

# **They Never Heard of Jesus**

## **(Journeys to Chemorongit)**

The following is an account of the events which took place last year as we made three separate trips into a remote valley which is located at the foot of Mt. Chemorongit.

### **Introduction:**

It was mid-morning in West Pokot. The sun was now beginning to chase away the cool air of the night. I was in front of Chief Phillip's house under a small tree sitting on a chair made out of sticks, drinking my beloved camel milk tea for breakfast. In the distance, I saw the chief walking and returning from town. He left alone earlier that morning to go and check on some government business in the small market town of Konyao.

Phillip is the senior chief of that area and has responsibility over approximately 30,000 people. His position had been appointed by the government, not like in years past when it was traditionally the position of the head elder of the village. The government decided that the position held too much power for the local people. It was still a very influential

position; especially for a young Christian man in his late 30's. My wife and I had met the Chief three years earlier at a ceremony dedicating the drilling of a new well for the community school. It was then that he invited me to come and help him reach his people with the gospel. Since that day, we have been working together.

Now as the Chief came closer, I noticed that he had three men with him. He introduced them and informed me that they had traveled 50 miles by foot just to talk to me. They said that they had heard of a white missionary who lived in a hut among the Pokots. They came looking for me to ask me to visit their village. They had been praying that I would come and help them reach their people with the gospel.

We left the next day. I was able to take my vehicle for the first 40 miles, but then we had to go by foot for the last 10 miles. There the church of 8 people met on a hill under a tree near the village called Nakali. The people told of their lack of food and that there was no one among them who could read the Bible. I prayed for the people and told them that I would return to my church with a plea for help. I encouraged them to continue to pray because we could only help as God

enabled us.

After returning home, we raised enough money to help the people of Nakali cut a primitive road. This road enabled us to reach their village by vehicle, thus helping us to get food and medical supplies to the people. We began to train two of the men from the church and often sent workers there to help them in their outreach. Also, we were able to get the church an audio Bible (called the Proclaimer) in the Pokot language from the organization, “Faith Comes by Hearing.” This proved to be a very valuable tool since no one of that village could read their own language. We then sent a young man to teach the children of the village to read Pokot. His tools consisted of a chalk board, the Proclaimer, and the Pokot New Testament. No one in that area had ever been to school. The church quickly grew to around 30 members.



**Lion Tracks**

In the fall of 2011, I again visited the village of Nakali. As I was climbing the hill where the church meets under a tree, I noticed fresh lion tracks. It had rained the night before, so the lion must have passed through that morning. I asked Elijah, a leader in the church, if there were lions in the area. He agreed, and then pointed north to a far mountain where he said many more lions lived. He also said that beyond that mountain there were many villages where people had never heard the gospel. That surprised me, and I felt that someone needed to go. Then suddenly I felt in my spirit that God wanted me to go. I told Elijah that on my next trip I wanted to go there and that my son Jacob (age 17) might also accompany me.

When I returned home, I found out that Jacob had already told his mother that he wanted to take off a semester from school and go with me on my next trip to Pokot. Then Tim Sheaffer, a pastor from Olathe, and Brett Cooksey, a former missionary to Kenya, both contacted me and wanted to go as well. It seemed that God had already picked the team and planned this trip in advance. This was especially made clear when Jacob and Brett arrived at the Nairobi airport on the same day, then Brett and Tim left the same day, all without communicating with each other! It gave the appearance of me being an organized leader!

## **The First Trip:**

We all met in Nairobi and drove 7 hours across the country to the town of Kitale where we stocked up on supplies and drove another 6 hours north to the village of Nakali. That evening we rested and enjoyed a time of fellowship with the people of the village. With great joy, the people worshiped, prayed, and listened to the Proclaimer (the audio Bible). We decided to get some sleep, since we had to get up at 4 a.m. to begin walking. As we were going to sleep, we could still hear the people listening to the audio Bible late into the night.



Four o'clock came very early. It was surprisingly cold as we were trying to wake up and gather our supplies. Our team consisted of 4 Pokots and 4 wazungus (white people). One man was carrying a drum. I asked him why he was taking the drum. I was surprised to

hear that the main reason he carried it was to alert the lions of our coming. It was an eerie feeling to walk in the dark through the bush and over the rocks and hills and listen to the sound of the beating drum. At first it was a bit alarming, but when the sun came up many areas looked as if lions could be lurking around. Then I began to wonder why he was not beating the drum more often.

After about 8 hours into the walk, we began to realize that we had a problem. We thought the trip was going to be ten miles long and we had calculated that it would take us approximately 5 or 6 hours. After many rocky hills and sometimes 115 degree heat, the Pokots showed us a blue mountain in the far distance. They said that we were going to the foot of that mountain. It was blue because of how far away it was!

To complicate things even more, I had twisted my right ankle earlier that day, and now it was getting worse. I thought that if I happened to turn my ankle one more time, I might have to crawl out of this valley. It was not helping that I was only wearing sandals, so my ankles did not have any support. I asked the team to please pray for me. They did, and I noticed that in about five minutes my ankle was totally healed! It then became so strong that my left ankle seemed to be the weaker of the two. Tim Sheafer

told us how his knee was beginning to lock up. We then prayed for him and not long afterward God healed his knee. The Lord was helping us, and we needed it. As we were walking, I silently prayed and said, “Lord, I know that this trip is not a surprise to you, but it is to me. You knew all along how hard it was going to be, and that is okay, because you are Lord. Now Jesus, I do not mind all of this hardship, but I want the whole village to be saved: every man, woman, and child!” I was shocked at my own boldness in that prayer, but strangely enough, I felt the Lord was pleased. I then began to believe that the prayer was going to be answered.

