

Primitive Baptists In Kenya

Written by Vernon Johnson

Wednesday, 19 May 2010 00:01 - Last Updated Wednesday, 13 December 2017 16:37



In this article, Elder Vernon Johnson, pastor of Denton church, Denton Texas, gives us a detailed journal of his third trip to Kenya.(July 2008)

Journal of my 3rd Trip to Kenya

On Monday, 14 July 2008, I said goodbye to my wife, Hazel, and departed DFW airport around 6 P.M. heading for Atlanta. In Atlanta, I met up with Elders Sam Bryant and Paul Blair. Around 10:30 Atlanta time we departed for Heathrow airport in London arriving around noon London time. We spent some time sightseeing in London as our plane to Nairobi was not scheduled to depart until 8 P.M. The plane was delayed and we departed at 9 P.M. London time. We arrived in Nairobi at 6:45 A.M. on Wednesday, Kenya time. After we arrived we found out the flight we had planned to take to Kisumu had been cancelled. We then scheduled a flight to Kisumu to depart at 8:00 A.M. on Thursday.

As we were awaiting transportation to travel to the fellowship in Nairobi, we were sitting in a airport café talking when I noticed a young man looking intently at us and who had a very worn bible in front of him. I felt impressed to speak to the young man. He was visiting Nairobi, but was from Ghana. His name is Doh Aikins. He told me that he was an evangelist in Ghana. He asked what we were doing and he expressed much interest when I told him. I exchanged email addresses with him and phone numbers. I told him that I would call him when I returned to the states and email him.

After our transportation arrived, we set out to find lodging and to go to the Nairobi fellowship for worship services. This group is being lead by a young man named Peder (spelling is correct). There were about 30 people present at the meeting place besides us. It was evident that this group's understanding had grown since Elder Ivey and I were here in March.

I spoke on true worship vs. false worship using Cain and Abel as an example. Bro. Paul spoke on light and darkness showing that darkness precedes light and when light comes it drives away darkness. He showed this is true in nature and is true spiritually. Bro. Sam spoke on being poor and being rich showing how that when we are poor in Spirit we became rich in spiritual blessings. The messages were well received.

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Thursday, 17 July 2008

We arose early to travel to the airport to catch our flight to Kisumu. We departed around 8:00 A.M. and arrived in Kisumu around 9:00 A.M. We gathered our luggage, met the driver, Bro. Wycliffe and Bro. William at the airport. Next, we went downtown to book a flight for Elder Obey to Nairobi and then to Dar Es Salaam on Monday 21 July 2008. Before we departed Kisumu, we bought some supplies and some gift items for our families back home. We proceeded then to Kisii and arrived at our hotel around 1:00 P.M. We met with some brethren who had come to the hotel to greet us for a short devotional and for a Questions and Answers session. We had supper around 4:30. Due to the flight cancellation, our Thursday appointments at two of the fellowships were cancelled.

Friday, 18 July 2008

This morning we traveled to the Etanda fellowship lead by Bro. Henry. About 70 people including several small children met us there. After song service, Bro. Paul Blair preached on the grace, love, and sovereignty of God. Afterwards, Bro. Sam Bryant preached on the great power of God. Both messages were well received. During the closing hymn, twelve of the saints came forward asking for a home in the church through water baptism and were received. After lunch at Bro. Martin's home, we worshipped at the Nyachenge fellowship (leader Bro. Martin Onyoni; assisted by Bro. Charles). After song service, Bro. Paul spoke on the conflict between the natural outer man and the inner man of the Spirit born child of God. I followed speaking on the verses: "without me ye can do nothing" and "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Bro. Sam then took as his text Isaiah 40:9-12; 15; 18-20; 26. Again, the messages were well received with much joy. At the closing hymn six saints came forward asking to be baptized and to have a home in the church and were received.

