



Spruce Grove Newsletter

Spruce Grove Apostolic Lutheran Church, Wolf Lake, MN

Vol. 10

No 8

November 2005

Editor's note: Eno has returned from her 5-week visit to a remote Kenyan village. She was able to assist and observe the work of Deborah Hendrickson, who is serving as a missionary and public health educator in the village of Arsim. She will continue to share her story as they leave Nairobi and go on to Arsim:

On our way north from Nairobi were beautiful views of the Great Rift Valley. This valley extends over 5000 km from northern Syria to Mozambique. The Rift Valley is called the Hula Valley in northern Israel where it divides the Golan Heights from the Galilee Mountains, becomes the Jordan River, goes into the Dead Sea, extends into the Red Sea, and then forks into eastern Africa through Ethiopia and then into Kenya. We traveled near the eastern side of the Great Rift Valley for most of our journey northward.

The journey to Arsim took two days, and was about 530 km (330 miles). As we traveled north, we crossed the Equator—of course I had to stop to get a photo of that! The roads were paved (including many potholes) for about the first 250 km (155 miles). Then suddenly the pavement stopped, and the roads (if you can call them roads) were rutted dirt roads. Fortunately, they were relatively dry, so we were spared from getting stuck in the mud. However, because they were dry, dust was everywhere.

After about 7 hours, we arrived in Maralal, which is like the capital of the Samburu District. We stayed overnight in this town. We stopped to pick up school uniforms for some of the students in Arsim who had placed an order with Deb. I was surprised to see treadle sewing machines being used in the garment shop. I guess without electricity, that's what a person would use.

We left the next morning at 5am and saw the sun rise as we traveled on the rocky mountainous roads next to the Great Rift Valley. The scenery was beautiful. We saw ostriches, zebras, crown crested cranes, and other animals on our journey. We got to Arsim a little after noon.

Arsim is in the Samburu District of Kenya. The map to the right shows the approximate location of



Arsim. The region is arid and mountainous. The village is quite small, and the area is very rural.

Deb works in the dispensary (clinic) in Arsim along with 8 Kenyan staff and one other missionary. Although the village is not very large, the dispensary serves a large outlying area covering many thousand square km with a population of about 7,000. The village has a Lutheran church and a Catholic church.

Every weekday morning devotions are held for the dispensary staff and anyone else in the village wanting to attend. I thoroughly enjoyed the singing and the devotions, even when I did not understand the language. I was given the opportunity to lead the devotions three times. The first time was on the morning of the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23), so I talked about how we need to be ready when the final trumpet will sound announcing our Lord's return. The next week, the day before and on the Day of Atonement, Deb and I shared how Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for sin. They do not have a Bible printed in their own language yet. The sermons are preached in or translated into Samburu, so those who regularly attend devotions and services can learn much even if they are illiterate. Although there are some very dear believers, there are still many with little or no knowledge of things written in the Bible.

Most of the Samburu people are pastoralists and tend goats, sheep, cattle, and camels. The people are somewhat nomadic as it is necessary to move with the herds to areas where food is available.

A Samburu hut is called an "nkaji," which is a temporary dwelling made of branches tied together lined with animal skins or gunnysacks. On the right is a photo of the outside of a typical nkaji.



Extended families usually have their nkajis in a grouping called a manyatta, which is typically fenced with acacia thorn branches. Children tending flocks of goats and sheep during the day return them to the manyattas in the evening for protection. Because it was so dry, most of the cattle herds had been sent hours away to areas where there was more food with teenagers acting as herders. Nearly every morning I would hear camels (they wear wooden bells around their necks)

walking by our house on their way to the watering hole. I watched women leading camels to water with babies on their backs as you can see in this picture.



I was able to visit a couple different manyattas while I was in Arsim. The first visit was to see a young mother (maybe 16 yrs.) who had just given birth to a baby boy. This birth was very special for Matthew (a believer in Arsim who works as Deb's guard from time to time) because this girl did not abort her baby. Nine months previous, a group of 9 young girls became pregnant and their parents were encouraging them to have abortions. Matthew wrote a letter to the community leaders saying that abortion was wrong. The people in the community were very angry with Matthew because of his stand, but one family listened and the girl did not abort her baby (the rest unfortunately did not listen). Matthew was so excited when he found out the baby was born, so he came over to tell us. We decided to visit the girl to bless and pray for her and her baby. (I was able to bring her a couple newborn outfits that had been given to me to give away.) Below is a photo of this manyatta visit.



l-r: Deb, Matthew, the baby's grandmother, the mother, and the baby

I was surprised that abortion was a problem in such a remote area, but I found that they face many of the same problems we do—they manifest in different forms. In the States, we try to make sin “politically correct” and sound less heinous. Maybe many Westerners would think their abortion methods are horrible, but would have no problem with an abortion performed in a sterile clinic. Either way, the sin is still the same. Sophistication of sin does not make it any less evil.