We were already out of water and the heat was becoming intensive. Some of us were exhibiting signs of heat stroke. We started walking slowly, going from shade to shade, hoping soon to find some water. We heard there might be a stream somewhere down in the valley, but it would take a few more hours to reach it. I began to have cramps in my legs. I felt that I just had to rest more or my body might shut down. I lay down under a shady bush. The ground was filled with sharp little rocks and thorns, but at that moment, it felt like a wonderful bed. Jacob decided to stay behind and take care of his dad. I was grateful and I knew then why God wanted him to go with me. I needed him. As a 12-year-old boy he wanted to travel with his dad to Africa, but now he was

like a Marine sent to help me make it. He was only 17 but he showed great maturity, as he was always serving the rest of the team without any complaints.

As we rested, the others went on down the steep mountain to try to find water. Tim said that he had to get to water soon because he had had a heat stroke before, and he knew that he did not have much time before he might have it again. An hour later they found a small mountain stream. Elijah traveled back up to us with some water. He found both of us asleep. It was a pleasant surprise to wake up and see his smiling face as he was handing us the water. We followed him down the steep path to the valley. We had to be careful because instantly the small rocks could come out from under us. We then saw the dry creek bed which led us to the stream. It was a beautiful small mountain brook. We purified some water, bathed, and rested for about an hour.



Then we continued on with our journey to find the nearest village. It began to rain and sometimes very hard. It was strange to be almost suffering from heat stroke and then to be cold from the rain. The sun began to go down, and after 12 hours of walking, we were very exhausted. We decided to make camp and send Elijah ahead to try to find the village. That night around the campfire, we heard people coming. Our scout not only found the village but brought many village people back with him. We were then told that it was only 2 more hours of walking. Early the next morning, we broke camp and began the final leg of our journey. We were

still very exhausted from the previous day's hike. At least I know I was. I was literally dragging my feet.



We then crested a large hill and began our decent. We could see a group of small huts in the distance in the valley ahead. Once we reached the village, people greeted us warmly. They brought out dry cow skins and placed them on the rocky ground for us to lie down and rest. It felt so good to stretch out and relax. The women of the village then brought us some hot goat's milk to drink. It was so refreshing, and it immediately gave us strength.

We then learned there was to be a gathering down by the dry river bed. We started walking down and heard the beating of a drum

and singing. The women and children were greeting us with traditional songs. Counting the men, women, and older children, there were about 55 people. I was asked to speak. The people of the Pokot tribe already believe in one God who is the creator of all things, who they call “Tororot.” They also understand and practice animal sacrifices. I could feel the Lord giving me strength, so from these two foundational truths, I began to tell them the good news of Jesus.

I told them that “Tororot” sent me to find them and to tell them of His Son, Jesus. I explained about sin, the holiness of God, and about our need for righteousness. I told them how Jesus came and gave up His life as a sacrifice for our sins. I asked the elders of the village to decide if they thought that God sent us or not. They said yes they believed that God had sent us, because no one else had ever visited them before. (We later found out that not only had they had never heard of America, but they had not even heard of their own capital city of Nairobi.) I then told them that if they believed in their heart that Jesus gave up His life for them and that He wanted them to give up their lives and live for Him. I invited any who wanted to do this to come forward and kneel down because Jesus was the king. The whole village came and knelt

down, and all 55 of them surrendered their lives to Jesus. The Lord had answered my prayer!



Afterwards, Benson and Elijah began to lead them in new songs. They were now rejoicing and worshiping Jesus for the first time. Later, they slaughtered a goat and continued the celebration. I could feel the Lord's presence, and I knew that He would continue His work even after we left. It was amazing to me how easily they received the message that Jesus is now living in them. Surely God has chosen the poor in the earth to be rich in faith.

We left that afternoon and traveled as the sun was going down so

we could escape the heat. Earlier that morning while I was praying, I felt the Lord warn me that an attack from the enemy was coming. As we started to leave, I noticed that I was starting to feel nauseated. I must have gotten a tainted piece of goat meat. It was so bad that I even had trouble drinking water. I had to hold a small amount of water in my mouth and then slowly let it trickle down my throat. Needless to say, this made the hike even more difficult. Then, to make things worse, I stepped on a large sharp rock. I instantly felt bones in my foot move out of place. It was very painful, and I could not pop it back into place. The team then prayed for both my stomach and my foot, but this time neither was healed. Then I remembered how the Lord had earlier warned me of an attack. That helped me not to be discouraged, so I just kept praying and took one step at a time. Any chance I had, I closed my eyes and simply gave thanks. I learned that giving thanks was a great weapon against discouragement. On numerous occasions when I did this, I could see in my mind the faces of the people from the village. In my heart I felt the Lord saying that these were the people who would see us in heaven and thank us for coming. Each time I saw this, tears would come to my eyes, and joy would overcome my discomforts as we made our way out of that remote valley.

