

Report from Makang'wa

P.O. Box 2094, Dodoma, Tanzania

June 9th. 2006

Greetings from the Amani Center, Makang'wa Village, Dodoma Rural District. That is our 'locality' address. This Report is a supplement to the Famine Relief Appeal letter which has been sent to congregations in Montana.

This afternoon, June 9th, I was present at the distribution of maize at the end of a Relief Work Week. We had forty people participating (representing forty households). In addition a further forty destitute elderly people received food assistance. Warm thanks to the people of south east Queensland, Australia who have provided funding enabling us to maintain this level of assistance for a further four weeks. This really is a 'daily' ministry. One of my particular joys is to say 'grace' with the people before a meal. Yes, I am learning to eat ugali (thick porridge) and beans, Tanzanian style. Fingers were made before forks! I find that I have developed a deep, deep love for these people.

Yesterday I was in Dodoma purchasing maize and cement, a strong wheelbarrow, some treated poles for a chicken run, shorter ones for drip irrigation, meeting several 'important' people and checking the bank balance! During the day four young boys came up to me, asking for help. I have come to know them and their family situations. When food runs out at home they are sent into the city to beg for food. My custom now is to take them to a fruit barrow and buy a few pieces of fruit for each of them. "Asante, bwana." (Thank you, mister.) and they skip away with a smile on their faces!

Tomorrow we have been invited to be 'special guests' for the procession of the Freedom Torch through the village. This is a very significant annual event in Tanzania. It tours the entire nation! In every district a particular village is selected to host the progress of the Torch. This year it is 'our' village. This annual celebration is a focal point for independence, unity and community.

On Sunday I am to be the guest at a celebration 'Welcome Home' service at St. Andrew's Church, our 'Parish Church'. It will be quite a celebration as these people do things in style. They had people praying for me every day during my absence. Val and Ivan Peters (sister and brother-in-law) kept programs operating smoothly while I was away. Much was achieved. They are locally called 'Bibi and Babu' – Grandma and Grandfather. There will also be prayers in remembrance of my sister Joyce who died on June 5th. The following Sunday I am to celebrate and preach at St Mark's Parish Church, the 'other' Parish in this Village. Each Parish consists of several congregations.

St. Andrew's has a daily ministry to many orphans and children of destitute families. The facilities are sadly lacking! I have decided that my 'pledge' to my Parish will be four sacks of cement a month. That will convert into about 110 concrete blocks a month. The parish will first construct a new toilet and kitchen (the children receive a meal each day – if food is available). That will probably be followed by a new multi-purpose Church building. This is l-o-n-g range planning.

We are looking into plans to convert the lounge/dining area in the house we rent at Mvumi Village – our registered office is there – into a Computer Training Center. We can place ten computers in the area. This is 'Plan G', God's Plan, as progress is very slow towards building the proposed school at Mvumi Makulu. It is important that the computers be put to use. We also have plans for a Vocational Training Center on the Makang'wa land. I am also exploring the placing of some of the large quantity of school books at a new English Medium Primary School in North Dodoma. They currently do not have a library so that may lead to another 'concrete block' manufacturing enterprise!

Concerning the proposed school at Mvumi Makulu, one of the basic needs before anything else can be done is to 'renovate' the disused well. The 'Walk for Water – Walk for Children' held during my trip to Australia has so far raised \$10,000.00AUST towards this goal. There have also been some local 'politics' involved in the process but I believe we are working through all of that quite smoothly. Several people have asked about the grape vineyard at Makang'wa. Our basic problem is water. Grapes do not need a lot but they do need water at critical times. After a delay while I was away we do now expect to have the well operating in perhaps three weeks time and then we shall have grapes! The young vines will progress very well.

Prayer points:

Pray that local people who have food will share with their neighbors.
Pray that there will be no unnecessary delay in equipping the well.
Pray that we may be clearly perceived to be true followers of Jesus Christ in all that we do.
Pray that I may be wise and patient in handling some very sensitive issues.
Pray for the local pastors and catechists as they minister to the people.
Pray that the twelve month Residency Visa for Nathaniel Asbell will be processed without undue delay.

Thank God for the strong faith evident in many lives here.
Thank God for blessings received during my trip to Australia.
Thank God for the hope which persists in the midst of such great need.
Thank God for the opportunity before us to minister in Jesus' Name.
Thank God for the donation of a motor bike for Nathaniel's use.

I thank you all for your prayers and kindness.

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