



# CONNECT

04

**WHAT HAPPENS  
TO THE UNREACHED  
WHEN THEY DIE?**

BY DAVID PLATT

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**HOW BOTU WAS SET  
FREE BY JESUS**

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**WHY IS DISCIPLESHIP  
SO IMPORTANT?**





## REACHING HEARTS

“I began noticing Mahlanya occasionally describing himself in conversation with other shepherds as ‘saved’.” Caleb Fetterhoff, a missionary living high in the Lesotho mountains, told us how one day Mahlanya, his shepherd friend, found one of his goats paralysed. Mahlanya had heard the story of Jesus and the paralysed man and asked Caleb to pray for the goat. After days of caring for the goat and praying, Mahlanya had found his goat walking and grazing again.

“He would even join in in my conversations and help me evangelise. When I asked Mahlanya when he started to put his trust in Jesus, his response was ‘when Jesus healed my baby goat’. Jesus was saving more than a little animal that day; he also was busy saving a young man’s heart.”

The shepherds are the most isolated and unreached group of people in Lesotho. Traditional ancestor worship and witchcraft still have a strong hold among them, as with many other people groups in Africa. In this edition of *Connect* we take a look at some of the particular challenges of deciding to follow Christ in this context, such as having access to the Bible in a language you understand and exclusion or pressure from your community - your source of identity, as well as the place many practical needs are met. But we also hear stories of how God is working to overcome these barriers to bring people, like Mahlanya, Botu (p.15) and Lokolem Gabriel (p.23), to recognise that the cost of following Christ is outweighed by the glorious riches of his grace. Pray with us that as God calls people to serve in Korr (p.18), Marsabit (p.24) and Kondoa (p.28), we’ll see new local believers with that same testimony of faith.

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## ABOUT DAVID PLATT

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# WHAT ABOUT THE UNREACHED?

By David Platt

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE DIE, IF THEY'VE NEVER HEARD ABOUT JESUS?

**W**e talk a lot about unreached people. Estimates say that over a billion people in the world today have little to no knowledge of Jesus, little to no knowledge of the gospel, and little to no chance of hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ before they die. It begs the question, then: What happens to them when they die?

This is a deeply theological question. There are many different doctrines bound up in any answer to this question and it is an intensely emotional question.

There's not a place we can go to in Scripture where Jesus says, "Some of you have wondered what will happen to people who never hear about me, and here's the answer." But God is not silent. He has spoken, I believe very clearly, to that question.



*“We have an entire book written to persuade the church to take the gospel to people who never heard the name of Jesus.”*

The book of Romans is kind of like a missionary support letter. We have an entire book written to persuade the church to take the gospel to people who have never heard the name of Jesus. The book of Romans then has huge implications for how we understand any answer to this question.

**1) ALL PEOPLE KNOW GOD THE FATHER - ROMANS 1:18-21.**

God has made revelation of himself continually and clearly known to all people. Every single man

in the African jungle, every single woman in an Asian village, the Eskimo in the forgotten tundra, everybody has knowledge of God the Father; everybody in all history knows God. Paul says, “For although they knew God...”

**2) ALL PEOPLE REJECT TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD - ROMANS 1:18-21.**

We all have an inherently sinful nature that is prone to worship creation rather than the Creator. Now, this is a fundamental truth in Scripture, but I think it’s often overlooked when it comes to this question of what happens to people who never hear about Jesus. “What about an Indian tribe who was here long before we were, and they didn’t have knowledge of the gospel, but they had an innate desire to worship something. They didn’t have knowledge of what that something was, and so they did the best they could with what they had. →



Maybe they worshipped the sun god, but that's the best they could with what they have. Isn't God pleased with that?"

What Paul is saying very clearly in Romans 1 is you don't worship the sun and call it "God," and that becomes pleasing to the God who is worthy of all worship. That's idolatry. This is not an indictment of that Indian tribe. It's not an indictment of any tribe in Africa or people in Asia. It's an indictment of every single one of us. We are all prone to worship creation rather than the Creator, who alone is worthy of all praise. We worship ourselves, worship things, worship idols, whatever it is, we have rejected true knowledge of God.

### **3) THERE ARE NO INNOCENT PEOPLE IN THE WORLD - ROMANS 3:10-12.**

"None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." Do you hear the universality in all of those statements?

When we talk about mission, we have this picture that there are innocent people all over the world waiting to hear the gospel. I want to remind you, based on the authority of God's Word, that there is no innocent guy in Africa waiting to hear the gospel. There's no innocent woman in Asia waiting to hear the gospel. The reason they need a gospel is because they're guilty, and not just them, but all of us.

### **4) ALL PEOPLE ARE CONDEMNED FOR REJECTING GOD - ROMANS 3:19-20.**

Do you think it would be just, or fair, for God to condemn someone to hell for not believing in Jesus when they never even had the opportunity to hear about Jesus? I think the answer to that question is clearly no. It would not be fair. It would not be just for God to condemn someone to hell for not believing in Jesus when they had never had the opportunity to hear about him.

Now, it's at this point that many in the Christian community today have said, "Okay, based on this, then, if they haven't heard about Jesus, then they will be okay." The only problem is that all people stand condemned for rejecting whom? For rejecting God.

Now, I want you to follow this logic. If people get a pass of sorts, if people will go to heaven precisely because they've never heard about Jesus, then what is the worst thing we could do for them? Go and tell them about Jesus. Because as soon as we tell them about Jesus, we've just increased their chances of condemnation. Before we got there, they were going to heaven.

Obviously, this makes no sense in Scripture. It doesn't hold water, and it undercuts the very mission enterprise of the church. All people are condemned for rejecting God. Therefore, they need to hear about Jesus.

## 5) GOD HAS MADE A WAY OF SALVATION FOR THE LOST - ROMANS 3:21-26.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” God has not waited for us to find a way to him, because we can’t do it. There is an infinite chasm that separates us from God, and, by his grace, he came down to meet us where we are and to pull us to himself. He took the condemnation due to us upon himself and took the righteousness that we could never have and put it on us. That’s the gospel; that’s grace.

## 6) PEOPLE CANNOT COME TO GOD APART FROM FAITH IN CHRIST.

God has designed this whole picture so that it’s not one ounce of our works that is the means by which we are saved. It is completely a gift of God. You cannot come to God apart from faith in Christ. It’s at this point, obviously, that you feel the emotional pull of our question. Some have said, “Surely, there is a way, then, that they still go to heaven. Surely, there’s something in their life, something they have done...surely, there is something there that God will still bring them to himself in heaven.” I feel the emotion behind that pull, but think about it with me. As soon as we say that, as soon as we say, “Well, surely, there’s some other way that God brings them to himself,” as soon as we say that, then what we’ve said to Jesus on the cross is, “Thank you for what you did, but we could’ve gotten to God another way. Thank you for your sacrifice, but, in the end, God is merciful, and I still would’ve gotten there.”

Scripture says very, very, very clearly, “People cannot come to God apart from faith in Christ.”

## 7) CHRIST COMMANDS THE CHURCH TO MAKE THE GOSPEL KNOWN TO ALL PEOPLE - ROMANS 10:12-14.

“For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’” That’s a promise. It’s a guarantee. “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’”

Now, this is not just a picture of rhetorical skill. This is a picture of God’s redemptive plan for taking the gospel and making it known to all peoples.

Christ sends his followers. His followers do what? Followers preach. Christ sends followers, and followers preach. The kind of preaching that’s being talked about here is telling the good news, proclaiming the good news. It is the responsibility, privilege, obligation, and opportunity of every follower of Christ.

This is the plan of God. Christ sends followers; followers preach; people hear; hearers believe; believers call, and those who call are saved.

The only way the plan breaks down is if the people who have been saved by this gospel sit back and soak it in for themselves and turn a deaf ear to those who have never heard it. That’s the only way you can even have unreached peoples: if followers of Christ are not preaching this gospel. The goal of Scripture is not to answer this question that we are asking; the goal is to alleviate the question altogether.

## THE REAL QUESTION...

Now, I want you to imagine something with me. I want you to imagine going up...you, not the person next to you, in front of you, behind you... you going up to a Bedouin in Algeria, and having the privilege of looking in their eyes and, for the first time, telling them about Jesus Christ. Telling them about how their life can be saved from eternal condemnation based on what Jesus did for them on a cross. Just imagine that, and knowing that there’s a Bedouin there that’s going to come to faith in Christ because you’re proclaiming the gospel. That is a cause worth living for; it’s a cause worth dying for; it is the cause for which we have been saved, and it is the cause for which we are still here on this planet.