We stopped during the night and slept on the trail. We were so exhausted that we did not even put the tents up. We just laid down on the ground and went to sleep. Occasionally, I would open my eyes and see the flickering campfire, the starry African sky, and turn over to snuggle closer to Jacob to try to get warm. Then I realized where we were and how the Lord had allowed us to be part of such an adventure; to find a lost people and help bring them to eternal life in Jesus. With tears in my eyes, I gave thanks and was grateful that my son was there to experience this with me. I then turned over and went into a sound sleep.

At 4:00 in the morning, I was abruptly awakened by a smiling Benson, saying that we needed to leave soon and travel before the sun came up. Benson is an incredible man. He is so full of Jesus, and he has energy all of the time. Again we quickly gathered our things and started out to finish the 14 hour hike. We were grateful to finally reach the village of Nakali and celebrated our safe return with a cup of hot camel's milk tea. In two days, we had walked over 56 miles through the rugged bush country of north Pokot! We left that same morning on a 7 hour drive to return back to the town of Kitale. Hot showers, warm food, and soft beds were greatly enjoyed. Tim and Brett then left to go back to the States, while Jacob and I stayed another 6 weeks in Kenya.

## **The Second Hike:**

After about a week in town, Dave Fraker, a missionary who did work in the Pokot, saw Jacob and me in town. He had heard what God had done in Chemorongit, and later he woke up one night with a burden for the people there. He wanted to know if we were willing to return because God had given him a great desire to go there, as soon as possible. I initially said “not now, but maybe next year.” I was still exhausted from the trip the week before. As I was trying to graciously say no, Jacob said that he would be willing to return. I must admit I had a mixture of feelings at that moment. I was surprised, frustrated, and proud all the same time; frustrated that I was feeling a pressure to go and proud that my son was showing such courage. I was again seeing God’s wisdom in sending this young man with me. Well, we left the next morning! I realized that if I was going to lead my son, I had better stay in front of him!

Early the next morning we set out to drive the 7 hours to Nakali. The people greeted us with great joy and were surprised that we had returned so quickly. “So am I,” I quietly said to myself. In less than a year, the church there had grown from 8 to 60 people.

That night they worshipped and prayed into the early hours of the morning. One thing I was very surprised at was how many different people participated in prayer. Benson was translating for me, as I heard one young woman quoting several verses from Romans chapter 8. I asked if she was able to read Pokot. Benson said no, but that she had been listening to the "Proclaimer" (audio Bible). This tool has greatly helped these remote people to grow in their faith. It was getting very late, and everyone was still listening to the audio Bible. We decided that we should get some sleep, since we had to get up before daylight. This time Jacob and I slept in a hut while Dave slept in his vehicle. We went to sleep as we heard the Word of God being proclaimed in Pokot, in the distance.

Again, Benson woke us up at 4 in the morning, and we set out on the 14 hour hike. I remember waking up and wondering if this was real or was I just dreaming of our last trip. Then the cold air confirmed that it was real. So I stumbled around with my flashlight trying to make sure I had gotten everything out of the hut. As we were about to go, I noticed that the Pokot brother with the "lion drum" was not there. I was concerned, but Benson assured me that we were not to worry and that the lions would not bother us. I decided to trust the local Pokots who live there, but I

thought to myself that if the Pokots panicked, I would be running right behind them.

Just a few days before it had rained and this made me not only concerned about the lions but also about the snakes, because they move around more after it rains. The Pokot area is notorious for its deadly snakes, mainly mambas and cobras. Both are considered two steppers; if bitten, that is about as far as you could go. Needless to say, this led to increased prayer for our journey.

About a quarter of the way on our trip, we suddenly stopped on the trail. Benson and Elijah, our two Pokot guides, were violently beating something with their traditional walking sticks. By the time we walked up to see what was happening, they had already killed a snake and had thrown it deep into the bushes. We asked them what kind of snake it was, but their only reply was that it was poisonous. A few minutes later, we encountered a green mamba on the trail that was coming straight for us but it turned to our left and went up a tree and vanished from our sight. From then on, I was keenly aware that the snakes were on the move, and I decided that I needed to be more alert in prayer. And be assured, it was prayer with my eyes wide opened.



On this trip, we were making much better time. We reached the mountain brook after about 10 hours of walking. There we rested some and then went straight to the village. We made it there in about 2 hours. We were surprised that we were able to make the entire hike in 12 hours! Judging by how I was feeling, this had to be God. I could not believe that I was even doing this again, and I was amazed that we were even able to keep up with our Pokot brothers. The Lord was surely helping us, and I was grateful.

Upon reaching the village, and because the rains had started, we found out that most of the people had left to go to the mountains

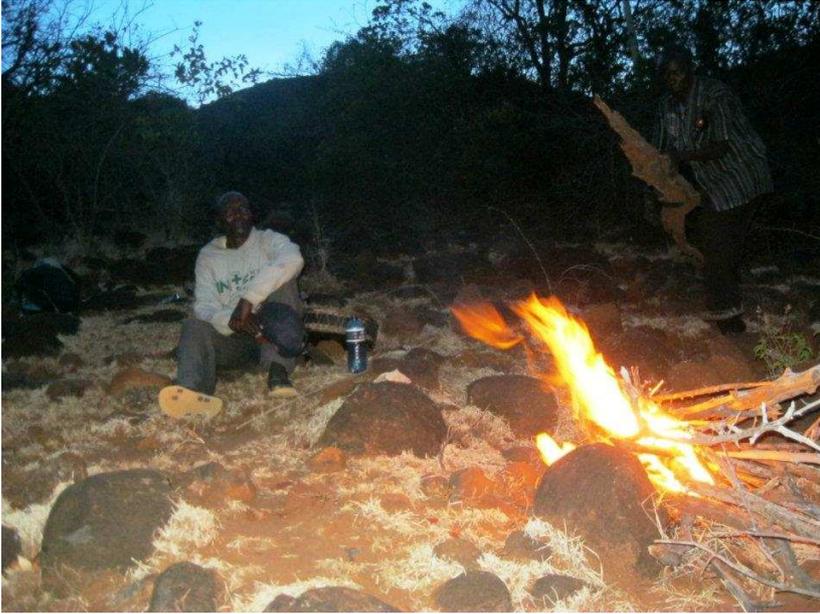
looking for food or planting corn. One older woman said that she had told the others not to go because she thought that the missionaries would soon return. We gave them one of the “Proclaimers” and spent some time teaching about 15 adults and numerous children. Seven adults were there from a neighboring village, and all seven gave their lives to Christ.

