AUG-DEC 2008

# The Land of God

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF AFRICA CENTER FOR THE GREAT COMMISSION

## ACGC Students Mission to Samburu

**To extend the kingdom of God in partnership with local churches**

# After Trip to Samburu

Testimonial By Nancy Kinyua

Member of Eagle Rise Church in Samburu, praising

Several years ago, God put a burden in my heart concerning the less-reached communities in our nation, especially the nomadic people. Because they do not settle down in one place, their commitment to Christ seems hard to be followed up.

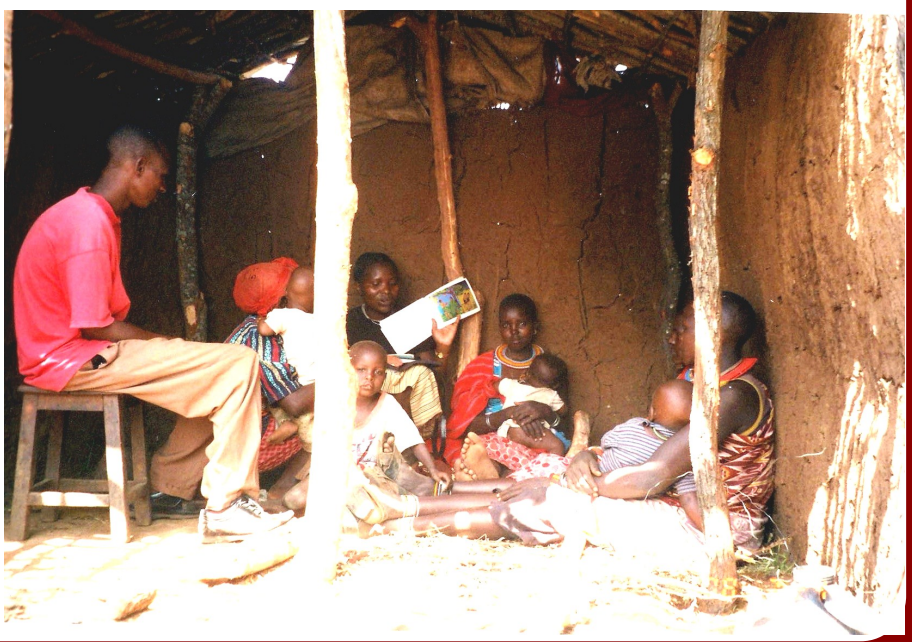
When I heard about our intended visit to Samburu to visit Nelly Songa, one of our missionaries, I was excited. I knew this was the moment I had been waiting for. After the much prayers , we finally left for Samburu on 23rd June. We left Nairobi at 10 am and arrived at our destination (Kirimon) at about 10pm.

On the way to Kirimon, we were overwhelmed by the beauty of nature. The boulders of black rocks looked beautiful with cactus plantation of red Aloe Vera and the green shrubs of the same height patterned well. I guessed the gorgeous environment could motivate the missionaries in the field.

On the following day after we arrived, we moved from manyatta to manyatta, evangelizing. I was actually touched by their willingness to listen and even to accept Christ as their savior. We were encouraged that people showed an interest and accepted Christ with an open heart. I reflected to that moment when God had put a desire in me to take the gospel to those who have not heard about Christ. Their quest for the Word of God touched me and let me ponder what I could do from here.

I pray that God will raise committed ministers who can bridge them to God so that all the peoples can have the joy in its fullness. It was a privilege for me to see a glimpse of God's love for us, so I thank God for giving me that opportunity to visit Kirimon, Samburu.

Left: Samburu leaders fetching water



Right: Sharing Bible stories with church members

# ACGC Students on a Mission

This mission trip was different; the whole program was solely run by the Student Council of ACGC. After a number of meetings, and the preparatory sessions for several weeks in a row, 13 students began a journey to Kirimon, Samburu as soon as they finished the final exams.

