

GENE AND MELBA MORDEN

MISSIONARIES TO THE TURKANA OF KENYA

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Grace, mercy, and peace in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I just received the following request from a fellow missionary on furlough. The answer depicts the current situation in Turkana.

"Quick question: Are you guys doing any food relief right now? *The New York Times* did a big article on drought/famine in Lokori. Folks on this side of the ocean want to help if your team is already doing something. Perhaps World Vision or Red Cross are already doing stuff, don't know, just fill me in. Thanks."

We did read the *NY Times* article as well. We spent the last two weeks of August living in the Kangarisae house with former missionary Dan Bader and a group from his church. The drought is bad, but not abnormal for Turkana. There was a critical food shortage until June when the transportation problem was solved, then the World Food Program was able to begin delivering food each month. Oxfam is the organization designated to distribute the food.

We have not seen any people dying of starvation as we did in 2000, but the cholera outbreak near Kerio that has claimed countless lives, is most assuredly related to weakened people and open water sources. But everyone is still hungry. The herd size is drastically reduced due to Lomo, which wiped out at least 80% of the herd. We still see a lot of weak animals. I know the Turkana are barely eating meat, which they traditionally do during drought, because they have less than ten or even no hides for us to bring to town to sell. I usually can take 1,000 hides a month to Lodwar during drought times.

We did receive a test run of energy packs from USAID in May to provide food for 20 families for one month. After doing nutritional assessments in several areas as part of our CHE program, the church leaders targeted 20 families at Kaitepi for the short-term help. Another organization has also given funds for helping OVCs (orphans and vulnerable children)



Beneficiaries: 10 families.

in Maasai and Turkana. The church leaders have again identified true OVCs and distributed the aid accordingly. At CMF, we have viewed this as a test of how truthful and faithful the leaders can be. We have found greed and jealousy and abuse creep in. But, in all clusters but one, the church leaders have stepped up and identified the abuses and reversed them, to the point of even going to take in kind from those who tried to abuse the help.

Last month we watched the traditional waterholes near Nakaalei and Loupwela dry up, forcing people to take their animals to ChokChok and Sike (areas that have springs). All the shallow cement culvert wells I know of along the Kerio River are dry. But the hand-dug cased wells we have installed are still functioning, and people are walking 15 kilometers (9+ miles) or more to those hand pumps. The people with pumps station guards at the hand pumps all day long to monitor usage and maintenance of the hand pumps. We were able to dig 4 more wells in August, and hope to keep up the pace as long as funds are available. We also have 6 farm plots that each supply food for over 120 people daily. We plan to install 4 more farm plots this year and continue as we have funding.

Of course, if there were funds for food relief, additional wells, or farm plots, it would all be used. We as a team still believe that the wells and farm plots are building the capacity of the Turkana to overcome the effects of the yearly droughts ... even bad ones like the current one. As money is given to the Turkana Relief and Development Account, we will work with the church leaders to determine the areas and people to focus on, and the best way to distribute the help.



Interns casing a well.

Our interns, early June to July 26, helped drill 2 wells, teach several CHE lessons, and aid in establishing a new farm plot.

The group from Lake Tapps Christian Church, Bonney Lake, WA – August 1 to August 18 – helped drill one well and establish a farm plot at Nakadukui. They worked very hard helping the farmers clear stumps from the farm plots.

Dan Bader and his group from First Christian Church, Canton, OH – August 17 to August 28 – were instrumental in constructing a worship center at Kangarisae, digging a well, and establishing another farm plot.



Canton group digging up stumps.



Finished church.



Clearing stumps Nakadukui.



Nakadukui Farm first water.



Preparing to plant.

We praise God for all the help and inspiration these groups brought to the church and us.

- Please continue to pray for rain for Kenya.
- Please pray for true reconciliation among Kenyans.
- Please pray for oneness and binding together for our team.
- Please pray that we at CMF and the churches in Kenya would have holy hearts dedicated to God and His kingdom.
- Please pray for protection from the evil one and safety in all we do.

May our awesome God who is able to do more than we think or imagine keep you all in His peace. Thank you sincerely for your prayers and support.

Gene & Melba

Gene, Melba, and Abe Morden