

Visit Report 2015

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Background

The purpose of my visit to Tanzania between January 11th and February 15th was to (1) research the feasibility of starting a Christian secondary school, (2) review progress at Tuishime School, (3) renew friendships within Tanzania, (4) establish whether other potential projects were feasible, and (5) visit new people and places.

Christian Secondary School

Questionnaires and background information had been sent out to a selected group of people in Arusha in advance of my visit. This sought to establish whether a wide range of people (teachers, head teachers, pastors, business people and professionals) considered such a school as meeting a need in Tanzania. In addition the group had met on one occasion broadly covering the same material as I had sent out in my briefing information.

The rationale for the school was to continue the good quality education that pupils of Tuishime School receive into the next stage of their school life, i.e. Forms 1-4. In the early days of the School, we were able to exert some influence on the secondary schools that pupils went on to attend but latterly the Education Dept decides which school pupils will attend which decision is based on where they live. The majority of pupils will therefore be given places at Njiro Secondary School which is not one of the best schools in Arusha.

A meeting was held with the group during the first week of my visit. After holding the meeting and talking with additional people I concluded that it made no sense to build a new school. Reasons for this are:

- (1) The project will be extremely complex and require a huge amount of planning and management. It will consume HFT for 5-8 years.
- (2) I am not convinced that we can find enough committed people, who also have time to assist in the project, to push the project forward to completion.
- (3) I am not sure that we can find enough committed Christian teachers to staff the school as the concept of such a school is rare in Tanzania, if indeed it exists.
- (4) The cost will be extremely high.
- (5) The school will need to become an elitist one for about 500 selected pupils. However, there is no assurance that pupils graduating from the school (Form 4) will go on to make a significant impact on Tanzanian society since they will need to join another school for Form 5 and 6 and the quality of education is unknown. Then they will attend University for tertiary education after which the deeper shaping of people commences when they make key life choices.
- (6) Morogoro Lutheran School is a rare example of a Christian school in Tanzania. However its Christian tradition is not as strong as it used to be which demonstrates the importance of retaining key staff to maintain standards. I view this as providing a high risk to the project.
- (7) The role of a Christian counsellor, which the school would need, is almost unique and not easily replicated. However, for the school to develop as a Christian one, each staff member would also need to have counselling skills.
- (8) A suitable size and location of plot has not been identified.

- (9) Competition from The School of St Jude, which offers free education of a very high standard, is very high. Another school, which would need to be financed by high fees, would not be attractive to parents of the brightest children who would send their children to The School of St Jude.
- (10) I have not found a person of sufficient drive, experience and character to project manage the planning and build phase. We have learnt over the last 6 years not to start a new project until we have identified a person in whom we have a high level of trust.

There was strong support from the group for a Christian school as there was the strong perception that Tanzanian young people are not learning Christian values. However, there was no understanding how to integrate Christian values into a high quality secondary school and indeed superficial description of how to apply such values. I conclude that it makes no sense to start a secondary school as the risks of not achieving our objective is extremely high. It is my recommendation that no further work be carried out in connection with this potential project.

Pastor Deo

I first met Pastor Deo in 2011, after an introduction from a friend in the UK. I met him again in 2013 and during this visit. In addition I have communicated with him during the intervening years and worked with him on a water research project in Singida on behalf of a student at the University of Nottingham. All these contacts have reinforced my view that he is a Godly man of integrity and great humility besides being talented, resourceful and forward thinking.

This year we spent 5 days with him, meeting him on multiple occasions. He was gracious and considerate, generous despite being poor, open to new ideas and passionate about missionary work. He is a trained pastor from a Tanzanian bible college who has been pastoring a Marantha Ministries church in Mwanza for the last 10 years. The church is quite extraordinary as he has been successful in training members to such an extent that he has effectively done himself out of a job. Not that this bothers him as it has released him to pursue his real passion which is cross-cultural mission.

