

## ON THE LORD'S MISSION TO SOTIK

In the year 2001 the Creamery I was working for in Kenya divided the company operations into two administrative regions. I was posted to head the operations of the Finance Division in one of the regions. This came at the wrong time as we had just started an interesting Church group in Nairobi. This came shortly after I had just been ordained an Elder and was glowing in the excitement of the work of the gospel with a small group in Nairobi to fellowship with. My family too was in Nairobi and we did not think it would be wisdom to transfer the children to another school again. Career wise the challenge to head a Regional Office was inviting, but my first priority was no doubt the small Church group in Nairobi and my family. I could of-course move with my family but not our small Church group in Nairobi. ARM board under the chairmanship of Seventy Richard Neill too was concerned for the work and asked if there was away they could assist so that I do not leave the work in Nairobi unattended. In side me I knew without doubt that there was no way any body was going to transfer me outside Nairobi if the Lord did not order him to do so. I knew this was the Restored Gospel and I had been ordained an Elder in this Church and that meant my life and station was under no one else but the Lord God.

The first morning in Sotik I woke up in the morning and asked the Lord to lead me to the person or people he wanted me to share this gospel with so that I could return to Nairobi to be with the small group there. That day I met brother Ben \*, now a Priest in the Church and later met his wife Helen and their daughter Valerie Wangare. The same day I met Ben I told him that I was not going to stay in Sotik for long, but that I knew I had a mission there for the Lord God. That there was some body or some people the Lord had an interest in to receive this gospel. Even though Ben and his wife Helen straightaway responded to the Restored Gospel Helen soon heeded the call to “repent ye and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of your sins”, a head of Ben. At the Regional Office where I worked one of my Accounts Assistants Leonard \* who had a strong Catholic background stood firm for his faith, arguing the merits of the catholic faith as he believed it but soon gave in to the spirit of the Lord and his truth as Restored in the Church of Jesus Christ. Leonard is a Priest in the Church. The day Leonard was to be baptised his wife Emmy (now a devoted sister in the Lord) threatened to leave him if he ever joined “that strange” church.

The Lord so blessed the work so much so that within the very first month I was in Sotik we were holding evening meetings in my house where I taught the Restored gospel classes everyday. We invited people to come for the meetings and the numbers increased by each passing day. The Lord blessed our meetings tremendously as men and women would live work and instead of the men going to the local bars to drink alcohol and play pool table, they come straight for the meetings. Couples and neighbours met at the meetings and soon started coming together. Meetings would last up to past 11.00 o'clock in the night. The local church denominations went on the offensive and attacked our church as worshipping the devil. They started visiting individuals dividing them, and caused a lot of problems between wives and husbands, telling one this church you and your spouse have joined practices devil worship and you shall soon start seeing misfortunes in your family. They attacked the Book of Mormon and the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. yet they refused to meet with us for a discussion on these. In one home a wife burnt the book of Mormon but the man refused to reject the truth he had received.

One particular Sunday Morning things were so bad I did not expect even one person to attend our worship service. This found when my family had come to visit. I was feeling so low that morning, so beaten and worn out. The congregation comprised my

wife Pam and two little sons Dean and Presler. When I called to a session of prayer my little sons started praying asking God to bring in people to worship with us. These little guys truly offered prayers from outside themselves. Their prayers focused on the issue at hand without being directed to do so and with the holy spirit bringing words from their little mouths. I shed tears as I listened to the Spirit of the Lord speaking to God through the children. I was again ready for the work. Soon one by one the brethren started coming in, later than they always came for our worship services but they came. They looked tired and I could see from their eyes that it had been a struggle. And as we sang hymns joy filled our hearts and tears of joy and broken heartedness were shed. Fourteen attended that morning. Until the time I left Sotik those who came that morning formed the core group.

During this period of server attacks from the other churches a team of two men started using a tactic that was harmful to our surviving small group. One of them was an official of a local church. They would target the two single ladies in our group with lies about the Church and its doctrines and practices. When this became too much we petitioned the Lord God to transfer them away from our group members. After we made this prayer I knew the Lord was going to remove them from Sotik. It did not take long after this prayer and the leader of the two, and the most dangerous was transferred from Sotik. Shortly after his friend too got transferred away. We praised the Lord for the relief.