I thought about the strong community encouragement of abortions and about the common rapes that go unquestioned. I was distressed by how women in general are used and abused. The general disinterest in the children was surprising to me. They are left to be on their own for most of the day even by the age of 2 or 3. While I was there, over 100 children (about 5 yrs and under) came to the dispensary, on their

own, to be weighed and measured. Over 30% were considered undernourished. Fortunately, we had brought the “uji” (porridge) from Nairobi, so the undernourished children were fed uji every morning. (They found that uji had to be prepared and fed directly to the children because when the cereal was sent home, the men would eat it instead of giving it to the children.) As we observed a community soccer game one day, I was shocked as a referee walked by with a stick and struck anyone he thought was too close to the sideline. Government hospital workers sell crucial medications, such as IV fluids, on the black market, pocket the money forcing patients to find other sources for their hospital medications. These and other things made me really stop and think. What would cause such destructive and nonsensical behavior?

I realized that when human life is not valued, the consequences are far-reaching. It is not just a matter of abortion. The value we place on another human being determines how we will treat them. Abuse, apathy, and selfishness accompany those who do not see others as being created in God's image.

Although this situation may seem grim, there was a bright spot. A believer in the community stood up for righteousness and said he could not keep silent anymore about the abortions. Even after the community leaders became outraged and asked him to leave the area, he said would not back down on the issue. Pray for Matthew and his family as they endure this persecution. Pray for more people in the community to rise up and stand for righteousness. Pray that the Holy Spirit would do a work in hearts to show how much God loves each person.

The other manyatta that I visited was Matthew's. He wanted me to come see his camels and how he milked them. He even let me help him milk one, and then I got to drink fresh camel's milk (it is actually pretty good). As I was sitting outside in his manyatta, I asked him how many camels he had. He told me that in Rendille culture (he is actually from the neighboring tribe but is married to a Samburu woman) you do not count your camels. He said that when you count your animals it is being ungrateful for what you have. It is like telling God that what He has provided is not enough. He said that if someone gives a container with water for drinking they do not look inside to see how much it has before drinking. Instead, they thank God for it and trust that He will provide enough for their needs. Needless to say, I am quite happy not knowing how many camels he owns. I am reminded in my own life of the times when I worry about not “having enough.” The Lord tells us in Matthew 6, ***“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for***

they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" Could you imagine a mother not feeding or clothing her baby? Why would our Heavenly Father not take care of us? He loves us and has promised to take care of us. Why do we doubt His provision? Why do we always think we need more? When it comes right down to it, we have way more than we really need. In the US, we waste much and then complain that we don't have enough. While I was in Africa, I was reading Proverbs 30 and came across these verses ***"Remove from me falsehood and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with mine allotted bread; Lest I be full, and deny, and say: 'Who is the Lord?' Or lest I be poor, and steal, and profane the name of my God."***

My experience in Kenya showed me even more how there is so much more to life than making money. I was brought to a place where life is a little more basic—stripped of fast paced communication, news, and much technology. People were much more laid back, I commonly heard people saying, "pole pole" (slowly, slowly) and "hakuna matata" (no worries) or "hakuna shida" (no problem). Clearly, however, it was not without problems. I am learning that even when there are problems, we don't have to worry. We can trust God to take care of us regardless of where we are or what our circumstances might be. Even with sadness around us, we can rely on the joy of the Lord to be our strength.

Overall, my time in Kenya was wonderful, and I would love to go back. Deb is a very wise woman and well respected in the community. We had a blessed time together. Through this experience, I was able to learn so much about life and the Lord. I would like to thank you all for your prayers—they were and are still much appreciated.

To summarize, two of many lessons learned were:

- When human life is not valued in a culture, the consequences are far-reaching. Each individual is valuable to God, so treat others with love and respect regardless of who they are, where they live, or what they look like.
- Thank God for what He has given you, be content, and trust Him for His provision (it will not be lacking).

God's Peace,
Eno Yliniemi

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Grandpa's Reflections



"Singing Thanks"

I Chronicles 16:8-9

"Give thanks unto the Lord, call on His name; make known among the nations what He has done. Sing to Him, sing praise to Him; tell of all His wonderful acts."

Grandpa could hear every single separate voice! He had his eyes closed and was singing grace with everyone else, but he could hear each individual voice singing. "Be present at our table, Lord; ..."

