

THE AMANI MESSENGER – APRIL 2006

REPORT FROM MAKANG’WA: After months of planning, steady progress, frustrations, shortages of cement and the brief ‘interruption’ caused by heavy rain we are *almost* living at the Amani Center at Makang’wa. Presently we are in a compact three bedroom house at Mvumi Mission, about nine km from Makang’wa. From the hospital hill we look across the valley to the Amani Center. This small house will be our Office and ‘town house’. Here there is electricity, phone – and shortly Internet! The contrasts are quite incredible in this traditional area.

We have now completed the second week of the Relief Work Program at Makang’wa. It has been an incredible blessing and joy. There were thirty four households represented in the first week and forty two in the second week. We shall settle to thirty six from now on. Hopefully, we can continue the program for twelve weeks. All depends upon the flow of donations. Weaker villagers are given light tasks and with



some families the workers change during the week. Four strong young men operate the concrete block making machines, with other villagers carrying sand and water from the adjacent river bed. The first production of blocks will be used to construct a ‘maternity’ addition to the Village Clinic. They have long dreamed of building the addition but have lacked the resource. Now they receive food assistance – and will see their ‘dream’ become a reality. Following that all blocks will be used for development on our land – well keeper’s house, farm supervisor’s house, Conference Center, etc.

Next week’s main task is the digging of the trench for the water line from the well to the housing and another trench from the well towards the village. All trees and thorn bush has been removed from the line. The people have worked with great enthusiasm as we allow them to take all useable firewood.

It is a ‘gift’ to be present at the end of the week’s activity when the maize is distributed. There is joy and happiness – and embarrassing expressions of thankfulness. The village people are delightful. None of this could have happened without the involvement of two special people. The first is our ‘secretary’ Ndilito, a teacher from the Makang’wa Primary School. In the picture he is on the right. This was taken two weeks ago when we presented ‘token’ Drip Irrigation Kits to the Makang’wa Primary School. These represent the promise of the School Nutrition Program which will commence shortly. Also in the picture are Godson Magawa, the young man who will facilitate the program, and the Headmaster of the school.



The other person central to the Relief Program is ‘Mr. Chedego’, our Program Supervisor. ‘Mr. Chedego’ is quickly becoming a local personality. He has excellent organizational abilities and is most trustworthy. I am thankful for his presence. He also speaks good English which is a great help to me. He is my shadow, instructor in matters ‘local’, guide and defender. In the next picture he is watching over me as I answer a call on my cell phone. Wonderfully, we do have ‘connection’ on our hill. It is currently one of the few places in the region where connection can be made. However one of the networks will soon have



a tower in place at Mvumi Mission making the whole region accessible. Cell phones are something of a nuisance here. People seem to have them constantly in their hands. 'Texting' is the national pastime! However communication is essential if there is to be reasonable progress in this nation. The problem is that 'money for food' may be spent on entertaining conversation.

Here is a happy young woman carrying away her sack of maize. We have arranged with a local mill to pay for the milling of the maize into 'ugali' flour. Ugali is really 'thick porridge' and is eaten with a sauce or 'soup' as the people term it. It is very nutritious and might be referred to as the 'national food'. I have eaten the maize ugali. It has little flavor to my taste but the local people say it has very good flavor. I have also tried the millet ugali. It has the appearance of concrete, the texture of concrete and even the slight taste of concrete. – to me. However I believe that if it was well cooked, mixed with hot milk and sprinkled with sugar it would make an acceptable breakfast cereal.



The young woman on the left in this picture is the leader of one of the local Anglican Church Choirs. She is one of the most joyful people I have met, full of fun and a great encourager of others. I noticed that wherever she was present there was laughter and happy conversation. People like that cause us to reflect on our own attitudes and actions.

The Relief Work Program has another smaller program at Mwilimu Parish in Dodoma. Ten households are represented each week. This program relates to the ministry of Compassion International and the care of 270 orphans and children from very poor families cared for at this Parish. I believe that almost every 'expatriate' is presently involved in some expression of famine relief. Wonderful stories are shared day by day. Next week we commence a program involving fifteen households a week at Mvumi Makulu Village. Using wooden 'boxes' the people will make blocks for a planned new Secondary School.

Wonderful things are happening through the Relief Program. Apart from the food relief received we are developing excellent relationships with the village communities, especially at Makang'wa. They now regard us as being 'their people' and have committed themselves to our well being.