How is your life going to impact the unreached world with the gospel? 📌

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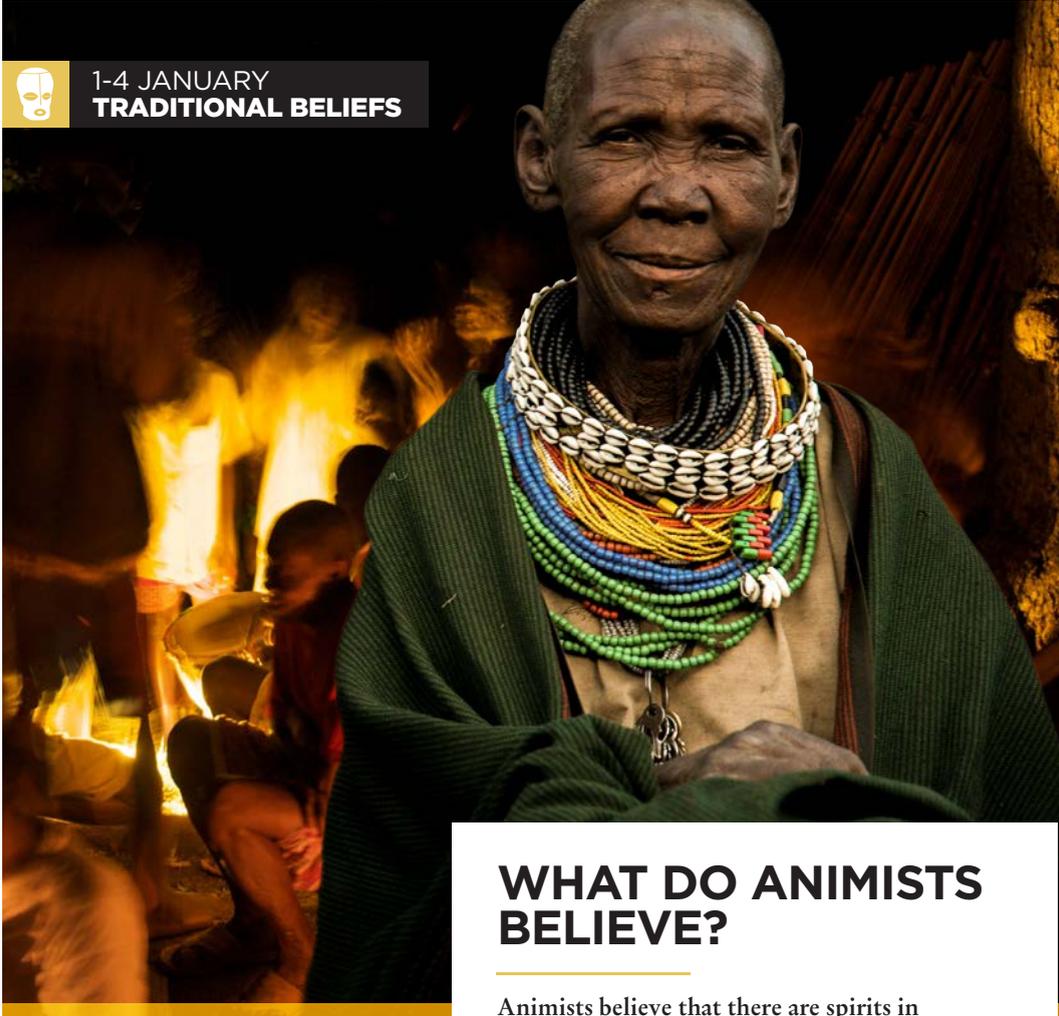
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1-4 JANUARY  
**TRADITIONAL BELIEFS**



## WHAT DO ANIMISTS BELIEVE?

Animists believe that there are spirits in everything; in stones, trees, seeds, water, and in people, whether they are dead or alive. They believe that these spirits control good and evil and can be petitioned to carry out actions in their lives and in the lives of others.

**T**o protect themselves against the spirit world, or to barter with spirits, animists offer sacrifices designed to pacify or please. This might include animal sacrifices or smaller actions, such as tying a piece of hair around a tree to ensure a good supply of coconuts. Many wear fetishes (bracelets and charms), believing them to have magical properties to ward off harm. These are often tied around the wrists of small children. Within communities, there may be actions, or sets of actions which are seen as ‘taboos’. A taboo can be something as simple as washing your clothes on the wrong

## TRADITIONAL AFRICAN BELIEFS

African traditional religion is the collective name given to a set of highly diverse beliefs, which vary according to geography and ethnicity. Generally, these traditions are oral rather than written, and include belief in a supreme creator, belief in spirits, veneration of the dead, and use of magic and traditional medicines. The role of humanity is generally seen as a bridge between nature and the supernatural.

day - an action believed to anger a certain spirit. Breaking a community taboo would risk bringing problems upon the whole community.

As a result of this, many animists are full of fear. They are fearful of breaking community taboos and risking anger and ostracism, and fearful of spirits in the objects around them being displeased with them. They're also often very concerned about their own ability to appease the spirit world.

### WHAT IS ANCESTOR WORSHIP?

Many animists also worship the spirits of family members who have died. In the same way they seek to placate the spirits in the objects around them, they seek to please their ancestors; offering sacrifices and obeying rules and regulations, which have been passed down for generations.

They often believe that if things are going wrong in their lives, it is because they haven't been diligent enough in their worship of their ancestors. The idea of ancestors punishing people for their behaviour towards them is common. Therefore, times of trial might lead to them adding new rules and rituals, or spending more money on livestock or items to sacrifice to their ancestors.

When sacrifices fail and illness and difficulty remain, animists and ancestor worshippers believe that if they are not to blame, then someone in their family must have caused the ancestors to become angry. This generates much suspicion and blame within families and communities, as people search for culprits and look for answers to their troubles. 🙏

## WHAT IS A WITCHDOCTOR?

The Oxford English Dictionary records the first use of this term in 1718 when the name 'witchdoctor' was given to a healer who treated ailments believed to be caused by witchcraft. Today, we use the word to refer to people who claim a special knowledge of the spirit world, interchanging it with words such as shaman or sorcerer. In many African societies, witchdoctors are highly revered and respected. People go to them for help and protection from spirits and witchcraft. Other people ask for 'medicine' to harm others.

### 1 JAN • TUESDAY

Happy New Year! As we begin 2019, there remain over 1,000 people groups in Africa who have yet to hear and respond to Jesus' saving grace. Pray that over this year, we would have the personnel to take the gospel to these people, and be able share the joy of people groups turning to Christ.

### 2 JAN • WEDNESDAY

Pray for the many people who are caught up in the rituals and rules of animism. Many live in so much fear of the spirit world that the concept of engaging with other ideas is beyond their comprehension. Pray that God would break through those barriers and give them supernatural courage.

### 3 JAN • THURSDAY

Pray for missionaries who are seeking to share the gospel in areas where beliefs in African traditional religions are strong. Pray that they would be able to understand the local culture so that they can present the gospel in ways that are accessible and relevant.

### 4 JAN • FRIDAY

For witchdoctors to turn away from their beliefs in the spirit world can often mean losing community status and respect. Pray that they would be more concerned with their status in God's eyes and that through their testimonies, would lead more people to Jesus.





## WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO BELIEF?

Though there are different barriers for each people group, one of the answers that we hear echoed regularly when we ask people, “What is the biggest barrier to the gospel in your location?” is ‘culture and tradition’. These issues become barriers as the price of accepting Christ can be heavy.

### COMMUNITY LIVING

**M**any African communities prioritise interdependence over the individual. Often, this means that people rely heavily on the support of their neighbours. For instance, if your fire goes out, you will relight your fire from your neighbour’s fire. Your community supplies your basic needs.

If you choose to become a Christian this will generally be respected, as long as your decision does not affect the community. What causes tension is when a believer decides not

to participate in traditions or cultural practices that go against the Bible’s teaching. Some of these traditions can include worshipping ayana (possessing spirits), ancestral spirits, or other gods, and sacrificing animals to appease them. In stepping outside what their society requires of them and not participating in these activities, Christians can bring shame on their family. They risk being cut off from their community and enduring the social and economic problems that isolation would bring.

### A PRACTICAL PROBLEM

Pastor Jeremiah, a Borana believer in Kenya, explains, “There’s a lot of pressure on people that, even after hearing the gospel, being isolated or excommunicated is a big problem for them.” If you do become ostracised and aren’t welcome at communal meetings, you then have no input into community decision making (decisions are made together). You may not be recognised as an elder in the community. Nobody within your community or people group will want to marry your daughters (for many people groups, marrying within is important). Your livestock will not be allowed to go and drink water with the rest of the animals. Sometimes, those



*“If your fire goes out, you will relight your fire from your neighbour’s fire. Your community supplies your basic needs.”*

who have become Christians feel forced to abandon their faith and return to following local traditions, as not doing so is too hard.

#### **A PROBLEM OF IDENTITY**

As well as these more practical aspects, culture is also the source of people’s sense of identity, defining themselves primarily through their relationship to others, rather than on their individual character, gifts or skills. This creates a very different value system than we are used to in Western society.

In these contexts, Islam then often becomes an attractive option. Those who have come to realise that African traditional religions and practices are not making them right with God will follow Islam because the forms of Folk Islam that they encounter allow them to maintain traditions that are important to their

culture, such as having more than one wife. Islamic schools often offer free education, or fulfil other practical needs, which makes Islamic teaching more acceptable within communities and attracts those who are struggling financially. Conversely, Christianity can be seen as too rigid; requiring them to change, asking them to let go of their culture, and challenging where they find their identity.

