

GOSPEL FIRE NEWS



Lake Turkana
A 16 year reunion

4



A near death experience near
Lake Turkana

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Toposa Medical Outreach
South Sudan

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“Truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”
John 5:24

Giving hope and joy to those deep in the heart of Africa.

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Dear friends,

After the film ended, Joash Okongo, a young dynamic Luo preacher, took to the stage and began to preach the Gospel message of Jesus Christ and His great love for us. He explained why we should turn from our sin and accept God's offer of salvation. I remember him sweating more and more as the evening went on. His face and shirt were soaked with sweat. His sermon was dynamic and full of fire. He really meant what he said and I felt deeply convicted. For the first time in my life I listened intently and tried to understand what he was saying. Ordinarily I was busy with all kinds of distractions but right now the Holy Spirit was convincing me and I was reflecting on my past behaviour.

I was only 10 years old at the time, but I was overcome with a feeling of conviction, something I had never felt before. Suddenly I realised that I had to take full responsibility for my young life and hand it back over to the Saviour from whom I

had first received it.

The film that had played before the sermon had softened my heart toward a relationship with God. I was impressed by the young man I had seen in the film and who demonstrated a real relationship with God the Father. I felt it was speaking to me deep inside my being. When I heard the call to come forward, I looked around and saw hundreds of people slowly begin to walk towards the front, people were standing in the aisles. No one seemed to care what others were thinking of each other as they moved forwards. They all wanted one thing: to approach God in prayer.

This was my moment. I too made my way to the front, completely forgetting that I was the only white boy there, kneeling in the grass under the tent, in front of the altar, it was just the Lord and I. Nothing could distract me. I poured out my heart to God. “Into my heart” we sang, “come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in, I beg you, come in and stay. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus, come”.

Giving hope and Joy to those living deep in the heat of Africa.



The Toposa villagers happy to receive visitors



Celebrating our arrival with the Toposa people

In August, we were able to take a team from Zwickau, Germany to our base in South Sudan. They drove our Unimog and trailer, packed full of building materials for the new toilet/shower block as well as some building material for the fence for our new agricultural project. Its always a big challenge to transport the building material to Naliel as the roads are so rough, and the areas are so insecure being prone to bandits and cattle rustling. There was also the challenge of crossing the boarder. Everything is high risk, unsafe and has fraught with hidden costs. Naturally all this created a memorable experience for the visiting team. It was the first time for them to drive such a long distance with a Unimog.

The team were not spared from the technical challenges we so often face. This time round it was 3 or 4 tyres punctures and faulty brakes, caused by the rough roads ...

The tractor made fit for use

Once we arrived at the base in South Sudan, The visitors got straight to work on fixing the tractor. The same tractor we that we were given by the district commissioner (see newsletter 2/2021).

With a few more fixes this tractor is now almost ready to be used to build and level a runway for our plane and to plough the land we have been given for the use of a demonstration farm.

School outreach

It was such a blessing for us to visit the school our missionaries have started and to see the joy on the children's faces as we spent time with them. After a short assembly, we taught some fun handcraft techniques that were trending in Europe with the children. It was so fun to teach them how to make necklaces and bracelets out of small rubber bands. Everyone was laughing and having so much fun.

The school has now been running for three years. For the first two years it was running under the shade of a tree and it has only been this last year that they have been able to move into the new school building. We pray that more workers, especially teachers, will get a burden for this area and can help this school flourish. Would you like to come and volunteer for a year or so? Get in touch.

