

**Subject:** Savuto - Hope and Brotherhood, Part II

Sunday 3 Feb. – Wednesday 6 Feb. 2008

Dearest Friends and Family,

“If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all. And so today I still have a dream.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

Bill, Claudia Freund, a mission partner from Germany, and I again traveled on Wednesday, 30 Jan. 08 to Nairobi. The previous week Presiding Bishop had requested that we travel with him and others from Tumaini Na UNdugu, (which means Hope and Brotherhood) to visit Nakuru and Molo Displaced Persons Camps. In last week's email, I stated that Tumaini Na UNdugu was made up of the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK), the Presbyterian Church, and the Anglican Church. We learned that in cooperation with the three churches Equity Bank, Britak, Housing Finance, Kenya Broadcasting Company, and a few other churches were all working together to bring peace and hope, food, clothing, and needed supplies to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) of this nation regardless of ethnic group.

We had called the Conference Office several times on Monday and Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> of January to make certain the group was still traveling to Nakuru and Molo as we heard numerous rumors and read news articles of the problems that were occurring in that area of Kenya. We knew that Presiding Bishop Stephen Kanyaru would never allow us to be in danger. He was constantly in meetings with Tumaini Na UNdugu members to make decisions regarding the safety of the team. Early Wednesday morning, we were told that they were definitely going. We traveled to Nairobi with no incident or road block. That afternoon while checking into our guest house we were told that the Nairobi - Nakuru highway was blocked and there had been much violence and killing in Limuru. We went to the Conference Office and visited with Lucy Kaindio, Women Fellowship Coordinator for the MCK. We shared what we had heard about Limuru. She said that there were two IDP Camps in Limuru, one for the Kikuyu and one for the Luo. As the IDP (predominately Kikuyu) from western Kenya returned to Central Kenya there was no place for them to go. In Limuru the problem was acute and thus the Luo people working in Limuru and renting houses were asked to leave and given a certain number of hours to go. Ruth and members of the MCK visited the Luo IDP who were staying at the Tigoni Police Station in Limuru, approximately 2000 Luo people on Tuesday. She stated that there had not been violence nor anyone killed, which was later verified by the news. The MCK had taken food supplies but the people needed cooking pots so they bought enough cooking pots for 2000 people. When the team took the pots to the police station on Wednesday, the number had grown from 2000 to 6000.

We met the members traveling to Nakuru at 8am on Thurs. morning 31 January 2008. We were to ride in the Presiding Bishop's vehicle which was provided by the Equity Bank. A caravan of vehicles left Nairobi. We were told we would not be traveling to Molo, only to Nakuru.



Presiding Bishop Rev. Dr. Stephen Kanyaru

On the two hour trip to Nakuru we never saw any violence or road blocks or riots or problems. After watching the news and reading the newspapers, we expected to see the results of much violence in Naivasha and Nakuru but we saw none.

Our first stop was the Anglican Cathedral in Nakuru. We had the great privilege to meet many of the leaders of Tumaini Na UNdugu. They were bringing 300 bags of rice (weighing 200 pounds per bag), 2 tons of clothing, needed supplies to include blankets (1000), soap, sanitary napkins, diapers, and underwear and logistical and counseling tents as the churches involved will provide counselors for the Displaced Persons Camps.

The leaders made speeches to a large group of reporters who were gathered. Each speech was different but all spoke of the sacredness of human life, the tremendous need for peace, forgiveness, and loving of our enemies, as God commands us. They shared that Tumaini Na UNdugu was created to bring HOPE and to work together with all ethnic groups to help all persons to rebuild a nation where people can live together. They called for the entire nation to help those who are displaced. Dr. Mwangi of Equity Bank stated that their bank slogan was "The Listening, Caring Financial Partner." He called on all companies, banks, etc. to live out their slogans as now was the time for action.