The Makang'wa Center has an incredibly beautiful location. From the main buildings on the hillside we look over a beautiful valley to the distant mountains. A cool breeze comes up from the valley, even on the hottest of days. Immediately behind the buildings are some very large and colorful rocks and a thick tangle of thorn bush. Occasionally monkeys appear and also small antelope. There are black scorpions about. These are quite large and to be avoided I am told as the sting is EXTREMELY painful. The entire site presents a challenge. The natural beauty must be preserved and even enhanced as we move ahead with development. Below are some pictures of the buildings and more of the Relief Work Program. Do keep donations to the work flowing. We are making a difference in the lives of the people and God is honored through the ministry.



The buildings at an earlier stage of construction. To the left is the Guest House of two bedrooms. Center is the main house with four bedrooms. To the right is my 'unit' – bed room, bath, study/office, and store. Between the house and unit there is now another building of two bedrooms (driver, housekeeper, laundry). A large water cistern is to be built behind the Guest House at a higher level. A 30X40ft shed will be built between house and Guest House. The ground in front of the buildings will be terraced (one day) and the whole area enclosed within a security fence. The area behind and to the right of 'my' unit is very beautiful and will be lightly landscaped to become a natural garden and meditating area. I expect to have an outdoor chapel there. The view is from Makang'wa village. The graves in the foreground are far distant from the buildings.



My 'retreat'. I guess it is rather like a 'concrete cabin'.



To the right is the main house. At about where Mr. Chedego and I are standing there will be an in-ground rain water cistern. This will also form a portion of the 'terracing' which will be constructed in front of the house. The buildings will be equipped with solar power. This is expensive to install but of course very economic to operate. We shall have to purchase a generator eventually to power a stove, iron – and literally anything with 'heats up'. In the meanwhile we shall use a charcoal cooker and take the ironing to the house at Mvumi Mission.



Pouring a 'tin' of maize with the afternoon sunlight streaming through the door.

The young man on the right, scooping maize into the 'tin', is truly a remarkable person. He is a natural leader and is just the type of person we must set out to encourage and to open doors of opportunity for future development. He is a key person in a vegetable growing cooperative which a group of young families have established. My brother in law has donated a 'Money Maker' foot operated Water Pump to the cooperative.



The site of the large shed which will be completed between the house and the guest house. It will be a large open style structure but will contain two secure lock-up areas. The concrete unit is now complete. The contractor is presently using the container for storage. The shed will be drive-through so that we shall have easy access from it to the areas to the northwest.

I am assisting the chief 'block maker' to move the boards which are set into the machine when making blocks. These base boards needed to be first oiled and then soaked in water. We had oiled them but had not known that they then needed to be soaked in water! I am learning many practical lessons as day follows day.



Standing at the door of the Makang'wa Administration Building. Our maize is stored in their inner office with a watchman 'sleeping' guard each night. Ndlito the secretary is marking off the name of one of our two cooks. Every 'worker' receives a good meal each day. Some people do pack the meal in a container and take it home to share with their family.

Many of the people say, "We have never had work like this where we work, receive a meal and then get a tin of maize at the end of the week!" Well, it seems very little for the long hours of work.



A week ago we presented the medical supplies and the 'nursing' books to the Mvumi Hospital. The Director of the School of Nursing and the trainees were delighted with the gifts. There are currently 130 nursing students. Later this year the School will become a department of the new St. John's Anglican University to be established in Dodoma. This will permit an increase in the number of students.

Following a Sunday Service at one of the village Anglican Churches we presented school exercise books to one of the local Primary Schools. Ndilito is receiving the books on behalf of staff and students. It is actually more economic to purchase books here than to send them from overseas.

There are three Primary Schools in the Makang'wa village area. We have so far donated books to two schools.



My sister Valerie Peters and brother in law Ivan and myself with a group of orphan boys and their 'carers', in Dodoma. These young adults had gathered the boys from bus shelters, etc. and had found a partly built house in which to create a 'home'. A small Anglican Parish offers some support.

They had to vacate the building as the owner wanted to complete the building. After much prayer, and at the 11th hour, another house owner offered them a house for very low rent. Obviously he is impressed by this generous self-sacrificing ministry. My sister and husband

have dedicated themselves to assisting this ministry – among other things!

May the blessing of God rest upon you this Holy Week and throughout the year. May the joy of Easter lighten every day. May your faith in God enable Him to lighten every burden. May your desire for Him enable your pilgrimage day by day.

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