#### **A SLOW SHIFT**

But there is beginning to be a shift in this way of communal thinking among the younger generations. Jane, a young believer from northern Kenya, says, “Education has a huge impact I believe, and people’s perspectives are changing.” As more and more people move away from their communities for education and work, decision making is becoming more individual, and often people don’t want to keep following the traditions of their community. The opportunities that this creates to reach these young people as they gather in towns and cities are huge, not only for them to encounter the gospel for themselves, but for them then to take it back and share it with their families too. 🌍



**WEEKENDFOCUS • 5-6 JANUARY**

## SHARING FAITH

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*Barako* is a Gabbra believer who works in Dukana, Kenya, on the Christian radio station, Chalbi FM.

**M**y aunt was a Christian and she shared the gospel with me when I was about 10 or 11. That's how I came to know Jesus. I went to school in Kalacha, northern Kenya, and when I went home in the holidays I would share my faith with my family. I would go with my aunt to visit my family, so I always had some backup! Now, my family all know Christ too.

Most Gabbra are happy for you to share your faith, as long as you are respectful. You just call them aside and ask for their permission, and if they are interested then they will listen. During the rainy season, when their animals are ok, they are less occupied and often are happy for you to talk to them and share about Jesus. But there are opportunities in the dry season too, when people are poor and in need. When they come to us for help, we can give them what we can, but we can also share about Jesus and invite them to church on Sunday. Pray that as we explain the gospel to people, they will be motivated to get to know Jesus. 🌍

## 7 JAN • MONDAY

Making the decision to become a Christian in many African communities can be difficult for people, and may result in exclusion from families or community life. Pray for believers who have made that decision and are feeling isolated, that they would know God's presence and comfort with them through their struggles.

## 8 JAN • TUESDAY

In many African communities, what is understood to be 'good' and 'bad' is decided by how it affects the whole community. Therefore, in similar ways to the West, it can be difficult for people to grasp that even though they may be good, helpful and generous, they still need a saviour. Pray that people would understand fully their need for Jesus.

## 9 JAN • WEDNESDAY

Traditional concepts of god can make aspects of biblical theology difficult to grasp. For instance, the Borana of Kenya believe in a supreme god and many lesser gods. This makes the Trinity, God being one and equal, and Jesus being God, difficult concepts. Pray for missionaries and believers to be clear and understood as they communicate about the God of the Bible.

## 10 JAN • THURSDAY

The Samburu of Kenya believe in one creator god, so it can be hard to distinguish when you are talking about the God of the Bible. Pray that, as they hear the gospel, they would understand that God is not distant, but that he gave his life for each of them so that they could have a personal relationship with him.

## 11 JAN • FRIDAY

Because the role of a father differs from culture to culture, understandings can vary widely when the Bible speaks of God as our father. For the Samburu, a father's role is one of provision, but also of distance and discipline. Pray that the Samburu would understand what the Bible says about God's character, not how it is understood through the lens of either African or Western culture.

## WEEKEND FOCUS

### 12-13 JANUARY

In many places in Africa it's not common for men and women to participate in activities or meetings together. Pray that as people believe in Jesus, these cultural barriers wouldn't prevent them from experiencing true fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ.

## 14 JAN • MONDAY

In societies where women don't often participate in meetings, there can be tension when women are more open to the gospel. Pray that God would raise up male believers to be leaders in new churches, and that women wouldn't find it hard to begin to play a role.

## 15 JAN • TUESDAY

In some circumstances, women who want to make a commitment to Christ, or be baptised, need permission from their husbands to do so. Pray that these husbands would also commit their lives to Jesus, and that families will worship God together.

## 16 JAN • WEDNESDAY

Sometimes in Bible translation, there are words that a language has no equivalent for, such as 'grace' in Samburu. Pray for wisdom and insight for translators, and that words that are used for tricky or foreign phrases or concepts can be given more depth through teaching the biblical meanings.

## 17 JAN • THURSDAY

For many people groups, identity is tightly bound up in their group culture and traditions. Pray for those who are interested in the gospel but are struggling with the idea of letting go of their traditions, and therefore, their identity. Pray that they would come to fully understand their identity in Christ.

## 18 JAN • FRIDAY

Pray for new believers as they navigate cultural traditions with their families and communities. Pray for insight and wisdom, that they would know how to handle those situations, and that believers would be able to form communities to support each other.

## SOCIAL GROUPS

In Samburu culture, men are segregated into social groups by age. A moran (warrior) is an unmarried, circumcised male. The oldest group are the elders. Each group has a different role in society, and bonds are created within their group, rather than their family. The different groups don't often do things together.



## NO MEANS NO!

Though the Gabbra and the Samburu live close to each other they are very different. The Samburu like to say what you want to hear and are very indirect, while the Gabbra say it like it is, their yes is yes, and their no is no. This can make working together tricky!

## FASHION SENSE

The headdresses that the Rendille wear have a lot of meaning behind them - they tell information such as who a woman is married to and how many children she has. Recently, some Christian Rendille women have started to add a cross to their headdresses too.





TESTIMONY  
**BOTU'S STORY**



# FREEDOM AND FAITH

Last year, the Gabbra people in northern Kenya suffered a famine because for the previous two years there had been no rain. *Eddie and Rachel Andersen*, living among them, felt they had to do something. They raised famine relief donations to employ 30 different families each week to help clear up the devastation caused by the widespread animal deaths, providing food, preventing the spread of disease and, at the same time, sharing the gospel with them. Eddie tells us Botu's story:

It was about a year ago, near the end of the famine relief work. We were having Bible studies in the mornings in the church, and one day we were going through the passage about the demon possessed man in Mark 5. After the study, one of our Gabbra evangelists, Dub, asked, "Do you think God still does that?" I said, "Well, we serve the same Jesus, he is the same yesterday, today and forever." He replied, "We know a woman like that in our village here, do you think God can heal her?" I answered, "He definitely can. Whether he will or not, that's up to him, but he can."

## HOUNDED BY DEMONS

Later that morning I heard a commotion. I went outside and saw Rachel staring wide eyed at a lady who was screaming at her. I called Dub over to interpret for me and he said, "That's the woman that I was telling you about!" We sat her down and asked her to share her story. She told us how she had been hounded by demons and had been running from town to town to try and flee from them for the last six months. She hadn't slept in a house as she had been told by the shaman and by ayana (spirits) that if she entered her house she would die instantly. She'd tried the ayana, she'd tried the Muslims, she'd tried the Catholics, but nobody could heal her. So, she'd come to us. When I asked her why she said, "Because you can heal me. There's nowhere else I can go." So we told her what Christ did and who he was, and we showed her passages of Scripture. Then we asked, "Do you want to be free?" She said yes, so we prayed in Jesus' name. It was amazing, we saw her whole face change from an expression of agony and terror, all of a sudden, to peace.

We explained that now she had been released, she needed to put something in that place so that the

demons couldn't return. We asked her if she wanted to accept Jesus Christ. "That's why I'm here," she answered. We explained the gospel clearly and she prayed to accept Christ. Then, we went with her to her house - which she hadn't been in for six months - and she walked straight in the front door. After we prayed over the house, I asked her why she'd been happy to walk straight in before we'd prayed. She replied, "I wasn't worried, I was covered by Jesus". She comes to church every Sunday.

## SEEING GOD MOVE

This has been a real encouragement for our Gabbra evangelists. We'd been reading and studying the Scriptures, and we knew it was true, but to see it happen in front of us was really transformative. When you see the Holy Spirit at work, it builds your faith, which means that when you proclaim the Word, you can proclaim it with authority. There has been a real difference in the way that Bible studies have been led since then, and we've seen real church growth too.

*"It was amazing, we saw her whole face change from an expression of agony and terror, all of a sudden, to peace."*

Not long after that, some elders from Kubi Adi, a nearby town, walked the 35km to come and see me. They asked for two things. "Firstly, we don't have any water and we hear you have water. Can you help us with water?" So I said I'd pray about it and see what we could do. We didn't have any funds at that moment, but we knew that God could provide. Then they said, "The other thing we really want you to do is teach us whatever it is that you are teaching these people here. We've heard there is a really sweet message and we want it for our village. Can you bring it and teach us?" They invited us to come and start a Bible study, so even before we had provided them with any water access, we were doing Bible studies with them. And we still go almost every week. They are really interested, there is a real hunger for the Lord. But now more villages are begging us to come too! Villages we pass on the way ask us why we aren't stopping to teach them, so we've made more stops. We are just seeing so much hunger, because people are seeing the lives that have been transformed by the gospel here, and the testimony of people like Botu. 🙏



19-25 JANUARY  
**MISSIONARY PRAYER**



## **THE KOCHS**

After living in Kenya for six years, *Joy Koch* met her husband, *Martin*, serving short term. After a few years in Germany, they moved back to Kenya in 1994 with four young children. They live among the Samburu in Lchakwai, building relationships, serving practically, and sharing the gospel.

### **21 JAN • MONDAY**

Give thanks for the baptism classes that Martin and Joy have hosted, and for all the Samburu who have attended. Some people attended regularly, and others just attended some of the 18 sessions. Pray that their hearts would be transformed by the gospel they have heard through these classes.

### **22 JAN • TUESDAY**

After the baptism classes, six Samburu women, two Samburu schoolboys and one Samburu man made the decision to be baptised! Praise God! Pray that their faith would continue to deepen and strengthen, and that as they have made this public statement of faith in Christ, it would be a witness to their families and communities.



