

NEKESA - "The Harvester" May, 2007

We received the news about 1 AM Sunday, May 20 that Justus Ochuro's father died Monday morning, May 21, 2007. He was ninety-four years old when he passed on. They are 8 hours ahead of us so it was already Monday morning. Justus and Margaret will be flying home Monday, May 28 for the funeral.

Justus explained some of the cultural factors involved in funerals in Kenya. The funeral cannot be held until the whole family is there. Justus said it often takes a month to get everyone together. His father was the most senior elder in his clan. Tribal religious tradition law requires that such a person be buried in his original home site. If it has been abandoned, someone from the clan must build a house and reside there before he can be buried there. The clan can take the body by force to bury it according to tribal tradition. However, Justus' father is a Christian and was a pastor for many years; Justus and several of his brothers are following in his footsteps. Justus father recorded an audio and a video in which he renounced the tribal tradition, religion and custom and stated his desire to be buried as a Christian where he lived near Bungoma. Justus has it and must find it so the clan will release them from obeying the tradition. One way you might better understand the situation is to consider each tribe was an independent country in the same way that an American states were independent countries and still retain control of some matters.



Funerals in Kenya are excellent opportunities for evangelism. As noted above, all the relatives and many friends come to funerals. It is traditional to talk for some time about the deceased so people are ready to listen. At most funerals many come to give themselves to Jesus. Equally important, the Good News of the Gospel is sown into every heart so that many who don't respond immediately come to the Lord as the seed germinates in them. This will be an especially significant time for Justus for many of the clan members he, his father and his brothers have ministered to will be there. Please pray in agreement for them that all his clan will be saved.

It seems a good time to share some thoughts about **MAKING DISCIPLES** that Justus ministered to the Church in Bungoma. The first part follows:

In final summary of His earthly life and purpose, Christ turned over His own commission from God to His followers. *"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."* John 20:21 **His life is an encompassing challenge that cannot be misinterpreted. He said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."** Matthew 28:19-20 This great commission, repeated in several other places in the Word, reflects God's eternal will that all people everywhere have the opportunity to become disciples of Jesus Christ. This command gave direction and motivation to the early Church. As you read the Book of Acts, there is no question that this command was to given top priority. Therefore, the early church grew from its beginning ... with mega power force - from 12 to 120 to 3000 to 8000. They went from addition to multiplication. Entire communities turned to the Lord.

Through the centuries the church has grown:

- Among alien cultures and hostile religions
- Among primitive and difficult people.

The church of Jesus Christ has grown and triumphed over traitors, persecutions, famine and sword. It is God's will for it to continue to grow and to complete its task. Let us run our course to complete ours.