Encouraging the new believers

These visits to the villages are a great encouragement to the new believers as they have so little contact with the outside world, hearing and seeing that there is a wider family in Christ that is praying from them all over the world brings them much



The tractor put back in action



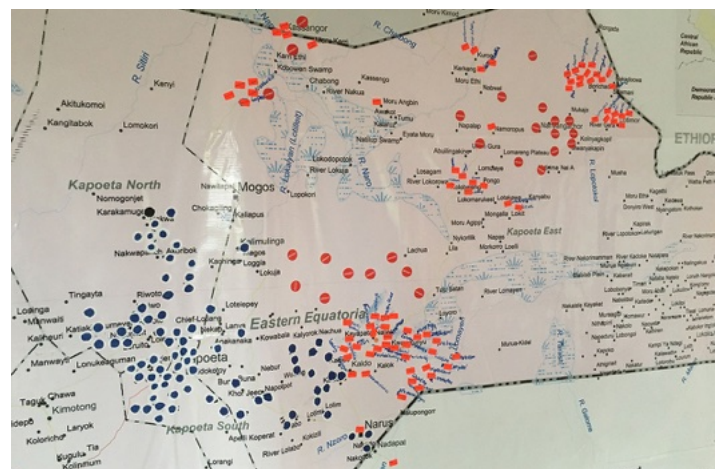
Test drive with the plough

Continuation of the Foreword

I lost track of time as we all knelt in the grass in front of that platform. I felt the sweet presence of God and had no idea how this decision would lead to my first steps forward in my walk with Christ, and what impact it would have on my life. This became a major turning point in my life. At that time I could not have guessed how much this point would wonderfully shape my future. I received an extraordinary attitude towards life, and a living relationship with God my Father through faith in Jesus.

Folks, Jesus is alive and everyone is invited to have wonderful relationship with God. It is never too late to start a new life with God.

Peter Franz



The red dots are our church fellowships, the blue where others are working and the red dots are totally unreached.



Traditional Toposa-style vs “western”. seating styles.



Tabitha teaching handy crafts in the new school

strength, especially as they face persecution. The way is simply too far and too unsafe and brings a lot of stress and hardship.

But God has given us this mission to bring the liberating, hope-giving message of the Gospel to all these far-flung places! Therefore, we will not be stopped but we will press boldly on.

It is simply wonderful to see how the work in South Sudan is developing. There are now 90 fellowships that have over 25,000 people being actively discipled, Imagine that is over 250 people per fellowship on average!!! Each one of these people is brand new in their faith and is slowly growing into maturity. Our team of missionaries visit many of these fellowships regularly to further teach and encourage the disciples in their new found faith. God is defiantly on the move and it is so so exciting to be apart of what He is doing.

Report from the German team:

The trip to South Sudan was one of the most formative and beautiful experiences I have had in my life. It was the first time for me to be not only in Africa but

also in South Sudan and we were able to experience so much! One of the most moving and beautiful moments was when we visited a school near the mission station and you could see the living conditions of all the teachers and children. It was also amazing to see the learning conditions for these children. Despite having absolutely nothing they were still so incredibly happy. It was also touching to see how grateful they were for the education they were receiving.

I was really shocked when I learned that there are only three teachers for all the students, which of course is far too few. I was also shocked to find out the teachers were voluntary and wored without any payment. I was also very touched by the way the children’s eyes lit up when you smiled at them or simply gave them a little something, even if it was “only” biscuits or balloons. My heart was filled with great joy when I could sing, pray, do handicrafts with these children and simply just be with them. I was deeply touched by how hopeful, reverent and joyful these children are, despite their circumstances such as illnesses, etc. I wish for this gratitude and joy in not only my heart, but also for all

people in Germany. My answer to the question whether I would travel there again would be a loud: “Yes, any time!

Naomi

Our trip to South Sudan was a journey full of miracles and unforgettable memories. We were able to experience so many good things, meet many lovely people, see children’s eyes light up as experience the power of our God. For us Europeans, the circumstances these people still have to live in the 21st century is unimaginable. Many of them have nothing to wear, they suffer from thirst and hunger every day. There is a lack of clothing, medicine, food, education ... The colour of the children’s “drinking water”, which they carried in small plastic bottles, was frightening, it was so dirty! Many of them are sick because of it. We were able to pray for a woman who had been paralysed since birth and for a small child aged 2. In such moments I was very grateful to know that Jesus has these lives under his control. God is so good and nothing escapes him! Looking back, I can say that it was a very formative experiences.