We told the people we would bring 800 pounds of beans to the village of Nakali on the first of May. They were to walk to that village and collect the beans. The same older woman, who had said that we would return soon, asked how many days away that we would be in Nakali. I then realized they had no concept of months. I counted and said that it was 10 days from that day. She slowly got up and walked over to pick up some small stones. She then said that she would keep these stones and each day she would remove one until there was only one left. Then they would begin the journey the next day to collect the beans.

After spending one night in the village, we decided to leave the next afternoon. Two men from the village agreed to travel half way with us. As we left, they told us of a shorter way to go. It proved to be shorter, but much more up hill. The evening sun was beating down on us as we slowly climbed the steep hills. It took us about 4

hours before we finally reached level ground. About half way up, I became very tired and hot. I told Dave, Jacob, and the Pokots to go ahead and find a good place where we could sleep for the night. Benson stayed with me to make sure that the old white man made it up the mountain. He saw how hot I was, so he prayed that God would send clouds but not to let them rain on us. Rain clouds began to form over a large mountain, and it did rain there, but not on us. It was a blessing to be shielded from the hot evening sun.

Without us knowing, the team ahead was walking very fast. As they were hiking at this fast pace, a snake quickly came between Dave and Jacob. Jacob almost stepped on it. The snake was so fast that later we assumed it must have been a mamba. The two Pokot guides decided on a place to set up camp. It appeared to be fine location to them, but to us it seemed very rocky. They quickly began to start a fire because the temperature was dropping rapidly. When we got there, we got out our bed rolls and tried finding the best place with the least amount of rocks to lie down. I was really exhausted, but it took me a while to go to sleep. It was probably a combination of the cold and the thought that some mamba might want a warm place to snuggle up for the night.



Benson got us up again at his favorite time of 4 in the morning, so we could begin the last part of our journey back to Nakali. Since it had been raining, the bugs were really swarming around our faces as we traveled in the dark. Three times I felt something crawling in my hair or on my beard. They were ticks. I then began to pray about that as well. About an hour later, it began to rain heavily. It was strange to be in Pokot and to be so cold. Now it was hard to even see where we were walking. This was especially hard for me because I had only worn Chaco sandals on both of these trips. My feet tend to hurt when I wore any other shoes, so this was all I had. The rain made it very slippery over the sharp and sometimes shifting rocks. Our guides know the terrain very well, but even the rain made visibility difficult for them, and we made a wrong turn.

We traveled for quite a while before they realized we were lost. We should have been crossing a dry river bed by now. We finally came across two young boys who were sleeping by the cattle they were guarding. They were quite startled to be woken up and especially to see white men there deep in the bush. One of them went with us and guided us through some very thick bush back to the dry river bed. It was still raining heavily as they used a machete to cut their way through the sharp thorn bushes. We finally made our way to the dry river bed. The sun began to rise in the eastern sky, and the rain finally began to let up. In a few hours, the air quickly warmed up, and we began drying out. We finally reached Elijah's village of Nakali. We had been walking a total of 14 hours, not counting our few hours of sleep. They welcomed us again with hot camel milk tea. We rested for about an hour, and then started on our 7 hour drive back to town. Once we arrived, we went straight to a local restaurant where we enjoyed a great meal. We then went to the house where we were staying to get a long hot shower and a much needed good night's rest.

### **The Third Hike:**

After our two difficult hikes to the valley of Chemorongit, Jacob and I finally made our way back home to the States. At the age of 17, Jacob was doing fine, but at 56, I was in need of some rest. In less than two weeks, we had walked over 112 miles through the rugged terrain and heat of North Pokot. My body was aching and desperately needed rest.

It was interesting trying to adjust to Western life after returning from Africa. After traveling for 24 hours, jet-lag is always an issue, and added fatigue complicated the situation even more.

With jet lag I tend to be more confused in the morning. After a deep sleep, I wake up to different noises and wonder where I am.

Am I in a hut? Whose hut? Where am I going today? It is always nice to see the ceiling of my bedroom at home and turn over and go back to sleep, knowing that when I wake up, I will be with my family. I have done this for almost six years now; traveling, living out of a suitcase, and constantly on the go. So, it is great to finally be at home and know that for a while I do not have to worry about moving anymore and can just rest!

It was during this time at home, that I received a call from Chief Phillip. He called me from Pokot to check on me and inform me of recent developments. Earlier he had told me that he had an uncle, a younger brother to his late father, who lived near Mt. Chemorongit. It was about a four hour walk further from where we had previously hiked. On the phone, the Chief said that this uncle was a well-known prophet in that area, whom the people called a “Libong”. This is more than simply a witchdoctor, but a powerful seer whom the tribe look to for spiritual direction.

