



Stephen and Angelina Cowan

Location: **Tuum, KENYA**

Mission: **Church-based community development and outreach**

FEBRUARY 2023



Large areas of Northern Kenya remain in acute drought. Small sun-showers tease, but we only smell rather than see evidence of the drops of rain.

The size of cattle herds - a symbol of wealth - has been allowed to increase unchecked during several years of good rainfall and grass growth, and the resulting overgrazing and lack of long-term planning is now brutally obvious everywhere. This subject is approached, challenged and often agreed upon at monthly seminars, but cultural identity and traditional thinking run destructively deep.

We continue to maintain and upgrade vehicles and buildings. A container has been converted into a garage tools' store. The store man is diligent in his responsibility and the system seems to be working well. A small group of Christmas visitors enjoyed the peace and quiet of the guesthouse and the stunning rugged beauty of the wider area. This generates much needed revenue for the SAA programme and demonstrates the potential for low impact tourism both now and in the future.

A New Year gives us reason to pause and reflect. With our youngest now finished her education in Kenya, our calendar is no longer determined by three-weekly school visits.

It was a good, if somewhat unusual problem. The queue extended three deep from both doors. Inside the church building the Kubamba team, who had been in charge of the December Camps during the previous ten days, were concluding by leading the Sunday morning service. The air was hot and stuffy but everyone listened as these nine young people, whose love for Jesus is infectious, used music and drama to illustrate and communicate His Father's love. The connectiveness of their presentation in song and skit was seen in faces fully focused, and the powerfulness of its truths relevantly conveyed was seen in many young lives surrendered to Christ. It was uplifting to witness the fun, fellowship and interaction so appreciated by all after a very long Covid interval.

As we had been delayed in Nairobi for a few days, the responsibilities for organising the camps, sorting out the usual logistical problems and overseeing security challenges and cultural barriers, were very much in the hands of the team leaders and young helpers from the Samburu Awareness Action Programme. It was encouraging to see them rise to the challenge. Once the camps had finished and the last vehicles had returned from transporting the 200 or so youth and 400 children back to their villages, and the everyday grit and grind once again became the norm, it was

good to reflect, God is building His church.



Prayer Points

- Pray that we would make efficient use of our time as we journey between various locations
- Give thanks for all the young people who gave ownership of their lives to Jesus during the youth camps.
- Pray that the present drought may cause many to rethink their traditional view of cattle quantity over cattle quality.