

Real Life Stories *Jungle Decision*

Stephen Kinyanjui rose from his knees in the neat potato patch where he had been praying, his prayer answered and his heart at peace. He looked down at the thriving plants, the only potato crop existing among his Kikuyu people, and recalled the huge sum of money a buyer had promised for the crop. Then, with an air of staunch resignation, the husky man strode to his house and sat down to wait – for what, he did not know.

It had been a hard decision. All the rest of the Kikuyus in Kenya Colony, in Africa, supported the revolt that was planned against the white men there in 1928. But Kinyanjui had come to know Jesus Christ and loved the Christian missionaries. He could not betray them. Then came the threat; if Kinyanjui did not give up his faith in twenty-four hours, he would suffer for it.

Was his Christian faith worth that? Kinyanjui moved his family to the Rumuruti Mission Station and had returned to his treasured vegetable patch. There, in prayer, he had made his decision to remain true to his new found faith in the Saviour. Now he awaited his fate.

At dusk Kinyanjui heard an ominous murmur of voices. The tribesmen were returning. Out of the ranks of dancing torches emerged the form of the chief, his grim face framed in the flickering yellow light. “Kinyanjui, have you decided?”

Stephen drew himself up to his full six feet. “Yes, I cannot go back on my faith in Jesus Christ!”

“Then maybe this will change your mind!” The chief signaled. Strong arms seized Stephen. Someone put a torch to his home. In a matter of minutes it was a flaming ruin.

“Will you change your mind?”

Stephen Kinyanjui shook his head. At another signal men began to trample through his garden and beloved potato patch. They tore up vegetables and ground their feet and sticks into the potato hills.

“What do you say now?” they screamed at him.

“I can only say NO!”

A fist smashed into his face. A stick slammed against the small of his back and another across the front of his legs. Blows came from every direction. The glowing end of a torch rammed against his chest. His seared flesh shrank in agony. Something crashed against the back of his head and the dancing flames and gleaming eyes faded as the darkness engulfed him.

When at last Kinyanjui came to his senses he was alone. The fire had burned out. Only hot ashes remained of his home. He tried to get up but something was wrong with his legs.

Painfully he dragged himself by his arms through the long grass and down into the valley. At daybreak the missionaries found him at their door.

That was in 1928. Quite a few years later Stephen Kinyanjui became one of the Kikuyu country’s outstanding pastors. If he was asked about his limp and the scars on his body, he would only smile and say, “It’s nothing! Let me tell you all about Jesus Christ.”

A true story
... By John Anderson Barbour