We had been told that we would visit two IDP Camps in Nakuru. One for the Luo and Kalenjin and one for the Kikuyu, Kisii, Kamba Meru, and Luhya. Presiding Bishop Rev. Dr. Kanyaru

We were headed for the Luo/Kalenjin IDP Camp when the news was announced regarding the death of the Member of Parliament (ODM) in Eldoret. We were informed we would still visit the camp, as we had a message of hope and togetherness for everyone, along with supplies and the leadership felt it was so important to visit both camps. However, as we neared the camp, the lead vehicle in the caravan made a U-turn. Each vehicle was notified that word from the IDP Camp Leader had advised us not to visit the camp at this time. That caused a great sadness as everyone thought it very important to visit and share with both camps.

We did proceed to the IDP Camp at the Nakuru Show Grounds. Presiding Bishop had visited this camp on Tues., nine days earlier, and reported there were 3,500 people in the camp. As we drove through a section of the camp, we were overwhelmed by the large number of people. We were taken on a quick tour of the camp. Our first visit was to the Camp Administration Offices where we were told that the camp presently has over 8000 displaced persons. Approximately 100 displaced persons leave the camp daily to travel to stay with family members or friends or churches that are willing to help and 500 new displaced persons arrive daily. Each person that arrives is greeted and data is collected so that there can be a tracking system for all the IDP's. **We also learned that in Nakuru District, which is approximately 20 miles by 20 miles with a population of 1.5 million people, includes Naivasha, Nakuru Town, Molo and some other towns, there are 71 IDP Camps with 206,000 people.**

We then visited the Clinic and saw the lines of people being seen and given drugs. We went to the store rooms of food and were very thankful we were bringing 300 bags of rice. We went to the several places where supplies were given to the people. Each had long lines.



Patients waiting to be seen in clinic hope



Presiding Bishop praying



People going to hear the message of

We then made our way into the Show Grounds where most of the people were located. We walked around watching the children, women, and men of the camp. We watched a few trucks being loaded with goods for people to leave and we watched two trucks from Kericho being unloaded. We could not imagine that so many people and many goods could fit in a truck.



Truck preparing to leave camp



Truck arriving from Kericho



Truck unloading people from Kericho

While the pastors and leaders of Tumaini Na UNdugu were giving a word of hope to a large group of assembled men and women, Bill began playing with a group of children. They completely surrounded him and I could hear their laughter and see their joy.



Bill with group of children



Boys playing on & under a table



Bill and one of the little girls

While Bill was playing with the children, I talked to three men about their experience. Patrick, a Kikuyu, was from Molo. He has a wife and four children. His home was looted and burned by Kalenjin, ODM supporters. He ran for his life and literally has nothing. He has been in the camp for one month. He shared that even the clothes he was wearing when he ran had been ruined. He has been given new clothing and is being fed one meal daily. He was born in Molo and has lived for 44 years there but was still considered a "foreigner" by the Kalenjin. We talked about his future. Yes, he would go home to Molo if there was true and lasting peace and safety for his family.



Patrick



Ezra



Isaiah

Ezra is 21 years old. He too is a Kikuyu and his family were farmers in the Molo area. They lost all their belongings and their home was burned. He has been in the camp for one week. Ezra was with a group of young men approximately his age. As we talked, I shared my hope that Ezra would be a leader amongst the young men and would work for peace and forgiveness. As I talked Ezra and the young men smiled and then he said that they knew revenge would not help anything. There had already been too much violence, too much destruction, too much suffering. He and his friends were not planning to retaliate; they just wanted to go home, back to school or farming. They wanted to return to Molo. We prayed together that returning home would be a possibility and that Ezra would be a leader to help bring peace to Kenya.

Isaiah, a Kikuyu, was the final person who talked to me. His situation was much the same though he was from a different area. He was born there and had a family and was a farmer. He has been in the camp for one month. His home was looted and then burned along with his land and his goats, cow, and chickens were killed. When asked if he would return home, his answer was not like the others. He sadly shook his head no and said he would not return. He had too many terrible memories of the day his Kalenjin "friends and neighbors" came to destroy his home, his property, his life. He had his family, for which he was thankful but everything else was destroyed. When I asked what his future plans were he said he would resettle somewhere else, have a fresh start with new friends and neighbors he knew he could always trust.