The Chief told me that he had received information from the Chemorongit valley that his uncle had had an open vision of white missionaries coming to the valley. This was even prior to our first trip. In the vision, he saw that missionaries had spiritual fire. The missionaries would then place their hands on people and fire came upon them; then the fire would pass to other huts, villages, and throughout the whole valley. This greatly disturbed the old prophet. He reported to others that he feared the fire of the missionaries, so he wanted to leave the valley.

On one occasion, Chief Philip called me and said he had heard that his uncle could not find an area to migrate to, so he decided to remain in the valley. The old man sent word that he was now

willing to listen to the message of the missionary, and he invited me to come to see him. The Lord had done all this to prepare the old prophet to hear the gospel. Here I was in the States resting, and the Lord was already preparing my next trip. I was receiving a “Macedonian Call” from a powerful prophet to come and give him the message of Christ. With all of these events occurring, I knew that I was to return as soon as possible. No one was able to return with me this time so I decided to go alone.

Another incident involved an injury to my right knee; I had never had knee problem in the past. I received prayer a number of times, but it was not getting any better. I knew the injury was from the enemy to discourage me from going, but the old prophet was asking for me and I had to go. I could not imagine getting to heaven after having an invitation like this and trying to give the Lord an excuse. So I just told Jesus that He would need to heal me along the way.

In September of 2012, I traveled back to Kenya by myself. I finally got my Landcruiser fixed, and left for Pokot. I visited my key leaders in the town of Konyao. We had training using the first draft of our new discipleship manual. We also planned our next hike to the valley of Chemorongit. While we were visiting a new

village church my vehicle began overheating. We ventured up the mountain to return to Kitale but travelled only short distances and then allowing the engine to cool. Upon on return, our mechanic advised us that it was the radiator, and even though we tried to be careful, the aluminum engine head was damaged.

After this news, I was faced with a decision. Should I abandon the trip or should I press on? I again remembered the invitation from the old prophet and decided that - press on I must. As I was packing the night before, I felt a very strong oppression. I had felt this before and instinctively knew it was witchcraft. It was strong enough to make me want to get on a plane and go home. But experience had taught me that a great blessing was just ahead and that I needed to persevere. So the next morning, I used public transportation to go down the mountain to the Pokot area.

I left at noon from Kitale in a vehicle with 16 Kenyans. If I had been driving, the trip would have taken me about 4 hours to reach Konyao, but instead it took 11 hours. We had 3 flat tires, and one was just after we reached the bottom of a steep mountain pass. Having a flat tire going down that mountain could have been disastrous. We finally reached the Chief's home around midnight. We planned to leave on motorcycles around 6 o'clock in the

morning. Although the night was very hot, I was extremely tired and went straight to bed falling asleep quickly. Then I suddenly felt something crawling across my chest. I immediately thought it was a spider, so I instinctively grabbed it with my hand and threw it to the floor. Instantly I felt sharp pain. I knew the pain did not seem to be from a spider. I reached for my flashlight and then realized what it was. It was a scorpion.



I had recently looked it up online. The scorpion is called the **Death Stalker, *Leiurus quinquestriatum***, and is known to be one of the most deadly scorpions of the world! It stung me on my left index finger. It initially felt like a wasp sting, but with every beat of my pulse it felt like it was stinging me all over again. It was a very sharp pain. Then I noticed that my hand began to ache with a slight paralyzing pain. This paralyzing, aching pain began to run slowly up my arm, then to my shoulder and chest. All this time, the pulsing sharp pain continued, and I began to sweat from both the

pain and the heat. Needless to say, I was not going back to sleep anytime soon. I decided to leave my mosquito net and venture outside where it was much cooler. As I enjoyed the cool air, the mosquitoes enjoyed me. But I reasoned that if I could not stop the pain, at least I was going to cool off. After an hour, I was concerned that the ache in my chest could be my heart! I called my wife in Kansas, and she advised me to wake up Chief Phillip. He and Benson said that I was lucky that it was not a large one or I would be in trouble. I finally managed to lie down and get a little sleep. Before I could get to sleep, thoughts kept going through my mind. I had always prayed that I “would walk over snakes and scorpions, and they would by no means harm me.” Now the enemy was saying to me that while I was asleep, he got me with a scorpion and that when I got on the trail, he would get me with a snake. I was praying before we left that morning, I had a vision in which I saw a snake biting me just above my right ankle. That was not a very comforting thing to see while praying! This vision had really started before I left the States and now, after this scorpion sting, this vision became even more alarming.