Deo set up the Tanzania Missionary Forum, with other people to share ideas and pray for the needs of unreached groups within the country. Those members living in Mwanza (8-10) meet up monthly whilst members living further away either meet up in local groups or communicate by email and phone. Deo used to run a Christian radio programme and has contacts with people trained in use of broadcasting media. He has registered a company although it currently does not conduct business, has worked in the construction industry, has carried out a funded research project (value Tsh16M) for local government and seems to be able to turn his hand to many different needs. Above all of these I feel that he can be trusted and is a man of deep integrity and conscience.

His passion is to move to Singida, which is an area between Arusha and Mwanza, populated by people who are animists, Muslims, nominal Christians and people of no religion. Witchcraft is commonplace. The Isansu is one of the sociological groups as are the mysterious bushmen. There are many other tribes. Deo's plans are to move to Singida to establish a base from which he can visit villages and build friendships. He will return from time to time to Mwanza to visit his family and church. He intends to live humbly and in his next trip to Singida in February 2015 will look to rent a few rooms. Longer term he plans to build a modest house in the same style as local people. He wants to establish an income stream which may be transporting goods using his pick-up van, dealing in gemstones (for which he needs to buy a licence), growing crops or construction. Thus he plans to model his life on the tent making life of St Paul. His decision to allow others within his Mwanza church to continue to run the church in his absence, due to his belief that they can manage well

without him is also modelled on St Paul's life as he only stayed for short periods in different cities. I support him in this approach as it is in no one's interests for him to be financially dependent on us or anyone else. Deo also will need a motorbike to access the remote areas, where there are no roads.

Deo has trained himself in cross-cultural mission although he readily appreciates that he could go deeper in this area. He has Muslims in his church and is fully open to the working of the Holy Spirit. During multiple trips to Singida he has become aware of the challenges in living and working there and already has found favour with people having been asked to pray and even conduct a funeral. He is a most unusual Tanzanian pastor as he wants to put himself in discomfort so as to further the spread of the gospel.

We are going to communicate over the next few months during which it is my recommendation that we support his work, through financial support and prayer, to an extent and in a way that maintains his ownership of the project and motivates him in this kingdom work. Specific financial needs are to be defined but are likely to include funding to build a house, capital to start a small business so that he can become self-supporting, a laptop and a motor bike.

I discussed companionship and accountability with Deo and it seems appropriate that Felix Massenge be his overseer. Felix is agreeable to this and will communicate with and visit him in Singida to encourage Deo and provide local ongoing support. Deo will provide us with short reports of his work at reasonable intervals. We will need to manage his expectations from us and ambition of his plans. Once he is established in Singida he welcomes us to visit him there or in Mwanza to see how the work is progressing.

He has separately provided me with an overview of his plans and some background information on Singida.

Felix and I preached in his church, which felt a great honour. We both felt that the Holy Spirit had challenged all of us and our message were well received by the church. Afterward we were invited back to Deo's home for a splendid meal cooked by his wife. We also met 3 of his 4 children. We were humbled when he gave both of us a love gift of TSh10,000, despite the church being poor.

Rev Grace Mbise

I first met Grace Mbise in 2009 and thereafter in 2013 and during this visit. In between times we have communicated by email and she has been good at providing me with updates concerning her mission plans. We have also supported her financially on a few occasions. She is a close friend of Caroline Shao, who we know well, and Caroline has deep respect for Grace. Indeed she is an extraordinary women who has been used greatly by God in missions throughout Africa and in the USA. She has written a book entitled "The mighty acts of God" which is quite simply amazing as many of the same miracles and happenings in the Bible have been experienced during her life and ministry. We should not be surprised since God is the same, yesterday, today and forever.

In 2013, Grace asked whether she could come under the umbrella of HFT. I agreed without committing us to any regular financial support and have continued to be satisfied as to her deep spirituality and humility. She is an evangelist through and through.

Grace's vision for her work in 2015 is to preach in unreached places as she feels that the towns and cities are saturated with preachers and churches. As these unreached places are remote, such a vision will need practicalities such as transport which includes living accommodation, means to play music and show Christian films. My suggestion was to fit a truck out with a sleeping cabin, so that she and her helpers could sleep, cook and wash, and an area from which she could present the

gospel using different communication methods. She will contact someone who works in a garage/body shop fitters to investigate options and understand costs.