Our evening worships continued with this small band of men and women. From a daily attendance of about forty every evening our number fell down to fourteen. But the wheat had been separated from the chaff. We became so close; we were literally our brother's keeper. We became each other's best friend. Most of us who worked close by spent each day's lunch hour on prayer at the school ground where Ben\* taught. Others spent their lunchtime session praying in oneness with us. Each evening after work men, women and children gathered in our houses for study and worship. We moved from house to house, each carrying some thing for our supper, every single day of the week for those many months. The children would be assisted with their homework as adults separated into those helping the host with cooking while the rest worshipped. None of us felt better than the other or lower, that is why we were so happy, so free to ask of each other if we had need, so loving of each other. We spent our weekends together in different places we would make arrangements to go to for our recreation. My family would come to Sotik at the slightest opportunity they had. I visited them in Nairobi as much as I could some brethren always accompanied me.

That year we had the most exciting Christmas any of us who was there remembers, we were altogether for the three days, the whole congregation and our relatives who had come to visit us over the season. Brother Nelson's\* wife Elizabeth was a Jehovah's Witness who was invited by her husband and son Marvin for Christmas. Elizabeth's testimony was that she had never been to a place where people were so happy so caring and loving to each other. Elizabeth was attracted by what these people were to each other and how the brethren received her. And the Lord's spirit was there in attendance. My grand mother Salome who had lost her three older children within a short period of time and was still grieving rejoiced with this group of men and women who played and treated each other like they all belonged to one family.

The Lord showed his love to us in many ways. Today we look back at those days and wonder where we used to get resources from, none of us lacked. Those who did not have jobs confess to the fact that they would always get some employment that brought in enough money to care for the family and the Lord's work, that illnesses

even by children were so rare and nothing serious. There were also gifts of healings, Joseph\*, a former DJ and Club manager at Sotik who had suffered from two attacks of TB and was in fear of death as he had witnessed three of his colleagues die on the third attack by TB was healed from fear and a bad tonsils attack. Brother Joseph is a dedicated Teacher in the church today. Leonard\* was healed of a strange illness that the doctors could not treat for over along period of time, and this happened after Leonard lost his Job.

During this time I went back to my ancestral home village and got six young men who had difficult time and were jobless and brought them to stay with me. They had difficulties; some had problems with drugs and alcohol, while others were not welcome by relatives because of irresponsibility and suspicion of involvement in petty thievery. We started with a few problems but the love of God the father overcame. The Sotik brethren received them and nurtured them in Christ, and soon there was an outburst of power of the Lord in the hands of these young men. The Lord manifested himself to them greatly. During this period we used to have early morning worship with these young men before we would start the day, then lunch time worship and evening study and worship, daily. When later we sent them on missionary work the message that followed them was that which gave glory and honour to the name of our Lord and Saviour. The fruits of their labour exist to date.

We would also invite friends and relatives to come and visit with us for a few days and ministered to them. It is through Sotik that the Lord took the Gospel to Oyugis. Priest Ely\* received the Restored Gospel message with his wife Truffen and his friend Bruce while visiting us in Sotik.

During this time the Lord worked in the lives of the six young men written of above and blessed all of them with jobs. Where they had been idlers with no jobs, they now had jobs. And in an environment with server joblessness this truly was from the Lord and those who remained faithful have enjoyed his care upon their lives and have been blessed with families.

Throughout this time ARM board continued to send missionaries to support the work in Sotik and the rest of Kenya. Elder Doug Smith would probably be easily recognized in the streets of Sotik town as would sister Emmy\* ( Emmy owns a popular hair saloon in town). That period we held a women's retreat at Sotik that was attended by Sisters Dianne Anderson, Mildred Smith, Briannne Mundy, Pat Carrick and Elders Dale Carrick and Brian Mundy. All these missionaries ministered to the women and the men who attended the retreat. The saints in the US sent lots of materials through ARM board to support the work that the Lord was doing in Sotik and the rest of Kenya.

I was in Sotik for exactly one year before I was transferred back to Nairobi. The Lord worked with the Sotik group and it is from here that a good number continue to be called to go forth to different parts of the country to work taking with them the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. We lived exceptional experiences in Sotik. We were not out to live these experiences; we did not even know we were living them then. We were just being ourselves, yet looking at it later on we can now see that at Sotik we had a testimony of the fact that Zion can be here on the Earth. Yes it is possible for Zion to be.

Written by Elder Eric \*

\*names with held for privacy