There was his wife's sweet voice and his grown children with their beautiful voice-tones praising God. But it was the little voices that started the swelling in his chest. The two year old voice that always rushed ahead of everyone else with gusto just a bit off key and not really knowing the words. The three year old voice that knew the words now and still had the courage to sing out even when not certain of the notes. The five year old voice of an angel. The twelve year old voice of self-consciousness wanting to sing, but not wanting to be embarrassed.

The swelling in his chest increased until he thought he would explode with emotion. Tears jumped to his eyes, flowed under his eyelids and down his cheeks.

"...grant that we may strengthened for Thy service be. Amen." The song ended.

"Are you OK, Grandpa?" the five year old voice asked in the song-end silence. "Why are you crying?"

All the voices were now eyes looking straight at him. "I think Jesus was listening to your song of Thanksgiving by using my ears and..." Grandpa paused and thought a bit. "This may sound a bit strange, but I'll try to explain. I think when you give your life to Jesus, He sends His Holy Spirit to live in you... and sometimes when He is living inside you... He uses you to say stuff, or do things that He wants done on this earth. He uses your mouth or eyes or body... and maybe ears...?" He stopped and wiped his eyes.

Grandpa took a deep breath and said with a rush, "I think the Spirit of Jesus' love was listening to us sing our thanks and... and just loved it so much that tears of joy came to His eyes... I mean my eyes and I'm so thankful for Jesus and you guys that I can hardly stand it!"

Voices started talking all around the table. Talking about how wonderful it was to be alive, together, Praising God!

Love Grandpa

Wedding Invitation

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Levijoki
Together with
Mr. and Mrs. Reino Aho
Invite you to share in the blessed
union of their children
Gina Lin to Jamin Mathias



On Saturday, December Tenth,
Two Thousand and Five,
11:00 a.m.
Spruce Grove Apostolic Lutheran Church
Reception to follow ceremony at
Wolf Lake Lion's Hall

Engagement

Neil Aho and **Amanda Holgate** announced their engagement on Friday, October 28.

Amanda is the daughter of Ken and Pam Holgate and Neil is the son of Joshua and Deborah Aho all of rural Frazee.



Neil is employed by West Central Telephone Association and Amanda is employed at the Menahga Coop Hardware Store.

A February wedding date is being considered but a definite date has not yet been set.

Radio Broadcast

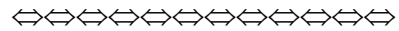
Echoes of Mercy broadcast – KWAD – Wadena
Sundays 8:05 a.m.- English--- 9:00 a.m.- Finnish
Elmer Yliniemi– November 6th and 20th.
Don Salo – November 13th and 27th.

Birth Announcements

Arabella Noel Aho, daughter born to Victor Jr. and Stacy Aho on October 2, 2005. She was delivered by a midwife at their rural Menahga home. She weighed 7 pounds and 14 ounces.

She was welcomed home by her brothers Victor III, and Alec.

Her grandparents are Victor and Lola Aho and Byron and Mary Saari of Ironwood, Michigan.



Mateo Troy Reynolds, son born to Troy and Mia Reynolds on November 4, 2005 at the North



Country Regional Hospital in Bemidji, MN.

Mateo Troy weighed in at eight pounds and one ounce.

His grandparents are Elmer and Miriam Yliniemi, Linda and Steve Edmondson of Coon Rapids and Bill and Kathy Reynolds of Minneapolis.

Youth Group

The youth group met at the Reino and Peggy Aho home on October 12th and at the Harry and Lori Aho home on October 26th. Eno Yliniemi who just returned from Kenya spoke to the group about her experiences there. If you would like to host the group in your home please talk to Pastor Elmer or Harvey Aho.

Gideon Speaker

A Gideon speaker is scheduled to be at our church Sunday morning, November 13th to talk about the work of the Gideons.

Funeral



Beulah Elaine "Bea" Skoog 76, was born March 24, 1929, in Gackle, North Dakota to Toivo and Aina (Wirkkunen) Koskiniemi. She passed away Friday, October 21, 2005, at Brooklyn Center,

MN

As a young girl Bea moved with her family to the Wolf Lake area. She attended country school near her home in Becker County. Bea graduated from Detroit Lakes High School in 1948. On September 10, 1950 she was united in marriage to Earl "Rudy" Skoog.

Bea's life work was providing a loving home for her family.