Katja



The team from Zwickau was a great encouragement for us



One of the many wells we installed

Turkana, in the north of Kenya.

A reunion after 16 years



Queueing to get food at our food outreach.



It is a pleasure to help people!

The last time we were on a mission in Turkana was 16 years ago. During that time we were working for GFI, and based in Eldoret, despite working there for many years I would still describe this outreach as a huge life experience. It took a lot of courage, and we definitely had to leave our comfort zone for this trip it was very life-shaping.

In October 2021, we set off from Eldoret with great anticipation - this time with an assignment to go to the South Lake region. So after a short visit to the GFI base, we got behind the wheel of the pick-up truck, and prayed and trusted that we would pass the police checkpoints with the few scraps of Swahili we were able to remember. We drove 350 km through mountains, down steep valley escarpments into the desert before we reached Lokori. The drive took us about 7 hours. The simplicity of being there in the middle of nowhere in the desert and



the warmth of the welcome we received from the team overwhelmed us! In the morning we set off as a team, accompanied by local believers. We looked for remote settlements where people were starving - starving in a double sense: On one hand for food and on the other hand for Jesus' offer of peace.

It was so moving to see how the men, women and children sang, danced and prayed together. How their eyes turned to look towards heaven! After we had sung, shared and prayed with them we distributed corn from our hands to theirs, or rather from a large 'dipper' into a old pot, sack or fold of clothing in their dresses. This reminded me of what Jesus said in Matthew 25:35: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me.... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." We handed out food from full sacks until everyone had received something. In the meetings, our two young girls, Nuria and Sarah, who are experienced in the youth movement, accompanied the message with a spontaneously rehearsed

song with movements. Not only the kids got into it with eagerness, but also the adults celebrated loudly! In the evening, the places around the Unimog filled up with many people. After the children's programme, there was preaching and prayer for the people. God's presence was visible and tangible! And as darkness fell, we started the open-air cinema with the Jesus film on the Unimog. This made the story of Jesus and his values tangible and understandable. Yes, how tired and exhausted we were late in the evening, totally sweaty and yes, filled with deep joy, with our simple contribution, to have been part of God's great story! And at the latest on the way to the tent, after a refreshing African shower (with cup and basin), under the countless stars in the night sky, the presence of our heavenly Creator was so close to us. Of course, there would be much more to tell! For example, the challenge with the Unimog and trailer getting stuck in a dry sandy river bed, the distribution of the microchip Bibles, the flight in landing after going through a the sandstorm, the stomach/intestinal upsets... in all of this we were able to experience the preservation and care of our mighty God! Thank you Jesus!

Beatrice & Patric

Two voices from the mission:

"I realised anew that despite all the poverty, the Turkana have a radiance on their faces. This shows how great our God is and that no wealth in this world can give us real joy except Jesus!"

Nuria

"When I looked at the faces of the Turkana children, they looked no less happy than the people in Europe. This is my proof that it is not money or power that makes people happy, but God alone!"

Sarah



Drama at Lake Turkana

Satisfied hunger and cared for a severely injured man



Even in the distance people hear the Good News



Showing the Jesus film late into the night

We were just wrapping up from an amazing food outreach in the south lake area of Turkana. We had an amazing time sharing about the deep unique love God has for us and the relationship we can have with the creator. It was a really tough outreach and we really felt the enemy was raging against us as we were pressing forwards, advancing the Kingdom of God. We had technical problem after technical problem. Peter even had to jump in his plane at one point and to get some parts for the truck so we could continue. The team was really in a battle and had all the cuts and bruises to show for it.