Saturday, 19 July 2008

In the morning we traveled to the Keburunga fellowship where we were met by about 60 in attendance. This was the morning scheduled for baptisms. During the morning worship service, Bro. Paul spoke on the subject of water baptism. This message was well received. Immediately following the morning service, we traveled down to the river which was about a mile down from the worship site. We then proceeded with the baptismal service. Elders Obey

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and Paul Blair baptized nineteen who had expressed a desire to follow the Lord in water baptism. Due to heavy rains the day before, the water was much clearer than it was in March. It was a beautiful ceremony.

We lunched with Bro. William and his family, which was an enjoyable experience.

We then traveled to the Nyarenda group where we were met by about 45 saints and then an additional 25 or so children from a nearby school joined us. Bro. Paul spoke on "what we know" and on the unity of the Spirit and the importance of continuing brotherly love and peace. Bro. Sam then spoke on both the doctrines of grace and practical applications to our lives. The messages were very well received amidst much joy.

Sunday, 20 July 2008

We rented a large room at the hotel in which we were staying for the ordination service that was to take place on this date. Many from the five fellowships near Kisii were to be in attendance as well as several visitors.

The last of the groups arrived around 11:25 A.M. and we began our morning worship service. Bro. Martin Onyoni preached in English and Bro. Obey interpreted in Swahili. Bro. Martin used as his text Rom. 10:1-4. The Lord richly blessed him to preach the gospel. Some of the major points he made are as follows:

1. The Israelites Paul was praying for were spiritual Israelites who were also natural Israelites. They were already children of God quickened by the grace of God into Spiritual life. He cited John 3:1-8.
2. They were already saved from their sins according to the covenant of redemption and given eternal life. He cited Rom. 8:29, 30.
3. They were trying to establish that which the Lord had already established for them.
4. They were ignorant of God's righteousness whereby He had made them righteous and they were going about trying through the works of the law to establish their own righteousness.
5. Paul desired that they would be saved from their ignorance and from trying to establish their own righteousness.
6. Great multitudes of God's people in Kenya are trying to establish their own righteousness and are ignorant of God's righteousness.
7. Bro. Martin said it was his heart's desire and prayer to God for God's people in Kenya that they might be delivered from their ignorance and from the work's system that bind them.
8. Christ has already established our righteousness for us. It is all by the grace of God according to the covenant of redemption.
9. Two types of salvation are taught in the word of God: Eternal salvation which is all by the grace of God and a salvation here in time when we obey the scriptural teachings.
10. He cited the rich young ruler as one who was trying to establish his righteousness under the law. However, he could not.

Bro. Martin greatly demonstrated his soundness in doctrine during this discourse.

The ordination service followed the morning preaching service. Copies of the minutes and a copy of the ordination certificate are enclosed.

There was much rejoicing by the people over the preaching and ordination of Bro. Martin Onyoni to the office of elder. About 150 people attended the services. Later I found out that two

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preachers of different orders had been in attendance and were very impressed with the way the services were carried out and are beginning to inquire about Primitive Baptist beliefs.

Monday, 21 July 2008

This day was spent taking Elders Obey, Sam Bryant, and Paul Blair to the Kisumu airport to begin their journey to Dar Es Salaam and meetings in Tanzania. Among the things they have scheduled is the ordination of a Bro. Kenny to the office of deacon. We bid them God-speed and returned with Elder Martin, Bro. Wycliffe, and Bro. William to Kisii.

Tuesday, 22 July 2008

In the morning, we visited with Elder Martin's father and with a preacher of another order who has indicated his intention to join the Primitive Baptists. I attempted to answer their questions and I believe we made progress with Elder Martin's father, whose name is Moses, in answering some of the questions he has about Primitive Baptist beliefs. His father and mother are members of the Seventh Day Adventists.

In the afternoon, we went to the Kiorina fellowship. We were met by a small crowd. This was market day in that area and several of the members had to be at market to sell and to purchase necessities for their families.

I preached on the subject of rest using Matt. 11:28-30 and Heb. 1:1-3 and the fact that God had rested from his work in creation and then told the people to rest on the 7th day in honor of his finished work of creation. Subsequently, Christ had finished the work of redemption (Heb. 1:3) and we are to rest in his finished work of redemption. The message was well received.

