

Stephen and Angelina Cowan

Location: **Tuum, KENYA**

JULY / AUGUST 2021

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



with their animals. The carefully conserved dry season grass on the other side of the fence is literally greener. Cultural thinking does not include planning for the future or thinking economically. Poor rainfall, ever increasing herd size and demarcation of land do not bode well for the future.

In early June we travelled to Nairobi for the first time in five months. At first the trip seemed exciting, but after a few days the dust, roadworks and traffic chaos made the semi desert feel inviting once more. We were glad to return to Tuum together with Annessa who had completed her 'in classroom' school year. Three weeks of online learning remained, with the ongoing challenge of our slow and stretched network here in Tuum.

Our privilege of literacy is more noticeable when 84% illiteracy surrounds us. Adult teaching classes, seminars and strategies have not worked for many complex reasons. However, research is being carried out by an IT specialist to create an app enabling potential owners to teach themselves on their smart phones. This venture is a leap of faith for all involved. At the nursery school changes are also taking place. A newly painted classroom and suitable desks have visibly encouraged teachers and pupils and gradually more organisation of resources will be implemented.

The recent monthly seminar and staff training days included Bible teaching, fellowship, awareness training and agricultural organisation. A table format setting out a planting schedule requires creativity and sensitivity when numbers and words do not convey anything to the gardener.

The area remains tense, as sporadic cattle rustling incidents continue to take lives and animals. Justice seems minimal, and local retaliation only adds to the geographically increasing problem. A large ranch about seven hours drive south of us has had kilometres of fencing cut on three consecutive nights as the pastoralist neighbours invade



Photo credit: Ebrahaim

Prayer points

- Pray for those in authority as they meet to discuss the ongoing problem of cattle rustling.
- Pray as we plan a different version of youth camps for July. Most likely they will be smaller, in several locations and led by senior youth from Tuum. Although challenging, there is much potential good in this arrangement.
- Give thanks for the renewed enthusiasm of the nursery school teachers and pupils.
- Give thanks for the outreach team that travelled to Lesirikan after the monthly seminar. They were able to encourage the small fellowship in the village.