As we packed up to head home there was a huge sense of relief, this had really been a tough outreach and we were finally heading home. The truck packed up and set off by 6am and I was following about an hour or so behind. You see on our outreaches we always try to travel in teams together in case one of us was to run into trouble, like a break down, or more recently a large street fight, where we had to defend our vehicles from being stolen!!! Well today we needed each other for something else, today was different....

About an hour into my drive I got a phone call from the truck, they seemed panicked and in real trouble - "Josh how far away are you? Come quickly, **I think he's dead** and I don't know what to do." I dropped a gear and went as fast as the car would let me, there was a dip in the road for a river crossing and I hit it at full speed, there was a brief moment of still as all 4 wheels on my car left the ground and I flew silently through the air, before, boom, I hit the ground, the wheels squealed as I raced up to the truck. As I jumped out, it was just as I had feared. There was a young boy that couldn't be older than 14, lying on the ground covered in blood. In fact there was blood everywhere, and a bicycle mangled underneath the truck. I took charge and picked up the boy with one of the guys, we threw stuff out the back of my car onto the road to make space and put him in with as much care as we could in the boot. We raced off to find the nearest medical centre. I slid to a stop as we pulled up to the clinic and I jumped out to get help. There was none, the Dr was out of town. We went to the next and the same again. I was able to talk a guy on a motor bike to show us the way to the nearest hospital. Over and over I was praying out loud "Oh Lord may this boy not be dead." As I took him out the car, I could see a pool of blood in the car. "Oh Lord we really need a miracle." There was nothing more I could do, I left my contact details and offered to settle the bill, "call me when you have news" I said, as I sped out the door. I raced back to the area of the crash to help the team deal with the police investigation that was about to take place. This was going to be a really tough situation and we all so desperately needed wisdom from the Lord on how to handle



it. We also needed a real miracle for the boy would pull through. As I drove I called the team to together to pray, I reached out to friends and family to pray. If there was any path through this mess, prayer was defiantly the route we had to take.

After spending 2 days with our team at the police station, we got some good news. The boy seemed to be OK, the x-ray had cleared him of all breaks, and a CT scan cleared him of any underlying trauma or damage, despite all the blood lost it seemed like he was going to be alright. We were able to find his family out in the middle of nowhere and talk with them to let them know what had happened and take them to the hospital. We were cleared of any wrongdoing and had made amends with the family, including purchasing a new bicycle. After some pleading and negotiating with the police they also released us from their custody.

You see this was no ordinary accident, there is an enemy that prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking to devour and destroy. There is a war that is going on and we are in a battle, the great battle fighting for the freedom of eternity. Everything is at stake and prayer is a powerful weapon, that should not be left to rust. There is no doubt in my mind that that boy should have been killed instantly. If that were the case we would be facing a very different situation with the police, our organisation, all the vehicles and I hate to think what else. But God is on our side fighting for us, might to save, heal and deliver us from the fowler's snare. All I can say is God was able to save us from a situation that seemed to have no escape.

The boy today is at school and doing well and though this situation is in the hands of a great local pastor, who is keeping us updated. Praise be to God.

Josh Rex

Toposa / South Sudan

Medical aid in sweltering heat



Dr Geoffrey treating several hundred patients every day

Early in the morning we left the mission station in Naliel / South Sudan to drive deeper into the bush. Far away from any civilisation, there is nothing but bush within a radius of 100 km. In between, there are 5 kilometre-wide sections without any waterhole. Those who travel here have to carry their own water- in the heat we needed 6 to 7 litres a day. After three and a half hours we arrived at the village of the Toposa. The scenery was like something out of a documentary film: the bush, the mountains in the background, the huts on wooden stilts, goats in between and everything immersed in blazing heat. As soon as they saw our off-road vehicles, people came running from everywhere to greet us. Our brothers and sisters in faith gave us an incredibly warm welcome with their Toposa praise, with prayer and with lots of handshaking.