So what were our impressions of the IDP Camp? There were so many, many people and probably ½ of them were children. There is not enough food, water, shade, tents, or medicine for 8000 people and the number grows daily. The people were friendly and kind. We did not talk to anyone who wanted to kill, destroy, or take revenge but all were anxious to either go home to where they lived or find a new home. All were eager for peace. The emergency needs are tremendous. We are so grateful to the US Government for their \$5 million in humanitarian assistance. We are so thankful to the United Methodist Churches and others who are supporting the emergency efforts through the MCK and Tumaini Na UNdugu and UMCOR. The supplies that Tumaini Na UNdugu provided that day will be most helpful but so much is needed. And after the IDP Camps are closed the work will have just begun. The long term effects of the violence will take a very long time to heal. Soon, we pray, Kenya will not be in the news but it is then that this nation will need so much help and so many prayers.

Why are there so many people in Nakuru? "Nakuru is a town of 400,000 people from all corners of the nation and the globe. Truly one of the most cosmopolitan towns in the country where residents of all races and religions co-exist in perfect harmony" (Nakuru Town Constituency's Official Website).

Nakuru is called the hub for the IDP of Kenya. If one is traveling from Rift Valley and Western Kenya it is the first safe town they reached. For those that have been displaced from Central Kenya it has been the last safe town. And until 7 days ago it was a SAFE TOWN. With all the IDP coming through and/or staying in Nakuru Town it remained a safe haven for almost one month.

On 28 January 2008 violence erupted in Naivasha and Nakuru. What we had hoped and prayed would never happen, happened. After approximately 1000 people had been killed and 400,000+ had been displaced from Rift Valley and Western Kenya (mostly Kikuyu and Kisii) a small number of Kikuyu's began their revenge. Of course, as we look at numbers, it has always been a small number of people that have caused so much suffering. Out of the 36,000,000 people in Kenya, probably 35,500,000 have never participated in any violence, no matter what their ethnic origin, but have just wanted to live in peace.

In Nakuru Town and Naivasha approximately 180 people were killed as retaliatory violence prompted new retaliations. Few ethnicities were safe in the two towns as the sheer numbers of youth overwhelmed police efforts to restore order. The military was called in and on Mon. 28 January a curfew was imposed which helped the situation immensely. Since the curfew almost no one has been killed.

Human life is so precious and what is most tragic is the innocent have paid with their lives and their homes and property. Those killed originally and then for revenge were most often not the people who rioted, looted, burned, fought, and killed. They were innocent people trying to make a living and live in peace.

This past Thursday, 31 January, the body of the brother to an important business man in Maua was brought to Maua and to our hospital to be placed in the mortuary awaiting his funeral on Sat. He was married to a Luo woman, had 4 children and lived in Western Kenya. It seemed he and his family had escaped the tragedies that had happened to some of his neighbors. His family in Maua had urged him to come home, but he had felt it was not necessary. One day his wife came running home saying she had heard that a large crowd was coming to kill them. The man ran to his land lord for help. The landlord took him back to his home and cut off his head in front of his wife and children. When the crowd arrived they decided they would not kill the children and wife.

The day of the funeral the brother announced that people in Maua must revenge the death of his brother. He and others had written some fliers demanding that "all the foreigners" be expelled from Maua. (Actually the word foreigner in this context does not refer to the missionaries but to the other ethnic groups.) However, the elders and leaders of Maua immediately met. The Ministers of Parliament in our area came to speak words of peace. They sent out messages to the entire district saying that no one was to be expelled from Imenti District but all were to feel welcome and safe in any community in our area. They also told the brother of the man killed in Western Kenya that if a hand was laid on any foreigner, the first person that would be killed would be this man, as they would kill him themselves. Thankfully, what could have erupted into violence and blood shed and the adding of more displaced persons was stopped.