We left early in the morning and traveled by motorbike. By this time my chest had stopped hurting, but I was still aching from my shoulder to my hand. As I rode on the back of the motorcycle for

over 3 hours, sharp pains were still coming from the initial sting. The road was very rocky and bumpy. We finally arrived in the town of Alale around noon and stopped at a local café. There we drank hot camel's milk tea while we ate beans with our fingers. One motorbike had to get a flat tire repaired while the other one began carrying members of our team the last ten miles. I volunteered to begin walking and wait for my turn to ride later. I was looking forward to stretching my legs after that long bike ride. By now only my hand was aching. It actually took around 8 hours for the pain to disappear. I walked for over an hour when the bike came back for me. By this time it had started to rain. After about 5 minutes on the bike, the rain became very hard. The storm was coming from the top of the local mountains so the rain was also very cold. We then began to go down a steep slippery hill when the bike came out from under us. We were going very slowly and the ground was full of soft mud, so the fall was not harmful. This soft landing was also contributed to the fact that the brake pedal had taken most of the blow. It was now broken and dangling. We tied it up with a small rope to keep it from dragging. I elected not to get back on the bike but just to walk the rest of the way. The total walk was about 10 miles which I made in about 4 hours. I finally made it to the village of Nakali, very tired and wet from the cold rain. The grass thatched hut was warm

and comfortable. It is funny how circumstances can change your view of things. In the past, staying in such a hut was considered an uncomfortable event, but now it felt like being at a Hilton Hotel. It was still raining outside, but I began to dry out as I enjoyed the fire in the hut, along with a few chickens and an occasional baby goat that would venture in to get out of the rain.

I was looking forward to getting my mat and sleeping on the smooth floor of the hut, but Elijah insisted that I sleep on his bed instead. I knew to refuse would be an insult, so I graciously thanked him. I also began to have second thoughts about sleeping on the floor when I remembered the scorpion from the night before. At first the bed looked comfortable, but as I lay down, I quickly noticed that the whole bed was made out of sticks; not just the frame but sticks were the “mattress,” as well. Needless to say, not all sticks are created equal. However, due to exhaustion, I quickly fell asleep. We woke up early to a breakfast of beans, and then left to find the old prophet.

We had heard that he was waiting in the valley for me to come, but after the death of his wife and one of his sons, we now learned that he had migrated out of the area due to fear that he too might die there. He still wanted to talk to me. I decided that all of the

opposition that I was having on this trip was related to the importance of finding the old prophet. We walked 5 miles in the opposite direction of Chemorongit in hopes of finding him. We crossed dry river beds, hills, and finally reached the mountain where the old prophet lived. The sun was now coming up, and it was quickly getting hot. I noticed that my guys leading the way kept kicking over small piles of rocks. I later was told that these piles of rocks were thought to have certain charms hidden inside of them. Someone was using witchcraft trying to keep us from reaching our destiny. As we reached the top of the mountain, a man around 40-years-old met us and was not happy that we had reached the top. We learned that he was a son-in-law of the old prophet. We looked to our left and saw two men sitting under a tree. The older one was the prophet. We just walked straight to him, as the first man was still objecting. I greeted the old man in Pokot, and he invited me to sit with him. Then Chief Phillip introduced himself, and the old man smiled. The Chief was the son of his older brother who had died many years ago. The old man said that Phillip resembled his father and was very pleased to see him. Phillip was also very happy since he had been praying for his uncle for a long time, hoping that one day he would hear the gospel. I told the old prophet that I had been praying and searching for him. I also told him that I had heard that he wanted

to see me. I asked him what I could do for him. He quickly replied, “I want to hear the good news.” I then explained in detail the gospel message of how Jesus gave His life for us. I said that Jesus was asking him to give up his life to follow him. I then asked him if he believed these things were true. He said he did. Then I encouraged him to get on his knees and bow down to Jesus. He immediately did this and the man next to him got on his knees as well. I also saw someone beside me on their knees. When I turned around to see who it was, I realized it was the man who earlier had resented us being there. All of them bowed their knees and gave their lives to Jesus Christ!



We explained what Baptism was and that we were going to have a baptism that afternoon at the river. Since the women had already gone to town, and because the men could not leave their animals unattended, they would like to be baptized later in the day. The

old prophet was also not feeling well and could not make it to the river at that time. We prayed again for him and went on our way rejoicing in the victory that the Lord had given. On our way to the river, they told me that the old man had influenced over 1,000 people in the Chemorongit valley. They usually would go to him and ask when and where they should go to make cattle raids in the Turkana, their neighboring enemy tribe. In the past, he would have a vision and tell them exactly when and where to go. Now that he had left the valley, their spiritual leader was gone. We now knew how important the trip would be the following day.

We left the old prophet in search of a place to baptize people from Nakali, the village where we had spent the previous night. We came to a waterhole that had not dried up yet, and a crowd was waiting for us. On that day we baptized 30 people. We then walked back to the village and ate beans again. I was given the same bed of sticks and slept as much as I could before I was awakened by Benson at 4 am. We quickly got ready and started out while it was still dark on our 28 mile (one way) vigorous hike.

It had been raining lately, so the bugs were really out and our flashlights attracted them. Due to the rains, the bushes were full, and the grass was high. I could not help but think about my vision

of a snake biting me, especially when we were walking through the tall grass. Resisting fear and having faith to pray against snakes was a constant struggle. The sun came up, and the heat began to rise. Once again Benson was faithful to pray and ask the Lord for cloud cover, but no rain. In about 20 minutes, only the clouds came, and it helped cool us down. About 4 hours into the hike, we hid some big jugs of water for our return trip. We had learned last time that this was a very good idea. On the way back, good water was so refreshing.