By the way, they now drum on yellow water buckets because the traditional drums are used by the sorcerers and they don't want to have anything to do with them anymore. The Toposa tribe in this region includes about 200,000 people who have not been reached with the Gospel until 3 years ago. Through the missionaries from Kenya - especially Mark and his wife Lorna - with the support of GFI, a movement has been started through which thousands have come to faith! I could not have believe it until I hadn't seen it myself! In this place, disciples are being made who are making disciples again and planting churches who are planting churches again. There is a multiplication happening that I had always read about in God's Word but had never seen with my own eyes. It is not a single outside missionary who brings this about, but the new disciples that immediately go out again and carry the gospel. Despite persecution, almost 80 churches have already been planted this way. And there is no end in sight, because especially the

young leaders are preparing to take the Gospel even deeper into unreached areas, sometimes even to their neighbouring hostile tribes.

Our contribution: Medical aid

The focus of our outreach was to provide medical care for the people. The Toposa see this as a sign that God is paying them a special visit now that they have turned to Him. Under the tree of the elders and under a tarpaulin between the Land Cruisers, we set up our bush clinic: Malaria testing station, doctor's room, medicine dispensary and intensive care unit - everything was there. Soon many people came, waiting for their treatment. My wife Silke spent hours devotedly tending to wounds, giving injections, setting up infusions, etc. I handed out the prescribed medicines and tried to explain how to take them. It was a real challenge for me. I learned three phrases from the tribal language for this: "Epie na taparatsch", "epie na napan", "narei na eripi" - "one in the morning", "one at noon", "two in the evening". After each treatment, we then prayed for each person if possible.

Maybe the outreach was not a sustainable medical help for every person, but it was a strong sign of God's love! In general, the people there have very different problems: The dirty drinking water is without question the biggest ... The whole village drinks together with the animals from a nearby waterhole. On the one hand, it is unbelievable how good their immune systems must be to tolerate it at all, but on the other hand, it still causes many health problems for the Toposa.

Despite the many exotic pictures, one must not imagine life there and also our short mission romantically. For us from the West, it is in reality the most extreme thing we can endure physically and mentally. We

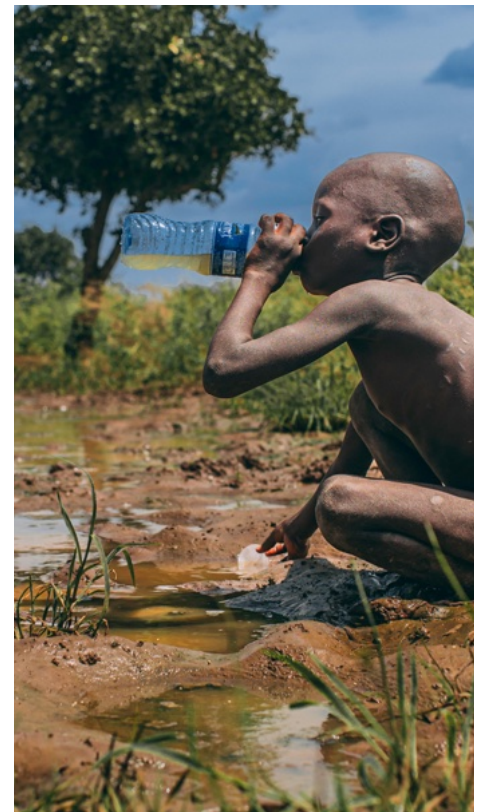


A Toposa Girl

have to be very careful all the time, always disinfect our hands. There are no washing facilities, only "behind the bush toilets". In case of emergency, there is no help far and wide, plus snakes and scorpions and many men with weapons. If something happens, you are completely on your own. But behind these mountains live more tribes who have never heard the Gospel. How can these be reached? Only through the native disciples! These can navigate the harsh circumstances. And - they are burning to take the name of Jesus to the remotest areas.

The fire must go on. Let's blow into it with all we have and keep fanning it.

Markus Kettner



Many of the issues we came across were a result of no access to clean water, as shown above, this is the case in many areas in South Sudan.