## SERVING THE SAMBURU

Joy explains her journey to becoming a missionary.

**W**hile studying at college I became friends with a number of Kenyan students. A desire grew to visit Kenya, and to stay and learn the language and the culture.

While attending the Urbana missionary conference I declared myself willing to become a missionary if God so led me. However, I heard a number of negative comments concerning missionaries from my Kenyan friends. An educated Christian Kenyan proposed that no more missionaries be sent to Kenya. So I asked my Kenyan friends, “Is there still a need for missionaries in Kenya?” Their response was that there was a need, yes, for people who would work alongside Kenyans and partner with them. God used that discussion to challenge me. I began applying to AIM, and a year later, when I was accepted as a candidate, I was having doubts. I felt unworthy to be a missionary. I saw my sin and apparent lack of influence. Could God use me as a missionary? After setting aside a morning for fasting and prayer, to talk it over with God, I felt him saying to me, “Yes, you are right, you are unworthy, you can do nothing on your own. But, if you are willing to go, I will use you for my glory.” With that assurance, I first left for Kenya, and true to his word, he has used me. Pray that we will see more people willing to serve in Kenya and across Africa. God is longing to use people for his glory. 🌍

### 23 JAN • WEDNESDAY

Martin and Joy have been praying for men to make a commitment to Christ and to be leaders in the church. Pray for more men to follow Lekaria, (the man who was baptised), and for men like Lemusi who have shown interest in Jesus. Pray that God would raise up male leaders to lead the church in Samburu.

### 24 JAN • THURSDAY

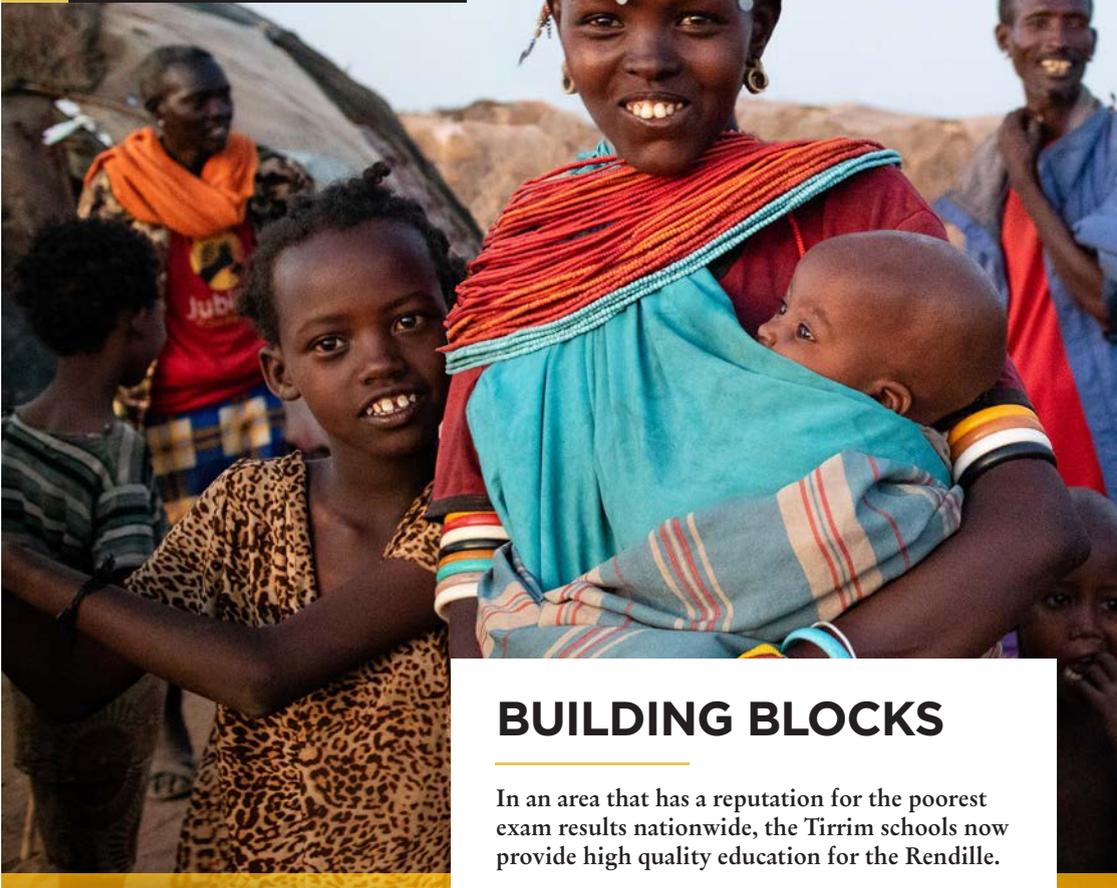
The Samburu love listening to stories and songs in their own language. Pray for the distribution of the Treasures (solar MP3 devices with Bible stories, portions of Scripture and songs in Samburu) to new people, that they would speak to people’s hearts. Pray also that they would not break, and for Martin as he fixes them!

### 25 JAN • FRIDAY

Give thanks that the translation of the New Testament into Samburu has been completed. As it is finalised for the audio version (this will be put on to the Treasures), and as work begins on the Old Testament, pray that hearing the Word in their heart language would transform people’s lives, and that many would believe in Jesus.



26 JANUARY-1 FEBRUARY  
**LANGUAGE & LITERACY**



## BUILDING BLOCKS

In an area that has a reputation for the poorest exam results nationwide, the Tirrim schools now provide high quality education for the Rendille.

**T**he word 'Tirrim' means 'kingpost', which is the main post in a Rendille house, serving the same function as the cornerstone in a brick building. This name was chosen to demonstrate the role that the Bible plays in all that is done by the AIC, and the vision of the Tirrim project that the schools would be places where people get to know Jesus as well as academic knowledge.

And God is working through both the schools and the literacy programme. Three graduates from the school are currently studying at Bible college, and many are interested in other ministries too. One student, who was suspended from the school because of his behaviour, is now following the Lord because of seeds sown at the school. There are a few Muslim students who have shown an interest in the gospel recently too, asking lots of questions about the Bible.

## THE RENDILLE

Last August, the Rendille celebrated the dedication of the New Testament that had just been completed in their heart language. But many Rendille are illiterate, and can't read it for themselves because they have had no chance to get an education. To address this need, the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Korr set up the Tirrim project, which includes a nursery, primary school, high school, and adult literacy classes.

There are also many Rendille women who share the testimony that they now follow the Lord because of the adult literacy programme. Going through the literacy class, they learn to read and write, but they also learn Bible stories and receive a copy of the Rendille New Testament.

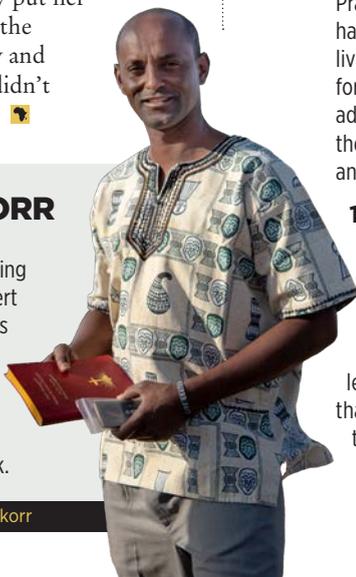
### ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

The Rendille traditional religion has many features that are similar Jewish traditions, and they follow a custom each year that is very like the Jewish passover celebration. A goat is sacrificed in order to pay for their sins, and they put the blood of the goat on their doorposts, children's heads and their animals. Work has recently started on the translation of the Old Testament into Rendille. Given that their practices are very similar to the sacrifices in the Old Testament, it is hoped that the stories they read will strongly resonate with them. Pray that God would use the similarities between themselves and Israel in the Bible to help the Rendille understand the New Testament and the importance of Jesus' sacrifice.

It is possible to know when a Rendille has become a Christian because they stop performing the goat sacrifices, having come to the understanding that Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice. But this can cause friction within their families. Some people choose to be present with their families, so as not to bring shame on them, but will not personally participate in the sacrifice. Others feel differently about it. Noreya, a lady who became a Christian through the literacy programme, decided to leave the family home because of the pressure her family put her under to continue to take part in the sacrifices. She chose to walk away and build her own house so that she didn't have to take part in the sacrifices. 🙏

## OPPORTUNITIES IN KORR

The church in Korrr is growing and is sending evangelists out into the surrounding desert areas. There is a need for church buildings to be built, as well as more school buildings, and the church can't fulfil those needs on its own. There are currently opportunities for skilled engineers or builders to support the work.



## WEEKEND FOCUS

26-27 JANUARY

The Africa Inland Church in Korrr, started in 1976, is now thriving, and completely led by Rendille pastors. Pray for Pastor David and the other pastors as they lead the church and encourage the believers to reach out to those around them with the gospel.

### 28 JAN • MONDAY

Pray for the translation of the Old Testament into Rendille which is just beginning, that there would be nothing that would hold up the work, and that God would provide all the funds that are needed.

### 29 JAN • TUESDAY

Pray that when they can read the Old Testament in their own language and see the animal sacrifices made by Israel that are so similar to their own, the Rendille would recognise and understand the importance and finality of Jesus' sacrifice.