I have deep respect for Grace and know that God has done a deeper work in her than in anyone else I have met. She has many stories to tell, some of which are so out of my experience that they are almost unbelievable. She is deeply aware of the spiritual battle she is in and has many experiences which cannot be explained other than her being exposed to strong satanic attack. But her faith is strong and God uses her to demonstrate his power.

I trust her, as does Caroline, who will continue to counsel and provide prayer support. I recommend that HFT supports her in her work as an evangelist. We need to think and pray about the extent to which we will support her and how we can support specific needs such as transport.

Tuishime Primary School

There continues to be a need to change and improve the quality of the school, particularly as it relates to teaching and the use of resources and reading books. The bright note was the situation in the four pre-primary classes. The walls were bright, resources and books were being used, Renalda's lessons were sharp and imaginative and teachers were caring towards children.

So it was of no surprise to me that I felt the word "change" was the one to use during the latter stages of my visit. In my many conversations with Naomi and my meeting with teachers I said that change had to happen. Changes in teaching method, changes in spirituality, changes in work load. There has to be a step change in the school. The available resources have to be used rather than kept in a glorified museum. I felt strangely empowered to challenge Naomi and build on the visit of SVN teachers that had laid the groundwork for my comments. I prepared a long list of changes that have now been prioritised.

But the biggest change that is required is that the school needs a new head teacher. One that is strong and committed, a born again Christian. A person who understands change and will be able to drive it through. One who is open to new ideas and indeed revels in them. The selection process for the head is critical and I have made suggestion how this could be done and how candidates for the role can be identified. I have drafted and agreed roles for the school director, deputy director and head teacher. Naomi is in full agreement.

The teaching load of teachers has to be increased and the number of teachers decreased. The timetable needs to be changed in a number of ways. Child centred teaching, differentiation and providing additional help for children with special needs should be introduced. These latter changes will need external input. I identified The School of St Jude, Braeburn and HOPAC as schools willing and able to show these differences so the door has been opened for change.

We talked a lot about making the school a Christian one and Felix fully embraced this. A multi-pronged approach will be used to produce this change. We have agreed that Caroline Shao will come into school and meet up with small groups of teachers during their free periods to pray, share and hear a devotional thought. This will eventually result in a different atmosphere in the school as the Holy Spirit softens attitudes and allows teachers the opportunity to connect with each other and bring Biblical values into the classroom. We will also find an external person to come into the school and re-energise the RE lessons. They will cease to be formal and run by a teacher. Rather they will contain singing, discussion, a Bible story and be run in a more interesting way. A prayer will be said before lunch, the morning assembly will be made a bit more thoughtful and teachers encouraged to pray with the class before each lesson.

The school is short of space. Class 6 has 49 pupils in it and a lower class also has more than 40. There is no room for teaching creative subjects such as art, reading and music. Without further investment in infrastructure the school will stifle and standards will not improve. I discussed the school needs with Felix and Naomi and we have asked engineers to provide an indicative cost quotation for a first floor to the central section of the school. This would contain 3 classrooms, a double classroom and a teacher resource centre (to contain internet connected computers and resources for teachers to use). The current library/head teacher office will become a play room for pre-primary children. Pancras is to investigate the cost of connecting the computers in the IT suite to the internet (a fibre optic cable has already been laid along the Njiro road so extension to the school is all that is required).

I have made the new build conditional on it being of an acceptable cost, the appointment of a competent head teacher and the demonstration of significant change which will be sustainable. It remains to be seen how long it takes the school to fulfil these conditions such that the build can start. I am not expecting building to commence before December, maybe later.

It is my hope that a team of teachers can visit the school in summer 2016 to conduct workshops on different teaching methods, to demonstrate use of the internet to obtain resources and to work on some administrative areas.

Whilst the above observations may appear negative it is my strong view that change can take place and be successful. What is unknown is how many of the current teachers are flexible and willing to embrace this change, how well the new head teacher will drive change forward and whether the head will be given sufficient freedom to bring about change. I challenged the teachers to hold the vision of the school being in the top 10 in the municipality league tables (as judged by standard 7 results) by 2020.

