

December 2023, Newsletter from Daniel and Grace Pratt Morris-Chapman

Last month we had the privilege of beginning training for local preachers inside the district. Previously local preachers have been examined in Kenya because our synod is an overseas district of the Kenyan conference. However, because the local languages are very different some people struggle to pass these exams because they do not know English or Swahili. Indeed, in some of our circuits there are very limited options for those who even want to attend primary or secondary schools. Thus we hope to set oral exams rather than written exams so that all may be examined in a way that is fair. Our plan is to summarise and translate the set texts into the local language and organise them in a way that makes them accessible to rural circuits where many of our wonderful *de facto* preachers are working (and planting many churches) regardless of their educational backgrounds.

I was deeply moved at our midweek Wednesday service when a lady who sells charcoal for a living preached a sermon far better than any I've ever heard before. She related how her husband had nearly died in an accident and how God had carried them through that time and strengthened her faith (please pray for her family). I was so moved I just stood up at the end clapping and said: "I am so happy after that perfect sermon, most of all because I think she should be made superintendent-she will be far better than me!" The people cheered :-)

When I think about how complicated it can be to become a local preacher in so many connexions around the world I wonder how far we have drifted from our roots. I recently had the chance to read about John Wesley's Preachers (<https://ukwells.org/revivalists/john-nelson>). They were very normal people, people who were in normal jobs. Some of them could not read or write but all were given a chance, if filled with the Holy Spirit, to proclaim the good news. They had no degrees, no masters, certainly no doctorates, yet they were amazing. They were willing to go wherever needed, sleep in barns and travel miles for the gospel. Many of them had no formal education whatsoever but it did not affect their calling to build the kingdom of God.

Please pray all for the preachers here. Pray that they will not let anyone look down on them but will just look to do whatever God is calling them to.



Please pray for us that God would bless us with encouragement at a time of huge changes in Methodist Mission Partner work.