Bea is survived by her children: Bonnie and her husband Banard Clifton of Maple Grove, MN; Russell and his wife Laurel Skoog of Frazee; Jean Skoog and her husband Gregg Randahl of Bloomington, MN; Curtis and his wife Debbie Skoog of Crystal, MN; Troy of Golden Valley, MN; 16 grandchildren; four sisters: Amy Porkkonen of Osage, MN; Shirley (Norman) Kangas of Ironwood, MI; Elma (Will) Postell of Charleston, SC; and Vivian (Nick) Nutter of Hillsburo, OH; two brothers: Einard (Dorothy) Koskiniemi of Park Rapids, MN; and Ernest Koskiniemi of Detroit Lakes; and one sister-in-law, Helen Saukkola of Kimball, MN.

She was preceded in death by her husband in 2001; her parents; and three brothers: Steen, and Evert and Duane who died in infancy. The funeral was held at 1:00 P.M. at the Spruce Grove church on Tuesday, October 25 with Pastor Yliniemi officiating and Deborah Aho at the organ. Interment was at the Balmi Cemetery.

News and Notes

- ❖ Several congregation members attended the Pregnancy Resource Center Banquet in Park Rapids on October 13th. Our congregation donated funds for event.
- ❖ A bridal shower was held for **Gina Levijoki** which was hosted by Laureena Keranen at her home on Thursday evening, November 3rd.
- ❖ **Rodney Aho** is scheduled to return to the States from Iraq later this month and he hopes to be home about the middle of December.
- ❖ **Jason Aho** will be traveling back to SC and will be driving home with **Amy** and the children after they attend the wedding of Amy's sister.
- ❖ Many guests are in the area for the hunting season.
- ❖ **Gina Levijoki's** grandfather, Emil Hilman passed away and she attended a service for him in Iowa with her mother.

Remember in Prayer



"...pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a 5:16)

- Pray for wisdom and God's guidance for our leaders and protection for those in the military.
- Pray for those doing mission work in various parts of the world, and for our churches, that the Word of the Lord would go forth.
- Praise the Lord for **Eno's** safe return from Kenya and pray for Deb Hendrickson as she works in a very remote area and faces many difficulties.
- **Andy Aho** who will be having surgery on November 11, in Fargo.
- Continue to remember in prayer:

Rodney & Hannah Aho

Dela Nelson

Martha Aho

Lila Yliniemi

Anna Alanen

Violet Yliniemi

Elnora Matson

Shirley Yliniemi

Mildred Kangas

Esther Hendrickson

Edna Keranen

The Skoog family

Alice Ristinen

Services via Telephone:

The services at the church are available by telephone. It is free to everyone who can dial up any of the following exchanges as local calls:

Menahga-564-2030

Wolf Lake-538-2030

Sebeka- 837-2030

Verndale 445-2030

Nimrod-472-2030



By dialing one of the above numbers just when the service begins you will be prompted to give the pin number. You should then be able to hear the service. If these numbers are long distance numbers, you will have long distance charges. Pin numbers are in bold type as follows for the services in the month of October (Unfortunately you have to have a different assigned pin number for each service):

November 6, 2005-Sunday -11:00 A.M.—**02388**

November 11, 2005-Friday - 8:00 P.M.—**02444**

November 13, 2005-Sunday -11:00 A.M.—**02502**

November 20, 2005-Sunday—11:00 A.M.—**02550**

November 25, 2005-Friday—8:00 PM—**02564**

November 27, 2005-Sunday- 11:00 A.M.—**02580**

Building Fund

A Check for \$1,300 has been received from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans in matching funds for the building fund. This is in addition to the \$3,106 which was collected during the Anniversary Services for the building fund. This totals \$4,406 which has been added to our building fund.

Organist Schedule for November

Sunday, November 6, 2005:

Patricia

Sarah

Sunday, November 11, 2005:

Deborah

Friday, November 13, 2005:

Marge

Sunday, November 20, 2005:

Ramona

Friday, November 25, 2005:

Patricia

Sunday, November 27, 2005:

Deborah

**Spruce Grove Apostolic Lutheran Church
Pastor Elmer H. Yliniemi
19505 County Highway 39
Frazee, MN 56544**

Return Service Requested

Book available on line

A Godly Heritage

*Historical view of the Laestadian Revival and
Development of the Apostolic Lutheran Church
in America*

This book, edited by Aila Foltz and Miriam Yliniemi with Rodger Foltz, Jouko Talonen and Elmer Yliniemi. includes:

- Biographies of the Revival leaders and historical background of the movement.
- Information on the development of the Apostolic Lutheran Church and overview of the current status of the movement in the U.S. and abroad.

The book can be purchased from:

- Miriam Yliniemi, 218-538-6615 or
- Over the internet by credit card. See link on church website www.sprucegrovechurch.org

Price is \$10.00. Add postage and handling charge of \$2.50 when ordering by mail.

