

Stephen and Angelina Cowan

Location: **Tuum, KENYA**

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



'Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgement.' Proverbs 9 v 10 (NLT)

December was focused on youth camps. The land rovers eventually emerged from the garage and headed out to transport the 300 children, who were ready and waiting in their home villages, back to Tuum. As usual, the excitement was infectious and the team from Nairobi who would lead the camp sensed their privilege and responsibility as they got to know the children during both formal and informal activities. The theme was the 'Fear of God'. Changeover on day 5 provided the leaders with the opportunity to rest and recharge while the children were transported home and the older youth from the wider area were welcomed for senior camp. Senior camp requires a change in tempo and the teaching is deeper and further explored in discussion groups. Some young people open up about the many challenges they have to deal with and a fun evening around the bonfire provided much needed laughter and relaxation.



A recent attack in the area north of Maralal has once again created much fear throughout the community. Although details are sketchy, it appears to have taken place over a wider area, spilling onto the road in several places and blocking it for part of the day. A food lorry was ransacked, a security guard killed, a young girl raped and several people injured. Rumours abound as to the reason for the unrest - some involving land demarcation issues - but it's clear that foremost is a complete lack of 'Fear of the Lord', and blindness to the sanctity of each life in His creation.

A few days ago, the 'wazee' (elders) from the community met to discuss change and the way forward. Gathered on a piece of ground under reclamation, the evidence of better land management and conservation was clear to see; they were sitting on it! With rapidly changing environmental conditions throughout the northern parts of Kenya, controlled grazing by local cattle is becoming more essential. However, understandably for a pastoral people, the unknowns of demarcation and cultivation bring unease. While government plans to fence sections of grassland for controlled grazing and fodder production are in the public domain, the local pastoralists feel that they are kept in the dark about such strategies. As is often the case, misunderstanding and miscommunication are increased by poor literacy.

Prayer Points:

- Pray that many of the 'wazee' will take up the oft given invitation to attend the monthly seminar where issues can be discussed and progress agreed within the framework of the wisdom of God's Word.
- Pray for safety on the roads and for those families grieving the pain and loss of the latest attacks.
- Give thanks for the December camps and for the young people who took their first steps towards a greater understanding of the 'Fear of God.'