### 30 JAN • WEDNESDAY

Many Muslims attend the Tirrim schools, where all students learn the Bible and have Christian Religious Education lessons. Pray for the opportunities as they hear the gospel explained, that what they hear will plant seeds in their hearts that grow into a trust in Jesus.

### 31 JAN • THURSDAY

Pray for Jim and Laura Propst who have just retired to California after living in Korrr for 10 years, and in Africa for 40 years. Pray that they would adjust well to life in the US and that they would know God's faithfulness and leading in this transition.

### 1 FEB • FRIDAY

Pray for the Schultz family, who moved to Korrr in the middle of last year, as they settle in and adjust, learn language and discern what ministries God is leading them to get involved in. Pray that their children would continue to thrive in this new setting.



2-8 FEBRUARY  
TIMO: MINISTRY IN ACTION



## WHO ARE THEY?

The Ik live in the northeast corner of Uganda. Believed to be one of the first inhabitants of that area, they are a small group, numbering between 7,000 and 11,000. Their corner of Uganda consists of a tiny ridge. To one side is a 3,000 foot drop into neighbouring Kenya. To the other sides they are bordered by the aggressive Karimojong people of Uganda and the Turkana from Kenya. Existing in the middle ground, the Ik are subsistence farmers.

## REACHING THE IK

Although there have been four churches planted in the Timu Forest, Uganda, there are few true believers. Many gospel sharing missions into the Ik territory have occurred, but hardly any discipleship has been implemented to develop new converts into mature believers.

**A**s a result, there is a lot of syncretism - the mixing of old beliefs with Christianity - among those who have accepted the good news. For example, church leaders will sacrifice goats to the local spirits, but will also claim the sacrifice is to honour Jesus. This is not helped by the fact that the Ik don't have the Bible in their own language, and very few are educated (it is estimated that only 3% are literate). Combined with a lack of discipleship, this means that many of the Ik have hardly any real knowledge of who the God of the Bible is, and what Jesus' death means and has accomplished.

### A GENUINE INTEREST

But despite all the barriers to them receiving the gospel, the Ik have shown a genuine interest in knowing more about Jesus; who he is and what he

has done. They now need people to go, learn their language, and share the Word of God with them.

In the summer of 2016 a Training in Ministry Outreach (TIMO) team began ministry among the Ik. Realising the issues outlined above, their first priority and largest project was ensuring that the Ik had access to the Word of God. This would mean church leaders could teach with more confidence and greater understanding of the gospel they were preaching. So, the team embarked on creating a chronological Bible story set. They chose 25 Bible stories from the Old and New Testament, concentrating on showing who God is, who Jesus is, and why the Ik (and all of us) are in need of a saviour. These stories could then be used for evangelism and discipleship as the team developed various ministry platforms.

*“The Ik have shown a genuine interest in knowing more about who Jesus is...”*

### THE WORD OF GOD REMAINS

One of the team, who is a doctor, worked with the village health teams not only to provide healthcare training, but to share the chronological Bible stories with them. Another team member led children’s programmes in the village and at one of the local churches. Another worked to translate the Jesus Film into the local language and taught at one of the local schools. Another taught Icetod (the Ik language) literacy. Two team members ran an after school programme where they led games, songs and told Bible stories from the set created by the team. Other team members spent time visiting all those who showed an interest in knowing about Jesus, and discipling those who’d received him as Lord and Saviour. As the TIMO team’s term comes to an end, they leave knowing that the Ik are now engaging with the transformative Word of God. 🇺🇦

## CONNECT JUNIOR

Did you know you can read these pages alongside Connect Junior? Help children to discover the joys and challenges of reaching unreached people groups with the gospel. Find out more at: [eu.aimint.org/connectjunior](http://eu.aimint.org/connectjunior).



## A LOCAL DELICACY

Grasshoppers, known in the local Luganda language as ‘nsenene’, are a delicacy available from November to January when millions of the bugs hatch with the seasonal rains. Street vendors sell half-kilo plastic mugs of ready-to-eat grasshoppers for about £2. Cooked grasshoppers have high amounts of protein and fat, as well as significant amounts of dietary fibre.



## PUMPKIN PATCHES

Growing pumpkins on a commercial scale is slowly becoming popular among farmers in many parts of Uganda. Almost every Ik home has one or two pumpkin plants in the backyard. They eat the young leaves as a vegetable, as well as the pumpkin itself and its fried seeds.



## USES FOR SORGHUM

Many Ugandans drink bushera. Made from sorghum, it is a malted drink that can be consumed fresh as a soft drink or fermented into an alcoholic beverage known as amamera. The Ik grow sorghum because it is a very resilient crop.



## READING THE WORD

On one occasion, Lucy Proffitt, one of the TIMO team members, told a group of children the story of Bartimaeus, whom Jesus asked, "What would you like me to do for you?" She asked the children what they would say to Jesus if he asked them that question. Their response was that they would like him to chase the spirits from the trees. Despite many people considering themselves Christians, many still live in fear, and it seems, do not believe that Jesus really cares for them or is able to help them.

But God is at work. One day, when the Ik were celebrating the start of the new season for digging and planting their fields - which usually involves a lot of drinking, dancing and singing - Lucy found one of her neighbours by himself reading a bit of Scripture in Karimajong (the neighbouring tribe's language). She would also often see one of the teenage boys from our village sitting with his English Bible during the school holidays, trying his best to read it.

## WHAT'S DAILY LIFE LIKE?

The Ik legend of origin tells how God created the herder, letting cattle down from heaven by a rope and giving the cattle, together with spears, to one group of people. To the other group (the Ik) he gave only the digging stick with the order never to kill. They are very proud of their culture and are traditionally a peace loving people, but what does daily life look like for them?

**D**aily life for an Ik person revolves around working in their fields. For both men and women, each day involves tending their crops. Depending on the season that can mean preparing the ground for planting, weeding, tending crops and then harvesting. Women also have the responsibility to fetch water in the morning and in the evening. They collect firewood and carry it home, and are responsible for fulfilling all the home's needs. Crops, and therefore food, mostly consists of maize, beans and pumpkins. Some people also grow cassava, tomatoes and matoke but those crops are less common. Men will collect honey and be responsible for building and repairing homes. The Ik live in circular mud huts with a thatched grass roof.

### LEARNING TO SURVIVE

Children have the responsibility to care for other children. When they are around six years old, they move out of the family home. Children of the same age group live together on their own. They look after younger children but will receive little in the way of parental support. They might be provided with a mug of porridge in the morning (sometimes this is given to them at school), but for the rest of the day they will be left to find their own food. As such, children are very resourceful. Boys will learn to hunt, and scavenge for wild fruit and vegetables from an early age. As school is often cancelled due to a shortage of teachers, they are also very creative at inventing their own games. 📖



## TO BE BORN AGAIN

*Lokolem Gabriel is a 25 year old Ik man. He is married to Natyang Hellen and they have two small children.*

**G**abriel is the firstborn in his family. He lost his father, who was killed by enemies, when he was one. His mother remarried, resulting in Gabriel being brought up as a Catholic. When he was seven, Italian missionaries came to sponsor children through school and Gabriel was one of them. This allowed him to go to school for 11 years.

### ACCEPTING THE GOSPEL

When he was 15, Gabriel heard someone preaching the gospel. The message was clearly presented and he was especially struck by the importance of being born again. So Gabriel decided to receive Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour. Since then he fellowships with the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church. "I start my day with prayers, I trust God and I can feel how he guides me through my life. I know that God loves me and has a great plan for me."

Gabriel has been a real help to the Ik TIMO team. He has translated Bible stories during weekly Bible studies, given the team insight into the Ik culture, and even helped out with transport on his motorbike when needed. He also ensured that no interfering activities (football games, hunting trips, or village meetings) took place during the scheduled time of Bible study! 🙏

### SPEAK ICETOD

**Maranga** ('Hello', or, 'Good')

**Irra nti** (How are you?)

**Elakasukotiak** (I am happy/grateful)

👉 Pray for the Ik: [eu.aimint.org/pray/ik](http://eu.aimint.org/pray/ik)



## WEEKENDFOCUS

**2-3 FEBRUARY**

Give thanks for the ministry of the Training in Ministry Outreach (TIMO) team serving among the Ik. Pray that through the seeds of the gospel they've sown, the Ik's desire to know Jesus would grow, and the Holy Spirit would work in their hearts.

### 4 FEB • MONDAY

Due to rodents, worms, and heavy, early rains, the Ik are having to plan for a small harvest this year. Please pray that God would provide for the Ik in very real and practical ways, and that they would see God as always good, despite their circumstances.

### 5 FEB • TUESDAY

The TIMO team have been running an after school programme where the children have been memorising Matthew 5:44, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Pray that this would sink into the hearts of the Ik as nearly every night neighbouring people groups have been raiding their villages.

### 6 FEB • WEDNESDAY

Please pray for access to good education for Ik children. There are no government schools or funding. Many children simply roam free in bands with similar aged children, learning to fend for themselves. Pray that the love and care shown for them by the missionaries would impact their hearts.

### 7 FEB • THURSDAY

There are some churches on the Ik ridge and among nearby people groups that the Ik can access. Pray that the true gospel will be taught in these churches and that godly leaders would emerge from among the Ik.

