faith for many years but is rarely present because he must look after his animals and travels far to find pasture. Timo is a widow, who has learned to read a little as an adult. Life is hard for a widow, but when we go and visit there is always tea made, and sometimes a bowl of rice.



Wife Ali Timo Salome



Women at Ongeli Mago

For the first time we visited **Ongeli Mago** where Silamo's sister is married. The meeting place is always under a tree, as shade from the sun, and here the women gather, and on this occasion Ogom preached to them. The men (wazee) are under a separate tree. They go to a *lugga*, a dry stream bed and spend much of the day talking, playing, and resting in the shade.



Wazee at Dubsahaay Chaule goob

There are two centres more than 25 kms. south of Korr where there is the aim of church planting among the Ariaal Rendille. In both places TBCN sponsors a Primary School.



At **Lekuchula** a service is held every Friday with a brother coming to preach from Korr. We have been preaching here for more than 20 years and there are a few who show much commitment. We recommended that special instruction be given to such to see if they really do understand and believe the gospel.



At **Losidan** the school has gone through difficulties, having had a headteacher mostly absent and too few staff. We met the new H/T and were impressed by his enthusiasm. Stephen Seitalo is pastor of Living Waters Baptist Church in Lontolio and he is seeking to plant a church here, and we are very supportive of him. You can watch a video of an interview with him on the Trinity Baptist

Church Nairobi channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReeecH4X2uE>). Another brother church planting near Laisamis town, in Sakadala, Boniface Kililo, is also doing a good work. May the gospel run and be glorified!