

Church Planting Kenya

There were a few converts among the Mausai people. But we were only touching the Mausai on the fringes. A missionary had started a few churches 1975 – 1985. Most agencies were afraid of the Mausai because they had been so resistant. In the early 80's focus was to start churches. The national leaders began to get caught up in this and decided to take on the Mausai. The whole mission was praying for the Mausai, a big factor. [Fast days].

A concerted effort was started by Jimmy who was key in getting this set up, the mission praying, and to get missionaries involved.

We have associational contests so singing contests were used, music and medical teams were used. Normally, we were working in areas ten to 15 miles away from any Government facility. So we tried to respond to the physical needs of the area.

Also, the Jesus film was used. They had never seen the box before and when the box started speaking they ran. The Jesus film was translated in Mausai and Swahili.

And some evangelists were trained – Mausai, young inexperienced who had probably been a Christian a year and a half were trained for a month. They were also taught how to move about their villages. These trained evangelists were often teamed up with volunteers from the States. They learned the routine of speaking with the elders. Older people were respected. Mausai men would translate for the volunteers. They would get permission from the elders to give witness. People would often come because you speakers were white. It was a great experience for volunteers. But mainly young people would respond. Older people [40+] seemed to watch and try to learn the songs.

If a young man comes from a family with a good reputation then he often will be listened to. Volunteers would come in for a week or two. If they didn't have local volunteers in an area then they put the evangelist with the volunteers. The evangelists had a tent and were paid \$20 a month. They stayed three weeks out of the month witnessing. Then they would go back home for a week.

People were saved in areas that you couldn't get to unless you walked. It might be 18 miles [... 3 hours walk translates to, 'just over there' according to the locals]. Churches were being started. The one thing hoped for was convincing them they need to get a leader out occasionally for training.

Next Phase - None of this happened in straight order. The evangelists worked over a 2-year period; they were spread over Mausai land. They broke through into some of the clans that had been resistant. Then the follow up was done with hand-cranked cassettes and another tier of people were also becoming Christians. People were sent to the seminary training to teach basic discipleship mainly with the leaders. These became leader schools and pastor schools. Within about 4 or 5 years of the kickoff they began to get students in the seminary who were Mausai [4 or 5 by the 5/6th year]. Then they started a class for the Mausai. The seminary students from Nairobi come in for two weeks out of the month every other month. Seminary has extensions in

two other parts of the country, one on the coast and one on Lake Victoria. We set up a center right at the border done in Swahili. However, this limited the number of participants because of language. There was no way to teach them in Mausai.

They study intensively in class for two weeks, and then go back to their territory for 6 weeks. These classes go four years. They are gone only two months from their church. Also, two students have been going into Tanzania. These folk are going to be well grounded. They live throughout Mausai land.

What is our definition of church? .. at least fifteen people. It would have a leader that would hopefully be getting TEE training and theological studies. Mausai can't seem to go beyond 50-60 because the leader can not cope with more. There comes a natural break [sometimes clean other times not].

John Witty is the first person that has gotten into storying with the Mausai. It is done in their language over a weekend. People want to hear the whole Bible. They are going to teach storying in the Bible schools.

As far as music, these people like to get together for celebration. Christians can go and teach Christian songs. We began to use youth camps and regional music festivals. They recently had 800 young people attend and fourteen choirs. Very traditional people [Mausai] participating. We teach them songs with good translations of gospel songs. They will sing all over their territory. They will teach it to everyone even if they don't know what the song means. [They do write indigenous songs.] Pastor / song leader are often the same guy. Scripture is taught in a class, and they work on a song during break.

In Kenya there is a great move toward becoming modern. They are wanting to do theological training. They are trying to learn some English songs that are sung around the world. There will eventually be a lot of mixing of traditional and new.

In the 80's there was a mass movement to start churches. Missionaries began church planting and everybody wanted to start a church. This idea took off on the coast. It was a well organized and controlled project approach. In Kenya it is a constant call for others to come in and help. A time came when men were praised for starting new churches. Out of this came the desire of local men to start churches. Locals who could not read a word but were asked to tell how they started a church.

METHODS USED:

1. It all started with initial work done by one person
2. That concern and prayer was shared with others
3. Prayer was a primary key
4. Local leaders (evangelists) were trained
5. Cultural methods and cultural signals were followed
6. Follow-up by Mausai to Mausai was specific and immediate using reproducible methods (hand-cranked cassettes)
7. Simple leadership training was given, even the illiterate could be pastors and leaders (storying)
8. Witnessing in the villiages were approved by the elders
9. An atmosphere and expectation of all Christians to be involved was shared