I knew that people were praying for this hike because I was feeling an unusual amount of strength and energy. The team of Pokots kept talking about how the old white man had so much energy. I knew that it was only the grace of God that I was able to do this. About 6 hours into the hike, we started to climb some high mountains and that is when I felt my right knee beginning to hurt. It not only continued but the pain worsened. On one of our resting stops, I told the team that my knee was paining, and I needed them to pray for me. They quickly laid hands on me and prayed with much faith. About ten minutes later, I noticed that my knee was no longer hurting! I had told the Lord earlier that I was going on this trip and that He would have to heal me along the way. And in His faithfulness, He did. His timing, as usual, was perfect. I could feel

the team's compassion for me as they prayed. They treated me as a father and told me often how that appreciated my willingness to travel to such a remote area to help reach their people. After 8 hours into the hike, we hid more water and took a longer time to rest, eat, and to be refreshed. The clouds were still over us, and I kept encouraging them to continue while we still had clouds. By this time everyone knew that it was God giving me this strength. I was by far the oldest with Benson, the closest, being 11 years younger. To them I was a very old man at 56. I usually let my white beard grow long before I go to Pokot. To them a white beard makes you a respected elder. Many think that I must be over 75 years of age for they have never seen a white beard that long. I don't tell them any different. Paul said, "I become all things to all men that I might save some."

After 11 hours of walking over hills, mountains, rocks, and thorns, we were getting close to our destination. I heard Chief Phillip raise his voice. He had just seen a mamba! He said that it was about 5 feet long and traveled very fast down the trail away from us. He said that it went straight as a bullet and did not even seem to wiggle. Mambas are lightning fast, as well as deadly. These two things are why they are so greatly feared. Needless to say, this renewed my prayer against snakes. In about an hour, we were in

the village we call Chemorongit. It is actually just the first small village in the valley of Chemorongit with even larger ones further in. We made the trip in record breaking time of 12 straight hours of walking. Once again the older women welcomed us as they brought out a dry cow skin for us to lay on. Then minutes later they were giving us hot goat's milk. This was the first time I had worn boots. On earlier trips I had only worn sandals. I remember how good it was to take off those boots after such a long journey.



After resting a while, we learned that 3 older women were there visiting from a neighboring village. They had walked 8 hours to come hear the Good News that it was possible for them to receive

eternal life. After meeting them and seeing that one seemed to be over 80-years-old, it humbled me, and I no longer thought it such an accomplishment of walking 12 hours.

I pitched my tent, and the others slept in the small huts. These huts are no higher than 5 feet tall. The walls are made of sticks with mud on top for the roof. I was so exhausted that I got in my tent early, rolled out my mat, laid down, and did not get up until the next day. As I was about to go to sleep, I thought about what little sleep I had had over the last 3 days, how little food I had eaten, and how much I had walked during that time. I had walked a total of 48 miles within the last 3 days. It then began to rain very hard, and I fell into a deep, deep sleep. I woke up in the morning hearing people talking loudly in Pokot, and it was then that I noticed that the tent was full of water! My mat was soaking wet. I had slept so soundly that I was not aware that I was surrounded by water. I got up and drained my tent from all the water. Though I had slept well, I was still feeling tired.

This was Sunday morning and somehow I needed to get strength to walk another 2 miles to where the church meets by the river. We started out walking, and as we were on our way, I noticed little pools of water on the holes in the large rocks and boulders. The

Pokots would just stoop down on all fours and drink the water from the holes. Then right after them, the dogs would do the same thing. It's no wonder they have so much sickness.

We reached the river and under a very large tree the people had already gathered and were worshipping. They told me to come and sit under another tree about 50 feet away. There they were cooking beans which they served me with hot camel's milk tea. It was so good and immediately I felt strength. They had made rustic benches by putting a long branch on two shorter "Y" shaped branches, and it formed a large circle under a large Tamarix tree which is known for its shade. There was a slight breeze, and I could hear the rushing water from the small mountain stream which they called a river. It was a perfect place for a church to meet. The men began coming and would lean all of their weapons against a small tree outside the circle. They were mostly bows and arrows, but there were a few AK47 assault rifles.



It made me think about how we hang up our coats, hats, and umbrellas as we go into a church meeting. Many of the men showed me where they had been shot in battle with the Turkana and told me how many of their friends and relatives had been killed. Some said that now they were following Jesus, they no longer made raids into the Turkana area stealing cattle. After worship and sharing the Word of God, many people wanted to be baptized. We baptized 53 people that day. It was such a joy seeing the 3 older women, who had walked for 8 hours, give their lives to Jesus and were baptized. The eldest woman who appeared to be 80-years-old was especially hard to immerse in the water. I don't think she had ever had her head under water. I realized that one reason she was still alive was because of how strong she was!

I also noticed that many of the men were not coming forward to be baptized. They told me later that they had wanted to, but they believed that they should be baptized separate from the women. I told them that we would have a men's baptism the next time I came. I was so amazed at how transformed these people had become from our first encounter six months prior. They had so much more life and joy!



After church, the ladies cooked lots of beans for everyone. This was so different from the first time we visited the area. The people had very little food. I even had to pay for a goat to be killed, and it was shared by everyone. Now one of the members freely gave a goat for the meal. The people had plenty of beans because we sent

them 800 pounds of beans after the second trip to Nakali. Thirty people (mostly women) walked 28 miles to the village of Nakali where we were able to deliver the beans by vehicle. It was right before the rainy season, so most of the beans were planted. God gave them a bountiful crop. Now we were eating from this bounty. The beans tasted great, of course, under the circumstances, I guess almost anything would taste great. They had some bowls, but we had to eat with our fingers. I had learned early on the wisdom of shaking hands with your right hand and reserving your left for eating. Sometimes I don't have a chance to wash my hands, or I have forgotten the hand sanitizer. I was enjoying the fellowship and eating the beans when I noticed some of the young warriors using something as a spoon. It was the front narrow metal piece of the magazine clip from their AK47 assault rifle! Through an interpreter, I joked with them to make sure they cleaned the piece well or they might be shooting beans instead of bullets.

