

Famine Continues: Planning for the Future

Famine Relief Update

From Erastus on June 5:

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior. We are doing fine. Our hope is that you are the same. We have been trying all the time to do a good work for the Lord. Here in Kitui, we are now surviving under hardship. Famine has just become part of us and we are kind like getting used to it. In my lifetime I have never seen this kind of situation where we have skipped three good rain seasons. Food is so expensive and even our livestock is feeding from our pockets. Those of us who trust in the Lord are thankful and know that God is going to teach us a good lesson out of it. Love in Christ must be real in us these good days. We eat just to survive. Nearly every home is surviving on a single meal per day, either ugali or a mixture of beans and maize. A kilogram of beans is steady at 70 shillings and maize between 30 and 40 shillings (Note: This is 2 or 3 times the price of 2 years ago). We traveled to Zombe today and we watched the school children as they were fed on half of a cup porridge and it was surprising. Though these little kids (pre-school children) were given a very little share, they were very happy. That's why I think that famine is becoming part of us. Lewis will send you some pictures of the situation and of the well we are digging on our land.

Generally the churches are doing well. I'm very pleased by the Church at Kavonge. The members are active and we are receiving many visitors in our Sunday services. Those who had stopped coming for worship are now coming back. Dickson and the family are a good example. There is nothing that encourages me in service to God more than this thing. I have committed myself to visiting members at their home, reading the Bible together, sharing our burdens, praying together and maybe having a cup of tea together. My current plan is one home per week. Pray for us to continue being strong.

May the Lord continue to add on your faith each day. We know you love us and we love you too. May the grace of our Lord be with you all. Pass our lovely greetings to all the beloved churches and individual brothers and sisters. Bye til we write again.

God bless you Amen.

As a result of reading the above letter from Erastus we set a goal of raising \$5000 to assist with famine relief to be distributed through the 6 congregations we have in Kenya. In the past two weeks loving, caring people from around the country have responded with donations of \$10,225. The first \$4000 was wired to Kenya last week. In a phone conversation with Erastus June 24 letting him know about the famine relief funds and planning their use he said, "Tell the people we are very thankful. Words cannot express our gratitude. It is incredible! It is very dry here and even getting water to drink is a problem. We are so thankful for the two deep boreholes (wells). Some families are now struggling to have even one meal a day. Many eat only porridge (corn meal and water). To them a meal of maze (corn) and beans is like a privilege."

If you would like to help us purchase maize and beans to reduce hunger and suffering in Kenya make your check out to "Caring for Kenya" and send it to: Caring for Kenya, 3508 E. University Ave., Urbana, IL 61802, Attn: Carl Burkybile. Famine conditions will continue until the rainy season harvest in January. Erastus indicated that in addition to purchasing food they will buy seed for the November rainy season planting. He said they also want to use part of the money to pay men for work done on the school property such as digging the well. In addition to getting the work done, the men will feel good about being able to provide for their families by purchasing food.

Once a year the church leaders spend a whole night in singing, praying, and studying together. This year it is scheduled for July 3rd. Erastus said this year the evening will also be a time of thanksgiving for the blessings that God has provided through American Christian brothers and sisters.

News From Healing Hands International

During times of low rainfall food can be successfully produced using drip irrigation. Even drip irrigation requires a water supply. Healing Hands International (HHI) has agreed to donate \$4000 that will result in the installation of two additional water distribution points (call water kiosks). The water will come from the two deep wells that we have near Tulia. People sometimes wait in line for half a day to get their containers filled with water. Some people walk long distances to reach the well. Additional kiosks will make quality water more available to them.

HHI is also interested in joining with Caring for Kenya and the Nairobi Great Commission School to train preachers in survival gardening and drip irrigation. The preachers can then use this training to help the people and as an outreach tool in establishing new congregations. We are hopeful that a 3 member HHI team will go to Kenya in September.

In March we, along with a group of University of Illinois students, applied for a "One Laptop per Child" grant. We are not selected to receive the grant, but HHI has agreed to provide 5 laptops for use in the school near Tulia that was a part of the grant application. In addition to the students learning computers they will also learn about God through using the Bible software loaded on the laptops.

Summer 2010 Trip to Kenya

Plans are being made for a June, 2010 mission trip to Kenya. As the goals of the trip are formulated, information about items needed for the people of Kenya will be passed on. We will be collecting things like school supplies to take with us. At present we know that we will be visiting students at school who are being sponsored by American families, providing medical supplies, teaching people about food production and preservation, expanding the water distribution system, viewing the community development projects, planning the construction of our secondary school, visiting the churches, conducting Bible studies, and meeting with Kenyan church leaders. Continue praying for our Christian brothers and sisters in Kenya and for the success of the upcoming mission trips.