### 8 FEB • FRIDAY

Please pray against the strongholds of the evil one in the Ik's lives. Alcoholism is a real problem, with many spending large sums on liquor rather than food for their families. Abuse and quarrelling are common side effects. Others are subject to demon possession.



## WHY IS DISCIPLESHIP SO IMPORTANT?

*John and Hey Ran Kang* have recently moved to Marsabit, Kenya, to open the Northern Bible Training Centre and support people like Matthew.

**M**atthew is a dentist who works as the youth worker in the AIC Marsabit church. The biggest challenge that he faces in that role, he says, is commitment among the youth. They often can't afford to get an education or get married. When they are told that if they become a Muslim there would be financial help for them, it can be a hard decision. Matthew believes the answer is good discipleship and to encourage the youth to get stuck into the Word of God.

There is a lack of theological training in Marsabit county, and the Bible isn't always preached in churches. A lot of pastors here have to support themselves, which means that they don't have a lot of time to prepare sermons, and they haven't been taught to read the Bible themselves. Preachers often say what the congregation wants to hear, and there is a big focus on material things and the prosperity gospel.

### MEASURING THE TRUTH

When you know the Bible and read it for yourself, you know when someone is teaching something wrong. But when you can't read, or if you don't know the Bible, there's no way to evaluate the truth of what they're saying.

Theological training plays an important part in encouraging local believers in evangelism, but it needs to go hand in hand with commitment. Believers have to make the decision, "Yes, this is the Word of God, and I will stand by it", especially when they are faced with cultural challenges. 🙏



## THE NORTHERN BIBLE TRAINING CENTRE

Despite being the biggest county in Kenya, Marsabit County currently has no Bible training facilities. The local church has requested that someone come and set up a Bible training college, which will serve the many different people groups in the area. The seven board members represent a variety of those people groups, Borana, Samburu, Rendille and Gabbra, reflecting what John and Hey Ran hope the makeup of students will be. The Northern Bible Training Centre will have a focus on biblical teaching and discipleship, meeting the big needs in the area. If a pastor has never been discipled before, it can be hard to know how to disciple others. Discipleship is much needed; it is powerful, but it can also be slow and labour intensive. More missionaries are needed to do this work. Could you invest in discipling believers who could then disciple other believers?



## OPEN DOORS IN MARSABIT

**T**here are currently many opportunities for ministry in Marsabit. It is a strategic location, being the administrative centre for the surrounding county, and an area rapidly growing in population. In the next four years it is thought it will grow from 22,000 to about 35,000. 14 different people groups live in the surrounding area, many of them unreached, and they all come to Marsabit to access banks, schools, hospitals. This is a great opportunity to share the gospel with people from different people groups, who can then take it back to their families when they go home.

At the moment the door is wide open for Christian teachers to teach Christian Religious Education and other subjects. This ministry would allow for personal discipleship through activity and fellowship groups. It is especially important to have teachers who can make an impact for Christ as Marsabit is an area where Islam has a huge influence. There are many opportunities opening up in schools, and often people in leadership positions, even though they are Muslims, are keen for missionary teachers to come and teach in their schools. One opportunity is in the local government school, Marsabit Boys High School, which has 450 students from many different unreached people groups. 📌

Other ministries could involve community healthcare, prison visits, engineering, construction or running an internet cafe.

Find out more: [eu.aimint.org/serve-marsabit](http://eu.aimint.org/serve-marsabit)

### WEEKENDFOCUS

9-10 FEBRUARY

Pray that the Lord would increase pastors' passion for preaching and teaching the Bible in their churches, and that they would be encouraging their congregations to be reading the Word for themselves.

#### 11 FEB • MONDAY

Pray that the Lord would give the local churches a vision to reach out to the surrounding 14 people groups with the gospel, that they would work in partnership to bring the gospel to the whole of Marsabit county.

#### 12 FEB • TUESDAY

Pray that the Lord would bring godly and faithful students to the Northern Bible Training Centre, who have hearts for reaching out unreached people groups, especially the Borana, Gabbra, Samburu, Sacuye, Somali, and Rendille.

#### 13 FEB • WEDNESDAY

Pray that God would provide all the funding that is needed for the building project to get the Northern Bible Training Centre up and running.

#### 14 FEB • THURSDAY

Pray that the Lord would bring whole families, clans and people groups to salvation, so that there will be strong Christian communities for believers to be a part of, that they may not suffer from being isolated.

#### 15 FEB • FRIDAY

There has recently been some conflict between different people groups in Marsabit county. Pray that God would bring peace, that he would uproot the spirit of revenge and bring about an end to the violence.





16-22 FEBRUARY  
**SHORT TERM**



## **AMOS KENNEDY**

*Amos is serving short term in Dukana, Kenya, a Gabbra town 20km from Ethiopia. He teaches Christian Religious Education in the school, and helps long term missionary Eddie Andersen with various projects. This has included installing a water tower in a nearby village, and doing practical jobs around the garage and radio station that are run from the compound.*

## **HOW THE GOSPEL REACHES HEARTS**

### **WHAT MADE YOU SERVE SHORT TERM?**

I had exposure to mission when I was younger as my parents were missionaries in Kenya, east of Mount Kenya in a place called Tharaka. I grew up in Kenya, but moved back to the UK when I was 10. Once home, I became a Christian at a camp, and as I grew in my faith, my desire to come out on mission also grew, as did my curiosity to come back to remind myself what it was like. We've made several trips back as a family, and I spent a couple of extra weeks with some family friends who live in Tuum, among the Samburu. I spent that time learning about mission and helping out practically where I could and really enjoyed it. The perception at home is that Kenya is 'done', it's evangelised, the most Christian country in the world. But that's in the south. In the north, an area that is 70% of the land mass, there are hardly any Christians. Among the 89,000 Gabbra people there are only about 200 Christians. And there are still many people groups who don't have the Bible in their language.



### WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED MOST?

I really enjoy relating to nomadic people, learning Swahili and just being able to make friends with people on a deeper level. Often in mission you have this idea that you just need to go in and tell them about Jesus and that's it, job done. But I've enjoyed making lasting friendships, and being able to carry on those friendships each time I come back. It's been great to learn from the missionaries I've stayed with, to see that to function in society, and to come alongside people and disciple them, it's got to be a long term commitment - both in seeing them hear the gospel in the first place, like what is happening here among the Gabbra, but then to disciple them and see them grow in their faith too.

### WHAT HAS GOD BEEN TEACHING YOU AND HOW IS HE USING YOU?

That mission is a long term commitment. I knew this year would be a big learning curve, because in the past I've only been involved for a couple of weeks. Even though a year is still just a snapshot, I'm getting a chance to see what is happening here, and it's giving me an idea of what it's like to commit to something long term. I'm seeing the process of how the gospel reaches people's hearts; how we can get them to hear it in the first place, and then making sure they can keep hearing it in ways that they understand and that they grasp. I'm learning how practical things like putting in a water tower gives us chances to go and share the gospel, and how that makes it easier for locals to accept us. And that you have to take your time and go in slowly. The biggest frustration is not knowing enough Swahili to be able to relate to people as deeply as I'd like. I'm not a mechanic or very practically minded, but I'm seeing how God can use me in other ways, even if I'm not an expert. 🙏

## WEEKENDFOCUS

16-17 FEBRUARY

Pray that my language skills would keep developing so that I can have deeper conversations with people. Pray that I would be able to understand the local culture and engage with people in ways that are meaningful, and that I'd be able to discuss faith with them.

### 18 FEB • MONDAY

Pray that I would make the most of the opportunity I have to teach Christian Religious Education. Pray that the students would take on board what I say and what they read in the Bible and want to explore the truth further.

### 19 FEB • TUESDAY

Pray for cultural insights so that I can communicate the gospel to those I teach in ways that they understand. We'd love these young people to begin attending church and for opportunities to develop to begin doing Bible studies with them.

### 20 FEB • WEDNESDAY

Pray for the long term ministry among the Gabbra, particularly that I would have wisdom in the things that I get involved in so that new initiatives can continue after I leave. Pray that all I do would fit within and be a part of the long term mission work in Dukana.

### 21 FEB • THURSDAY

Pray that my service as a short termer would be an encouragement to the long term missionaries that I'm working with. Particularly that I would work well with Eddie Andersen and be able to lighten his load. Pray that I would grow in my faith through this.

### 22 FEB • FRIDAY

Please pray for me as I consider both my immediate future and plans to serve long term. I am applying to do a PGCE next year, but I would also like to stay to finish the school year here, which overlaps. Pray that as I make decisions, I would seek good guidance and godly wisdom.



Image © Baba Tahita

## WHAT IS TIMO?

TIMO stands for Training in Ministry Outreach. It is a two-year team programme that trains new cross-cultural workers from around the world to do ministry in Africa. With a common goal of sharing Christ, teams live together as learners among an unreached people group. Team members learn how to learn a language, then put it to use. They discover methods of outreach—creative ways to reach out with Christ's love in word and deed. Every day teams put into practice what they learn—theory fleshed out as they live and interact with their host people group. TIMO has required reading and there are papers to write. All of this is an integral part of building a solid foundation for a lifetime of ministry. You can find out more about TIMO at: [eu.aimint.org/go/timo](http://eu.aimint.org/go/timo)

## BRINGING LIGHT

AIM is starting a new team in Kondoia beginning in July 2020, partnering with the Africa Inland Church Tanzania.