We then said goodbye to the three older women. They were beginning their 8 hour journey back to their village. They left around 4pm and might have gotten back to their village by midnight or they might have slept on the trail. They invited us to come to their village, but since my water purifier was not working

correctly, I told them that it would have to be on another trip. They insisted that next time I was to visit their village. I learned that their village was a larger one of over 200 people. They hugged us and left to go on their way, rejoicing in their new-found life in Christ.

We then walked 2 miles back to the small village where we had camped. I was tired and had thoughts of going to my tent and lying down. When I got to my tent, I noticed a dead monkey on the ground in front of it. My first thought was some sort of witchcraft was being preformed against us, but upon inquiring I found out that it was killed by some small boys in the village. I was relieved to hear that no “monkey business” was going on.

At the end of the day, I became very tired. I told everyone I was going to bed, and the Chief decided to join me. We got in our tent and into our sleeping bags. I could hear voices of people talking in Pokot outside our tent. As I was about to dose off, the Chief asked me if I wanted to know what the people were saying. I told him “yes”. He told me that it was a conversation between an older woman and a young boy. She was asking the young boy why he was not baptized that day. The young boy said that the men wanted to be baptized separately from the women. The woman

then began to rebuke the boy. She said, “You foolish young man. Do you not realize what has happened? Why do you think the prophet left the valley? He left because he was afraid of the God of the missionary. Then the missionary went looking for him and found him. Now we have heard today that the old prophet gave his life to Jesus. You should have been baptized today, you foolish young boy.”



I then began to realize even more how important it was that we had been able to reach the old prophet with the gospel. The Lord allowed us to overhear this conversation, and this message was traveling right now throughout the whole valley. God was again going before us and preparing the people to receive the message of His Son. I knew that our next trip would be a very important one.

That many, if not all 1000 in that valley, might be reached with the gospel.

We sleep well that night, and again Benson got us up around 4 a.m. so we could get ready for the long hike back to the village of Nakali. The first four hours on our return trip was a steady incline. I was relieved once the trail began to level off. The sun was now getting high enough that the cold air from the night was quickly being replaced by heat. It's always amazing to me how quickly it can get so hot when the sun comes out. The reason is that we were in a high elevation, and the equator was only about 100 miles south of us. Here the rays of the sun are quite intense, especially for my light complexion. It felt as if there was a huge magnifying glass above my head.

Once the heat was upon us, thirst became a factor, and my water purifier was not working. I was trying to take small sips in hopes that we would soon reach our midway mark where we had hidden some water. Then I began recognizing the area and knew that we were getting close, as I could see the large pile of stones marking the place where we had hidden the water. Elijah went behind the rocks and down the hill to get the water. It seemed to be taking him far too long, so I began thinking that the baboons might have

found it, and the rest of the trip would be dangerous with the noonday heat. Then we heard Elijah coming through the bushes. He had the water him, and I was relieved. I prayed and gave thanks as I drank the fresh cool water. It tasted wonderful.

After a small rest, we started out to finish the hike. Benson prayed for our safety and for clouds to cover us. I was also praying quietly against any snakes because the vision of being bitten was still on my mind. The grass in some areas was still high, even though we had sent two local Pokots ahead with machetes to clear the thick bush. With the trail cleared, it was much easier, and we were not being held back by the thorns as much. Fatigue was beginning to set in. All of the traveling, lack of food and sleep was beginning to take its toll on me. I needed to stop and rest more. The Lord was faithful and continued to cover our journey with clouds. At least the heat was not contributing to my weariness. It was just sheer exhaustion, even to the point that I didn't even want any food or water. Not wanting food was somewhat acceptable but not wanting water was quite dangerous. I would try to drink a small amount, but part of it would come back up. I knew I needed to go slowly until I could get back to the village and finally get some rest.

We made it to one of the major dry river beds. It is a good place to rest in the shade and the soft cool sand. But as we approach the river bed, I could smell something cooking. When we arrived, we saw that some Pokots from a nearby village were roasting a camel. They graciously invited us to join them. The team was excited at the offer, and normally I would be too. Though I have had camel's milk many times, I had never eaten camel's meat. I had heard that it was very good and always hoped to get a chance to taste it, but not this time. Even the smell of the meat was nauseating to me. I told the others to stay and enjoy it, but I was going to slowly move on. I was walking so slowly that it did not take them very long to catch up with me.

We soon reached the primitive road which had been recently cleared. It was really just a very wide path. There were still stumps and large rocks that would prevent most any vehicle to pass. But to us it was a sign of civilization and that the village of Nakali was nearby. About 45 minutes later, I was resting on that bed of sticks again. This time it felt wonderful. The ladies brought me some of my beloved hot camel milk tea. I was soon refreshed and laid down for a long nap. Though it had only taken us 12 hours to reach the valley of Chemorongit, it took about 14 ½ hours to do the return trip. I was just glad to be back safely. I

knew then that the hardest part of my trip was now over and that in about a month I would be on my way home to see my family.

With these thoughts in my heart, I gave thanks to God and went soundly to sleep, sticks and all.