

## When Will The Rains Come?

Simeon, the rainmaker, looked at the dry, cracked soil at his feet, then returned to scanning the horizon.

Every day the farmers were asking the same question, "When will the rains come?" Every day he gave the same reply, "Be patient. They will come. They have always come."

For generations, as far back as anyone could remember, his family had been rainmakers. The gift had been passed from father to son. From the time he was a boy, he had been taught to observe subtle changes in the life cycles of the natural world which surrounded him.

With remarkable accuracy, the rainmakers had been able to advise the farmers when to prepare the soil and plant their seed, in anticipation of the life-giving rains. They were highly-regarded members of the community.

Deep inside himself, Simeon was troubled. He knew that the rain cycles, upon which his people were dependent, were becoming less reliable. Some years they would begin early. Other years they would begin late. Some areas received too much rain, and many received too little. The days were becoming hotter and the winds, blowing over deforested hills were becoming stronger.

Where there was too much rain precious topsoil was eroded from hillsides, fields were submerged, roads became impassible, cisterns for storing rainwater overflowed,

wells were contaminated by runoff, swollen rivers carried away trees and property, and the threat of disease increased for plants, livestock and people.

Where there was too little rain, grazing lands became barren, livestock starved, trees lost their leaves and failed to set fruit, shade crops withered, rivers vanished, wells ran dry, and much time and energy was spent searching for and transporting enough water to sustain life.

The cycles which had sustained countless generations were changing. The practices and teachings of the past would have to be adapted to an unknown future.

Every year the question would be asked. It would become more and more difficult to answer.

"When will the rains come?"

Notes:

The weather services of the Kenyan government are collaborating with local rainmakers to refine forecasts for individual localities.

Our latest report from Sr. Rose notes that late rains resulted in planting delays and smaller crop yields in Nyalieng'a. The effects of climate change are not coming. They have arrived!