

## Stephen and Angelina Cowan

**MARCH 2022**

Location: **Tuum, KENYA**

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



We rollercoasted along the new ribbon of tarmac, now reaching Maralal, insulated from the almost post-apocalyptic brittle, barren, drought-stricken landscape on either side.



The contrast mirrored the government's ongoing digitalisation of existing land ownership demarcation and its requirement for submission of updated claims where none has previously existed - modern technology slicing through the ancestral boundaries, bondages and beliefs of pastoralist and other people groups. Once again, the afternoon session at the monthly Bible teaching and staff training seminar focused on this topical issue. Stephen had sourced and printed from the internet the government's recently uploaded details for parts of Samburu County which directed the people to lay claim to their homesteads and pastoral grazing areas or risk losing them. Photocopies were distributed to the literate minority who shared the contents with the majority encouraging much heated discussion. The solid words on a sheet of paper brought home the reality after months of concerned anticipation and prediction. The news travelled to the village quicker than footsteps.

Surprisingly, despite widespread lack of rain, much raw honey is still carried down from the mountain. This traditional 'log hive' product is bought, refined and packaged by the two men who have faithfully kept this business going for over 25 years. Many dozen jars are sold

to the smaller supermarkets and individuals in Maralal, and its high quality is further recognised by consistent orders from Nyahururu and Nairobi.

Small vegetable gardens at various locations around the mountain, painstakingly watered by their owners, produce amazing watermelons, pawpaw and oranges.



These alternative sources of income are helpful as the cows – the main source for milk and regular income – are many days' walk from the homesteads. The few animals that remain close to the village are fed on grass which is cut and transported from areas presently considered too insecure to graze.

Into this background God's redemptive love and care for each person is presented through all Samburu Awareness and Action (SAA) programme activities and teachings. A large group of primary school pupils attend Bible teaching sessions two afternoons a week, faithfully presented by several of the SAA leaders and discipleship programme graduates. The twice weekly morning devotions allow a relaxed interactive forum, and an opportunity for guests to share their lives and faith with many who don't attend a more formal church setting.

### Prayer points

- Give thanks for those individuals and families throughout the community who have learnt from these programmes and are now standing strong within the freedom of God's boundaries.
- Give thanks for those from outside the area who give of their time and energy to help practically and share their journey to a relationship with Jesus.
- Pray for wisdom for the next steps towards land demarcation and ownership in the county and country.