The student leaders initiated this project to encourage our ACGC missionary, who has been working in Kirimon Samburu since 2006. The EagleRise Church of Kirimon, planted by Nelly Songa, now needed a bigger space for the service. To secure a place of worship, the Kirimon church members have been fundraising actively. As a way of participation in this project, ACGC students decided to help out with construction of the church building.

The missionary Nelly Songa planted the church in this interior area of Samburu in 2006 after she finished her theological studies at ACGC. Her main focus has been discipling people through the Bible study; but a number of changes and community development projects have been reported as well.

**ACGC students, at the church construction site**

ACGC students encouraged our missionary and the church members by holding a revival and helping in the church construction.

# Interview with ACGC's Sudan Missionaries

After the missionary training program, they remained with the passion for the Kingdom of God in Southern Sudan. Here is the interview with our two proud missionaries who are ministering in KajoKeji, Southern Sudan.

***Edward Lodiong:*** I grew up in Sudan during the war. Many of my friends died in the training, while others in the battlefield. I then moved to Uganda when things became worse. By that time, I had gotten saved and wanted to share the word of God all my life. I had the desire in me, but I didn't know where to start from. I prayed hard to God to open a door for me to receive some Bible training. I came to ACGC after that, and I decided to be a missionary. I learned a lot during that time, which as a result left a burden for non-Christians. The focus in my ministry is also missions. I teach people about missions and how we also need to reach out to people. In Sudan, transportation system is not good. Since the road is not still tarmarked, we don't have the public transportation system yet. So when a person gets sick, it becomes a big problem. I pray that the Kingdom of God will be expanded through ACGC missionaries, reaching every corner of Africa.

***Peter Wani:*** I was born in Yei, Southern Sudan. I also grew up during the war. I was taken to be a soldier, but God helped me. When I was 8, my father told me how he got saved. From his testimony, I also got saved. And I came to ACGC. While studying at ACGC, my desire to tell others how they can be saved and become children of God grew. We had a lot of opportunities to reach out to unbelievers. We used to go for missions within Kenya. I learned God's love here. His love is too big for me that I have to tell others about it. Here in Sudan, I teach people about good and bad. Many people do not know how Christians are supposed to live. I want to continue to share love, peace and joy in God.

# 2008 ACGC's Alumni Reunion

All the alumni and staff, at the front yard after the reunion meeting

**Left:** Excited to meet old friends
**Right:** Alumni Council Election

All of us were reminiscing the bittersweet memories of the peers, classes, exams, and the graduation ceremony. The familiar corners of the school compound had us recall our good old days. It was an exciting moment for everyone to see the changes of the school since they graduated. Starting with the welcome message by Dr. Lee, the program continued with the past development and future plan presentation and the testimonials by two alumnae. Everyone shared their ministerial changes and impact they received from ACGC. There was a lot of laughter, and it was cozy throughout. We shared our hope that although the formal education was finished with the graduation ceremony, the partnership and resource exchanges will be carried on. It was also a good opportunity for the ministers to build network and challenge each other. Alumnae Council was set up at the end of the meeting for our annual reunion.

# Rethinking of Theological Education in Africa

By Rev. Dr. James Jong-Do Lee

African pastors are commonly engaged in pastoral ministry without formal theological education, which is very different from the Western church context. The Western churches regard theological training as a mandatory process of moving into pastoral ministry, unlike in Africa. Herein theological training in Africa should be reexamined.

### *Contextualized theological education*

Many African churches assume that theological training makes pastors too much "bookish" and proud in spirit. It is believed that such intellectual training leaves a negative impact on the formation of the pastors' spirituality. This way of understanding is widespread especially among the Christians of African Independent Churches.

Initially, theological training in Africa was introduced by the Western missionaries during the colonial days. This system has been criticized that it neglected the real needs in the African context. This shortcoming came out of the lack of understanding the concept of missions in our previous days, which failed to distinguish between the core of the Gospel and the Western cultural elements of Christianity. The Western theology was coarsely adopted without the process of screening out the Western cultural elements. The mistake of transferring Western Christianity to Africans made the African Christians accept the Gospel with the Western husk.