**L**ed by Jared and Megan Hood, AIM missionaries from the US, the team will focus on lifestyle and proclamation evangelism and discipleship. As they learn Kiswahili, the team will intentionally seek to partner with and mobilise local believers and local churches in outreach and discipleship to their unreached neighbours. They will encourage new believers to join already existing congregations, as they work closely with multiple denominations and with local believers.

### LONGING TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

There will be opportunities for team members to become involved in a wide range of ministries, using their gifts, talents and experience to edify the local church and create platforms where they can meet locals, build friendships and begin to share the gospel. There will be opportunities in farming or agricultural work, as many people living in Kondoia tend to have small plots close to their homes and then larger farms outside the town. There are opportunities for teachers in a local school, to teach English as a second language or to get involved in sport ministries, as football is very popular in Tanzania.

Ultimately, we need people on this team who long to share the gospel with the people of Kondoia so that they may be brought from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Pray that God would begin to soften hearts ahead of the team starting, so that people will be ready to accept Jesus. We look with eager anticipation to the day when people of Kondoia are welcomed into the kingdom of light for all eternity. 🙏



## ARE YOU CALLED TO KONDOA?

**T**he town of Kondoia is 100 miles north of Tanzania's capital, Dodoma, on the main trade route from Cairo to Cape Town. It's a small town of 14,000 people, populated with traders and merchants, as well as government workers and business people drawn by industry related to Kondoia's role as the administrative centre for the district. Historically, the Kondoia highlands were a cultural backwater until ivory traders arrived between 1850 and 1880 and founded a trading post. The first mosque was built in 1885, and the first Catholic church in 1910.

Currently 75% of the town are Muslims.

There are a number of different people groups, however it's estimated that the Rangi people make up around 60% to 70% of the population. Of the Rangi, the Catholic church state that 5% are Catholics. A local pastor working among the Rangi stated, "We do not have a Rangi pagan, every Rangi is either a Muslim or a Catholic." But there is also a significant Protestant minority in Kondoia with Anglicans, Lutherans, the Tanzania Assemblies of God, the Free Pentecostal Church of Tanzania, some smaller Pentecostal churches and a Seventh Day Adventist Church all present. As such, the vision of this team is not to plant new churches, but to work in partnership with the existing local church; training, mobilising and supporting them in their mission efforts. 🙏

If you'd like to find out more about serving in Kondoia:

Visit: [eu.aimint.org/serve-kondoia](http://eu.aimint.org/serve-kondoia)

### WEEKEND FOCUS

**23-24 FEBRUARY**

We are seeking to place a new TIMO team in the town of Kondoia, central Tanzania. Pray for God to raise up team members who are passionate about seeing the unreached people who live there come to a saving knowledge of Jesus.

#### **25 FEB • MONDAY**

Pray for Jared and Megan Hood, currently on home assignment in the US, as they prepare to lead this team. Pray that God would be equipping them with the wisdom, patience and love to lead the team effectively.

#### **26 FEB • TUESDAY**

There are a small number of Christians living in Kondoia. Pray that God would be working in believers' hearts now so that the team may be able to easily join in with their evangelism and outreach strategies and support the efforts of the local church.

#### **27 FEB • WEDNESDAY**

Pray for the Africa Inland Church Tanzania as they seek to mobilise members for this team. Pray that they would find godly men and women who are willing to learn local languages and work in unity with both the local church and the other TIMO members.

#### **28 FEB • THURSDAY**

There are many social needs in Kondoia, including educational needs. Pray that some of the team members would be equipped to work as teachers in local secondary schools and in so doing, demonstrate Jesus at work in their lives and directly bless the local community.

#### **1 MAR • FRIDAY**

Pray for the Rangi people who make up the largest percentage of people living in Kondoia. The predominant religion among the Rangi is Islam, but it is mixed with African traditional beliefs, including elements of witchcraft and sorcery. Pray for openness and soft hearts.



## WHAT ABOUT THE GOSPEL & CULTURE?

One of the biggest challenges for a believer in any culture is how to deal with areas of that culture that stand in tension with the Bible.

Wherever we live, all of us have either experienced or know of new believers who have gone through the painful process of changing lifestyle choices. It can be especially hard when we have to give up things that shape our identity, or that are expected of us within our families and communities.

So what does this look like for believers coming from a background of African traditional religion? Often, cultural traditions and customs are contrary to the Bible; for instance, making sacrifices to other gods, or honouring their ancestors instead of Christ. Refusing to participate in these rituals can cause animosity with family or community. For several Gabbra Christians who decided to get married in the church instead of following traditional customs, the result was being ostracised by their families for years, and constantly being told by them that they weren't really married because they hadn't done it the right way.

### CULTURE MATTERS

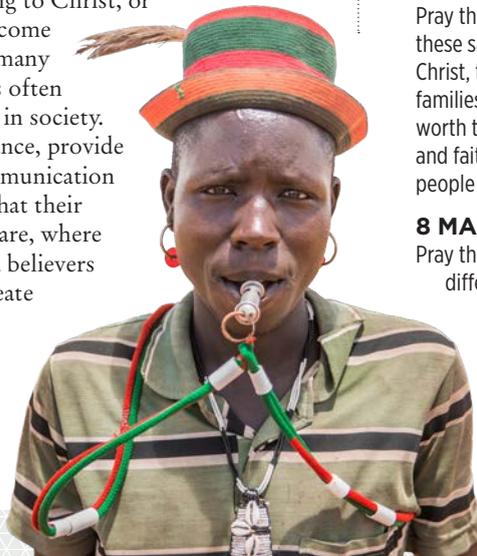
Culture matters. It shapes our identity, our society, what we value, what we fear. We can't detach ourselves from culture, God created us to create culture. But what do we do with those aspects of our cultures that are not compatible with the Bible? As a missionary in a culture that you don't yet, and may never, fully understand, what is your role when new believers are struggling with these issues?

Coming from a different culture themselves, missionaries arrive with their own cultural framework and worldview. Values and ways of understanding things will be different, for example serving cross-culturally often means adapting to a collective society when missionaries often are sent by cultures that emphasise the individual. In these contexts it is important not to assume that you fully understand another culture, and to always have a learning attitude. Culture can vary from place to place, even within the same people group, which is another reason why learning language is so important, so you can ask questions and communicate accurately and sensitively.

What role, then, do missionaries play? Teaching the Bible ensures that people understand and address these issues for themselves. Recognising they don't understand the culture deeply enough to tell people what to do or not do, Martin Koch, a missionary among the Samburu, says, "Only the Holy Spirit can do that." Working among the Gabbra, Eddie Andersen's experience is that, "It takes a lot more thought, but we'll be in a Bible study and the light will suddenly switch on. They will see and understand why things that are done in their culture are really not honouring to God, and as a group they will decide together for themselves what is good or not." Local believers need to recognise and identify things that need to change themselves. Ownership of these decisions makes them culturally relevant and sustainable.

### JESUS AT THE CENTRE

The key for all of us is to constantly be asking the question, 'Is Christ at the centre of our traditions?' Is it honouring to Christ, or could it be changed to become honouring to Christ? In many African cultures, customs often play very important roles in society. Rites of passage, for instance, provide boundaries and clear communication to children about what their roles and responsibilities are, where they stand. Churches and believers can decide together to create new traditions that fulfil these social needs, but do so in a way that keeps Christ at the heart of all they do. 🌍



## WEEKENDFOCUS

### 2-3 MARCH

Pray for new believers who may be the first Christians in their people group or clan facing these issues. Pray that, as they wrestle with what culture should look like for them, the Holy Spirit would be working in them and convicting them and giving them the courage and faith they need.

#### 4 MAR • MONDAY

Pray for missionaries who are supporting believers in difficult cultural situations. Pray that as they support and encourage them to be studying the Bible and making decisions themselves, local believers would take ownership of creating new traditions that honour Jesus.

#### 5 MAR • TUESDAY

Pray that cultural issues and challenges would not be a barrier which prevents people from making the commitment to follow Jesus; that people would grasp the truth that following Jesus is worth more than anything else.

#### 6 MAR • WEDNESDAY

Pray for those who are ostracised because they have taken a stand and refused to participate in cultural traditions. Pray that they would know Christ's strength, comfort and peace in their lives, and that God would provide for them in their every need.

#### 7 MAR • THURSDAY

Pray that as people do decide to make these sacrifices in order to follow Christ, that this would witness to their families and communities that Jesus is worth the cost. Pray that their courage and faith would bring many other people to believe and trust in Christ.

#### 8 MAR • FRIDAY

Pray that as missionaries live among different people groups, they would be able to have learner attitudes and that language would not be a barrier to positive and clear communication about the Bible and culture.



9-22 MARCH  
**CHURCH PLANTING**



**WEEKENDFOCUS • 9-10 MARCH**

## SHEPHERDING SOULS

Caleb Fetterhoff and Tobias Reuff work among the Lesotho shepherds, seeking to share the gospel with them.