The blood is tested for malaria and syphilis.



The diagnosis is made under the tree

Healing for a country full of violence!

A glance at the morning news: “Highway attack: 14 dead” and “Hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese lives in danger in worst flooding in 60 years”. This sounded like a normal day in South Sudan ... but I would be lying if I said it didn’t make me a little nervous and what challenges we would face on this mission.

When we arrived at the first village after a three day drive into a remote area, we were surrounded by dozens of children. Mothers with babies, singing and praising God, came running to greet us. The joy and excitement you could see in their eyes when we arrived is truly indescribable! I leaned over to my translator and asked him what the people were singing? His answer was: They are singing: “We are not afraid of tomorrow, we are not afraid of tomorrow, we are not afraid of tomorrow, for Jesus is our hope. He is our protection, our provider, we fear no darkness, for we have left the darkness and now live in the light! and now

live in the light!” I looked around: a dry, arid land full of thorns and spikes. One thing was clear: their only hope really lay in the Gospel, in their Jesus!

I spent the nights on goatskins and under mosquito nets, my mind busy trying to understand this very different world. A world where the separation between light and darkness is so vividly in view. To see Jesus set people free from disease, hunger and violence in a place so besieged by demonic darkness, is indescribable. And all this in a landscape that is beautiful - with the most beautiful sunsets and starry nights. Simply surreal!

But the reality of Toposa is different: We saw children with severe burns, young men with bullet wounds and villages where almost all the inhabitants had malaria. That is intense but the joy of bringing the Gospel to these dirty, broken and forgotten people filled my heart. I knew: the Holy Spirit was the commissioner of this outreach and I was in the right place, at the right time,

with Himself and many angels by my side! Every morning we did not know what new challenges we would face. The list of possible dangers was long: vehicle breakdowns, tribal rivalries, corruption, storms, floods, lack of fluids, fatigue, illness... Nevertheless, it is wonderfully exciting to move forward in faith, trusting in God as God Himself has commanded us to do. A short prayer for protection and preservation before sunrise brings the same warmth as the rising sun and quietly reminds us how great is our God who washes away all fear. I am “Ready” for the new day!

Peregrine Rex



Rapid tests for malaria and syphilis



Young warriors treated first

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

Put a smile on many faces

You are welcome to support us in giving Christmas presents to people in need. These are very practical things, such as clothes, food, chickens, goats and other things. For many people around us, this is a great help and a great blessing. Write on your bank transfer which project you would like to support:

Our donation account is in the right column on this page.

Or online via en.gfi-ministries.org/donate/



CHRISTMAS AID:
Donation for Maize, chickens, goats and other things ...

Per family
20 Euro

CHRISTMAS AID:
Donation for Clothing for children

Per family
50 Euro

MEDICAL OUT-REACH:
Donation for Medical aid in South Sudan

Total
6.000 Euro

GFI FLEET:
New car tyres to get through the rough terrain.

Per tyre
300 Euro

GFI AIRCRAFT:
Support "Wings of Hope"! In February, the annual inspection is due.

Total
4.000 Euro

GFI-BASE :
Renewal and construction of the base in Eldoret

Total
20.000 Euro

Our new 2022 calendar!



Order at:
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Please pray with us:

Prayer requests:

- Discipleship training and growth of discipleship flock in Sudan.
- Planning for the agricultural project and needed water pump with water drip system.
- Wisdom in planning for another medical outreach.
- New teachers for the base in South Sudan.
- Finances for ministry and building work in Sudan.
- Two major crusades are planned for March. Pray that we will be able to hold these crusades.

Pray for health especially for the Rex children, they keep having minor illnesses. Pray that they will grow strong and that immunity will be built up.

Dates:

- 4-6 December: Outreach with Jan in Sudan, inspection and planning for the agricultural country.
- 17 December: GFI Christmas party in Eldoret with team - a joy for the families!

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