Even today most theological schools in Africa operate with the Western curriculum. Western theologies, which were brought forth from the Western context, cannot give relevant answers to the African issues because they are blinded from African realities. The African spirituality together with the theoretical aspects of the Western theology leaves a feeling of squashing two unfit puzzle pieces.

### *Worldview, the Starting Point of Theology*

All theologies are culturally conditioned to some extent. The Western worldview, from which the Western theology emerges, is said to have the two-tier structure of worldview. The Western dualistic worldview divides realities into supernatural and natural. However, the African worldview has three-tier structure. For African worldview, there is a middle zone between natural and supernatural. Accordingly, the dualistic Western worldview cannot see the real issue of the African middle zone. Some middle-zone issues such as living dead, ancestral veneration, or witchcrafts, are not imminent cultural issues to the westerners, although to the Africans these are daily life issues.

African theology therefore need to come up with the relevant answers to their African issues.

When theology does not touch its own cultural needs, it cannot but lose its virtual function. It is a part of reasons why many African initiated churches remain unquenched with the Western-oriented theology. During the colonial times, the Western culture was considered superior to the African culture. Accordingly, the necessity of developing local theologies was not even considered. Such a mind cannot provide a way out to the needs of the African culture. It only produced a superficial spirituality in Africa because the Western Gospel could not "root itself down to the African soil".

### *Imbalance between the Bible and the Society*

The failure of traditional theology lies in its inability to reconcile the basic Christian message with the contemporary self-understanding of human nature. Traditional theology education method failed to equip students with the way to study the society. Without understanding the society, we cannot do a proper hermeneutical job. To do this job, first of all, pastors need to be trained in how to handle the Bible, and how to understand society. Then we can bridge between the biblical truth and the society. In this sense, the curriculum should be designed with a balance between how to know the Bible and how to know the society.

**"Theological education exists to serve the church. If not, it is missing the original function as it should be."**

### *Not a Means to Success but a Means to Serve*

Education is a popular means of achieving a success in life all over the world. This is also true among Christians. It has been used popularly by them to accomplish their own ambitions in life. Theological education cannot be an exception of this loop. The drum of theological education has been beaten with such tune.

Here we need to rethink the primary task of theological education. What is the purpose of theological education? Theological education exists to serve the church. If not, it is missing the original function as it should be. It ought to be pitched to serve His kingdom effectively from beginning to end. Otherwise, it will only be exploited for the means of getting better jobs or higher rankings in church.

Any theological education that does not recognize the context of its audience cannot achieve its primary objective. Its purpose and content should be aligned to serve His church. At the same time it should align itself to suit the needs of His people in their context. Theological education in Africa should meet the real needs of its targeted people.

# Share the Dream of ACGC, the Hope of Africa

**You are invited to join our theological education for the work of building the Kingdom of God.**
**Engage in a rigorous training program for intercultural and pastoral ministry.**
**Partner with national and international leaders to mobilize your church.**
**This will be an opportunity for you to reflect about biblical truth clearly and apply it to relevant problems in your ministry. Act right now !!**

## Africa Center for the Great Commission


Postal Address:
P.O. Box 1083-00606
Sarit Centre,
Nairobi Kenya

Phone: (254)20-630968,
(254) 726-880858,
(254)733-266816

E-mail: acgckenya@gmail.com,
nicckenya@gmail.com


**ACGC is a non-profit, non-denominational evangelical mission organization. It is founded on the biblical Christian worldview, aiming to integrate theory and practice to promote the effectiveness of education and its applicability to the society. It exists to extend the Kingdom of God in partnership with the local churches by mobilizing and equipping them with holistic ministry. We believe in African National Initiative Mission Movement, for which task we are engaged in training, and sending the national missionaries.**