On Sunday when I began writing this email, I would have ended it by saying that I thought we were very close to peace. We were absolutely amazed at what we saw in Nairobi, on our trip to Nakuru, in Nakuru Town and our trip to and from Maua. From the newspapers and TV I thought we would see roads blocked and destroyed, rioters in Naivasha and Nakuru, burned vehicles, homes and businesses and general chaos. But in fact we saw none of this. On the entire trip to Nakuru we only saw one building that had been burned and we went by Naivasha and all through Nakuru Town. On Friday in Nairobi we went to Kangemi Slum. Though many of the slum dwellers are without work due to the lack of tourists, it was peaceful. It seemed that the violence was happening in very isolated places and often in places that have had a history of ethnic skirmishes. Today I am not certain. The peace talks were to last 7 days creating a road map to peace, resettlement and rebuilding the nation. Things don't seem to be happening and new threats and demonstrations are planned.

What are some of the impacts of these 6 weeks of violence. A decline in food security in all sectors – farmers and urban poor. In some areas businesses have been burned or looted and many of the working population no longer have jobs. Trade and transport to Kenya's neighbors

and other countries has been interrupted with road blocks and railroad tracks being destroyed. Fuel prices have increased which touches the lives of everyone as public transport costs increase. Living in the violent area and in camps have caused malnourishment, particularly to children with lack of fuel, food and inappropriate cooking facilities. In Nakuru, three children died on the day of the Presiding Bishop's first visit. Schools have been burned or abandoned, there is a shortage of teachers in many areas due to fear and violence. Last night on TV they showed a teenager weeping in one of the IDP Camps. He stated he had finished secondary school and his State Exam but all were burned and he had no proof of anything. At present we require proof to admit students in our School of Nursing or any other higher learning institution. He will probably be able to receive it at some point, but when? How long will it take? There are many new orphans and at present few places to send them. Rape cases have doubled in hospitals in Nairobi. Violence and running have disrupted access to anti-retrovirals needed for persons living with HIV/AIDS.

We need you to continue to pray for peace. To give now for emergency needs that are overwhelming the country. This past week Maua Methodist Hospitals out-patient numbers and our deliveries have doubled (488 out-patients and 17 deliveries on night). The District Hospital, which sees out-patients and delivers babies, has closed as they have no drugs as all have been sent to help in the IDP Camps. But do not forget to continue to pray for us after the peace comes. The nation will need to heal the raw and open wounds of so many, over 500,000 people will need to be resettled and their safety provided. Schools, churches, businesses and homes will need to be rebuilt. We will need your prayers and gifts to help make this possible. When we are no longer in the news, please remember us! We are very prayerful that peace will soon come and we can begin the long term work of resettling all the displaced persons, helping others to forgive and move forward led By God's Love. To heal and do the long term work that will be necessary will require resources from others as so many people have lost everything and will need to be resettled and yet we will have so few paying taxes and with the loss of tourists 1000's are out of work. It can be done as the people of Kenya are amazing. We pray that all Kenyan's will follow the Guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring forgiveness and compassion. We are not fearful but hopeful!

If you or your church would like to donate to help the Methodist Church in Kenya help thousands of Displaced Persons you can wire funds to:

ACCOUNT NAME: Methodist Church In Kenya – Projects  
BANK: Barclays Bank of Kenya Ltd  
BRANCH: Queens Way House Branch  
P.O. Box 30011  
NAIROBI  
SWIFT NO.: BARCKENX  
ACCOUNT NO.: 03-094-2110901

Please email the Presiding Bishop at [mckconf@wanachi.com](mailto:mckconf@wanachi.com) and state the amount wired, the date, name of donor, and that the funds are for "Relief for Displaced Persons".

Living with hope,

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Everything that is done in the world is done by hope. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.