**W**e are not only shepherds of animals. Shepherds are aware of sick and weak animals, shear their wool, go with them to the pastures and protect them from jackals and thieves. They care about the wellbeing of the animals they are entrusted with, and in the same way, we care about the shepherds that God has entrusted us with.

Life in the mountains is characterised by constant coming and going. This gives us the opportunity to have many initial conversations about our faith with shepherds. The reactions we get are often quite different. Some, like stubborn sheep, can't or don't want to recognise that there is another Shepherd who cares about their lives. Others are willing to hear the good news, listening to the solar-powered audio Bibles with eagerness and gratitude. Of these, some may be sincerely interested in the spiritual truth found there. For others it is just a change to their quiet and lonely lives. Nevertheless, we frequently encounter shepherds who are willing to pray with us: prayers to surrender their lives to Christ. Pray that we will meet many more. 🌍

To download a prayer sheet for the Lesotho shepherds, go to: [eu.aimint.org/pray/lesothoshepherds](http://eu.aimint.org/pray/lesothoshepherds)

## 11 MAR • MONDAY

For almost three years we have had the privilege of serving among the shepherds in Lesotho. Give thanks that we're now more comfortable with being dirty, not being able to change our clothes for three weeks, having only one pair of gumboots, and sleeping in a simple hut.

## 12 MAR • TUESDAY

Give thanks that many shepherds are willing to stop and talk to us, or even give us some food. Other shepherds are surprised to meet us, wondering what these white people are doing. Pray that these encounters would be opportunities to share the gospel.

## 13 MAR • WEDNESDAY

Jackals are the natural predator of the sheep in the mountains. If a sheep gets lost they will almost certainly be found dead. Many shepherds who have professed faith seem to be like these sheep. Pray they would stay close to Christ and seek discipleship.

## 14 MAR • THURSDAY

The seasonal, migratory nature of herding means that new Christians lose contact with us. Pray for shepherds who go back to their home villages and are faced with traditional religious practices which might be incompatible with a genuine walk with Christ.

## 15 MAR • FRIDAY

Tsie, Mochefeng, Tebello and Kefiloe usually come to Bible studies. Now they are taking part in a six month initiation rite where boys are circumcised and recognised as men. Some of the activities are probably demonic. Pray they would be protected from spiritual and physical danger.

## 18 MAR • MONDAY

Ask that the believing shepherds would demonstrate lives that are changed, especially in regard to abuse of alcohol and drugs, extramarital sex and ancestor worship. Please pray for Thabile, Lavasta, Course, and Mahlanya that they would grow in their faith.

## 19 MAR • TUESDAY

Pray for us, that as we teach, love and live with the shepherds, we would make the most of every opportunity to share the good news. Please pray specifically for Kamohelo, Jakobo, Masaina, Koena, Khriteon and Thapelo who have not yet professed faith.

## 20 MAR • WEDNESDAY

Pray that we would discern which relationships with shepherds we should invest more in. Whom should we follow and whom should we let go their own way? Pray that even those we never see again would continue in God's grace and bear fruit.

## 21 MAR • THURSDAY

Pray for leaders from among the shepherds to develop so that some will be motivated to recreate Bible study groups and to tell the Bible stories to still more shepherds. Pray that we would have wisdom to identify these potential leaders and that we would know how to train them.

## 22 MAR • FRIDAY

Please pray for us as we think about how our future work with the shepherds should evolve. Should we continue doing what we're doing? How much longer should we continue this ministry? Pray for wisdom, so that we can follow God's plans.



## rites of passage

Male initiation is known as 'lebollo la banna' in Sesotho. It is a rite of passage for boys when they pass puberty to enter adulthood and become men or 'monna'.



## initiation ceremonies

Initiation involves a lengthy stay at a secluded location with other initiates, during which they are also circumcised.



## becoming women

Girls also go through an initiation rite involving seclusion. After initiation girls become women and wear cowhide skirts.

## WEEKENDFOCUS

### 16-17 MARCH

Please intercede for the twice weekly oral Bible study in Matšela village, that the shepherds would keep coming, and find mutual encouragement in being with the others. Pray that the stories would sink into their hearts and minds and bring life change.





23-31 MARCH  
**OUTREACH & EVANGELISM**



## “NOW, IT’S OUR GOSPEL!”

*Eddie and Rachel Andersen live in Dukana, sharing the gospel with the semi-nomadic Gabbra people, who have been fairly resistant.*

**O**ne big breakthrough that Eddie and Rachel have witnessed was after organising an ethnomusicology seminar in Kalacha, where songs based on Scripture were written in the Gabbra language and style. When people heard the gospel in their own language they really started to identify with it. The elders of the church in Kalacha said, “Now we can share the gospel! We didn’t feel confident about how we could share it before; it was your gospel. But now it is our gospel.” Gabbra believers began to evangelise, going from village to village singing the songs in their own language and sharing the gospel, and people really started to listen. The whole Bible was translated into the Gabbra language, and Eddie and Rachel started to give out audio recordings on MP3 devices, along with the Scripture songs. Some of those devices have travelled for miles, to places the Andersens have never been, picked up by herdsman who come to town, who then take them with them and share them with others.

Another project that is run from the Andersens’ base in Dukana is Chalbi FM, a Christian radio station that broadcasts over a 70,000 mile area, covering many different people groups. Barako, Mwambi and Gollo, who run the radio station, broadcast Christian music and news in eight indigenous languages. As this is the only radio station available in most of that area, they have a large and captive audience - they even get Islamic traders listening in. Everybody loves listening to the radio! 📻

## WEEKENDFOCUS

23-24 MARCH

Pray that the Gabbra would understand that Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice, and all that they need to make them right with God. Pray they would know he wants a personal relationship with them, and make the commitment to following him.

### 25 MAR • MONDAY

Give thanks for the first baptisms in Dukana which happened recently! 17 people completed the baptism classes and were baptised. Pray that those believers would be encouraged and strengthened in their faith, and that through their witness many other Gabbra would come to Christ.

### 26 MAR • TUESDAY

There were more Gabbra who were interested in baptism, but couldn't attend all the classes because of responsibilities looking after animals. Pray for the second class that has started, that people would be able to attend and that their hearts would be convicted and transformed.

### 27 MAR • WEDNESDAY

Pray for Barako, Gollo and Mwambi as they work at the radio station. They want to start working on a chat show about cultural things that people struggle with and give biblical answers. Pray for the provision

of more staff and funding so that they can be on air for longer and also be able to spend more time creating programmes.

### 28 MAR • THURSDAY

Pray for Barako, who is in charge of raising funding for the radio station. It's a challenge because it's hard to get money from advertisements in an underdeveloped district. Eventually it would be great for it to be as self-sustainably funded as possible (it currently runs on external funding).

### 29 MAR • FRIDAY

Pray for evangelists Dub Jillo and Dub Giro, who work with Eddie in his garage doing mechanical and driving work. Providing water for nearby communities provides great opportunities for sharing the gospel too, and there seems to be a real hunger to be taught the Word of God.

## WEEKENDFOCUS

30-31 MARCH

Many of the leaders among the Gabbra believers, like Barako and Dub, are the fruit of volunteers who worked in the schools in Kalacha, investing time and energy to share the gospel and disciple them. Pray for the many opportunities there are in the schools among the Gabbra, for the gospel to be taught and people to be disciplined.



## WHO ARE THE GABBRA?

The Gabbra live in the northernmost part of Kenya, 89,000 people spread out over a large area of land. One of their biggest needs is water, as rainfall is low and unreliable and many places may not get any for years. They herd camels, which are more resilient in the harsh conditions than cattle or goats, and are semi-nomadic, often having to move around to find grazing.

*“When people heard the gospel in their own language they really started to identify with it”*

The gospel has been very slow to take hold among the Gabbra. Traditionally, they worship a god called Wak, who is omnipotent but also distant. In order to please him they sacrifice animals and follow many customs and rules. After the first missionary arrived, it took 15 years for a Gabbra person to accept Christ. After 35 years of ministry there were 70 known believers, and now, 10 years later, there are about 200. A lot of the resistance is because for the Gabbra, they know that when they accept Christ they have to stop following some of their cultural traditions.



# GO & SERVE

## COULD YOU SHARE LIGHT WHERE THERE IS DARKNESS?



### SHORT TERM OPPORTUNITIES IN MARSABIT, KENYA



Could you serve short term, joining the team in Marsabit to focus on building relationships with individuals in the church and community in order to mentor and disciple them?

Find out more online: [eu.aimint.org/shortterm-marsabit](http://eu.aimint.org/shortterm-marsabit)



### LONG TERM OPPORTUNITIES JOIN A TEAM IN KONDOA, TANZANIA



Do you have a heart to share the gospel? Could you work with the local church to mobilise believers to evangelise and disciple their neighbours as part of a TIMO (Training in Ministry Outreach) team?

Find out more online: [eu.aimint.org/serve-kondoa](http://eu.aimint.org/serve-kondoa)



**AFRICA  
INLAND MISSION**

### About AIM Europe

Africa Inland Mission is a Christian mission sending agency. We have our roots in a small band of faithful men and women who, in 1895, followed God's call to venture inland to reach Africans untouched by the gospel. Their vision set the course of AIM for 120 years, as a community called and sent to live and minister among Africa's least-reached peoples. A call that still remains.

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