Wednesday, 23 July 2008

We visited with Bro. Peter in his home (this is the brother who came from another order to join the Primitive Baptists in our previous visit to Kenya). I met several members of his family including his mother who is 120 years old. She was a delightful woman who has a very sharp mind. I had an opportunity to speak to Bro. Peter's family and encourage them to study with Elder Martin and Bro. Peter and to seek the truth. Bro. Peter has a very large family who live near him. I believe there will be a very large church in that area in the near future. Throughout the Kisii area, many people are very receptive to the biblical beliefs held by the Primitive

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Baptists.

In the afternoon, we traveled to the Etanda fellowship where we were met by a very large group including many children. I preached on the subject of being "in Christ" using Ephesians chapters 1 and 2 and the many times that phrase appears. I spoke of the things that God has done for us because we are "in Christ." The message was well received.

Thursday, 24 July 2008

We traveled to the Keburunga fellowship where the crowd was again small because of market day in that area.

I preached on the subject of hope using Tit. 1:2; 1 Pet. 3:15; Rom. 8:23, 24; Heb. Chapter 6 and 1 Cor. 15. The message was well received. I made the following points:

1. Hope is based on the covenant promise of God before the foundation of the world.
2. God cannot lie, thus hope cannot fail.
3. Hope saves us from despair.
4. Our hope is in the resurrection of the body.
5. Hope is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.
6. The tribulations in our lives exercise our hope thru patience and experience.
7. Hope will cease when we are resurrected and have an eternity with Christ.
8. We should be ready to give an answer when asked the reason of the hope that is in us.

Friday, 25 July 2008

We traveled to the Nyarenda fellowship in the afternoon. This was a very long and tiring trip over very rough roads. This fellowship is located a far distance from the other four fellowships near Kisii.

After song service, I spoke on the subject of repentance. I used as a text "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of." I made the following points:

1. The non-elect cannot repent.
2. In our natural state prior to being born of the Spirit we cannot repent.
3. When we are born of the Spirit, God sets up a courtroom in our hearts and minds and writes his laws there (Heb. 8:8-12; 10:16; 10:22; 2 Cor. 3:3; 1 John 3:19-21; Rom. 2:14, 15).
4. In this courtroom, we are convicted of being sinners and of sin. This brings about godly sorrow.
5. This conviction of sin and godly sorrow leads us to repent.
6. I cited the example of Isaiah in Isaiah Chapter 6.

The message seemed to be well received. At the close of the service, a young woman came forth asking to be baptized and join the church. She was received as a candidate for baptism.

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On Saturday, I was informed that the sister came from another faith and subsequently her husband has informed them that he plans to join on Sunday. In addition, I was informed that two others from another fellowship said they will join also.

Saturday, 26 July 2008

I met with the five fellowship leaders and discussed with them our plans for our trip back to Kenya in January. At that time, we plan to ordain a few additional elders as Elder Obey determines are ready. In addition, we plan to constitute the first churches in Kenya. I discussed with them some preparations they need to make prior to Elder Ivey and my return. In addition, I opened the meeting up for questions and received several good questions about how we do things in the United States so that they can continue to pattern their meetings and later churches after the manner of Primitive Baptist churches in America.

Sunday, 27 July 2008

The morning worship service at Nyachenge was my last service in Kenya before my return trip. We were met by approximately 40-45 people who had gathered to meet for worship. After about an hour-long song service and prayer I spoke on the subject of God's love. I felt a strong presence of the Spirit and the message seemed to be very well received. Elder Martin informed me that those who accompanied me in the van to Kisumu to catch my flight to Nairobi had been talking about the message most of the trip.

After a long and arduous journey back home, I arrived at my home on Tuesday morning at 1:30 A.M. I was exhausted but satisfied that the Lord had blessed our efforts. I was also informed that the man from Ghana who I had met in Nairobi had called twice before I got home. On Tuesday morning, he called the third time and seemed quite anxious to communicate with me concerning our beliefs. We will see where this leads us.

Elder Vernon Johnson