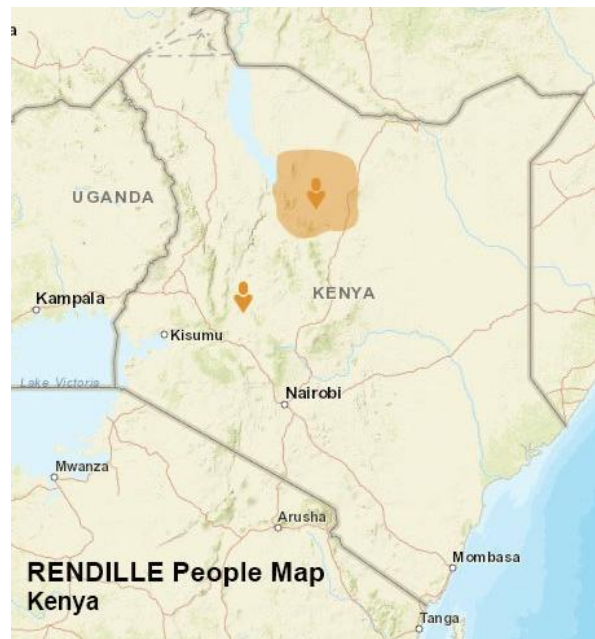


In God's providence, when I first went to Kenya in 1968, I was posted to Meru District just to the south of the vast northern area of Kenya which is dry savannah country, the home to various tribes of pastoralists. Travelling east towards Maua and west towards Nanyuki afforded the most glorious vistas stretching away north. I would stop the car just to marvel at the spectacle of one mountain after another rising from the plain until the horizon. I knew there were tribes/peoples here, the Boran and Samburu, yet unreached by the only saving gospel of Jesus Christ. I took any opportunity to get into the area. Adventurous teachers organised a lorry to visit Lake Turkana, the 'Jade Sea' and I went with them. When I acquired a Landrover I even made my own safari to Lake Turkana and unknown to me at the time, passed by Rendille people herding camels (the photographs alerted me to this fact many years later). I had the privilege of meeting Stephen Houghton, an Anglican missionary with the evangelical BCMS in Marsabit and seeing a little of his work amongst the Boran people.



### First contacts

These things kept alive the desire to bring the gospel to multitudes living in the darkness of traditional religion and Islam. So how did the ministry amongst the Rendille people open up in God's providence? It was through our contact with the Somali brethren. Both the Somalis and Rendilles are Cushitic peoples and their languages are closely connected. Abdi Mrefu, in his pre-Christian days, had been a drinking partner with Osman Mosor, the leader of the Rendille community in the slum area of Kwa Njenga or Kijiji (meaning, little village) in the same general area of Nairobi as we were. Many Rendille come to Nairobi to get a job as an askari (watchman). They are considered reliable as they know little language other than their mother tongue and so are unlikely to collude with thugs. Further, they are fearless people as pastoralists must be, having faced hyenas, leopards and even lions. Osman began engaging with the church at the end of 1997 and brought quite a few others with him. It was an opportunity for them to unload all their obvious physical needs on us. Osman's baby had just died, Martin's wife had a miscarriage, there were rent arrears because of joblessness, but bus fare was required to look for a job and so on. We saw this development giving us greater opportunities. For example, by identifying with us Osman showed he was not part of the prevailing Islamic community in the area....