Prof Enast Chaggu and Stephen Osinde Abulo

Professor Chaggu was introduced to me by a Tanzanian friend in the UK as someone who is deeply spiritual as well as being a top academic. When I met her in Dar I was not disappointed. She is a remarkable woman, full of kindness and compassion, strong, humble and a real delight to be with. Felix and I came to love her deeply. We met her at Ardhui University where she is a professor of environmental health. She was offered a top East African post in her academic area of sanitation, epidemiology and urban planning but declined as it was not what God wanted her to do. Her passion is training of young people so that they live Godly and influential lives. She seeks to do this in her role as a senior academic of 30 years and uses her lectures to speak strongly about the Bible and God's values. She gives out Christian books to her students and has seen a number of them become born again Christians. Quite remarkable.

We met her on a second occasion when we again met her husband, Stephen who is a pastor. We went to his church which is in a strongly Muslim area and enjoyed fellowship with the church, some of whom had previously been Muslims. The church is unremarkable as it does not look like a church (for obvious reasons), is obviously poor and is somewhat dilapidated. But the meeting was lively and we felt God's presence. Stephen is a Kenyan who is also humble and whose passion is church planting amongst the Muslims of Dar and re-invigorating and refreshing worn-out pastors to go into Muslim evangelism. He and Enast want to open a school to build on the small school they run from the church. Most of the pupils are from Muslim families so this is a great ministry for them to be involved in. However, my view is that HFT should not support a new school, even if it is strategic for evangelism. It is unclear at the moment how we could support them so it seems reasonable that we

communicate with them over the next months and exchange ideas. I believe that through this God will open doors and make his will clear to us.

From the two times we have met Enast and Stephen, the view of Felix and the strong recommendation of our friend in the UK who has known the couple for many years, and is herself well known by the Dar church, I believe that they are honourable and trustworthy people. I recommend that we keep in touch to determine the way to work together in this challenging work.

Other people and visits

We (Felix and me) visited Felicia (daughter of Felix and Naomi) and Emmanuel in Lushoto for a weekend. We had a relaxing time with them, which included a day visit to the sea-side city of Tanga. Emmanuel was bank manager of the NMB branch in Lushoto (now transferred to Moshi) whilst Felicia is an English teacher at the secondary school. She has requested a transfer to a school in Moshi. Ultimately it is Naomi's plan that Felicia will take over as head teacher at Tuishime School – perhaps after 10 years when she has completed more training courses and gained further experience.

We visited Marie (daughter of Felix and Naomi) and husband Paul in Dar. Marie works for a NGO that works in the area of health but is not challenged by her job and is interested in studying for a master's degree in logistics of project management. She is very insightful of situations and people, sparing in her use of words and can summarise her views succinctly and in an interesting way. Paul is a complete contrast and brimming over with opinions and words. He is an MP, appointed by the President to represent the youth of Tanzania and to put over the ruling party's policies concerning matters relating to youth. This will involve him travelling to all regions of the country over the next few months as the new constitution gets discussed, refined and eventually voted on. He has also been given responsibility to advise the Minister of Communications so this will mean he has a steep learning curve to embrace.

I visited Simon and Laura Walton in Dar and had a wonderful time with them and their family. I visited the Nooru Centre which provides employment for about 15 disabled people, some of whom are Christians. They make crafts which are sold in the UK, although it is a precarious business due to the competition for such similar products from different organisations. But the people in the centre are wonderfully content and it was a great experience to be part of. I was asked to give a short talk about coping with a difficult situation and it was an honour to be amongst this group of people. Laura was great in her translation of my words into Swahili and sign language.

Simon is a doctor at the Bugurunhi Anglican Health Centre which I briefly visited before we flew to Mwanza. Simon has had a significant impact on the health centre which suffered from endemic corruption. Quite shocking. But now it operates in an honourable way although Simon has doubts whether this will continue once he leaves. Simon is also chair of the board of HOPAC, which is an international Christian school. I visited HOPAC, which is where the Walton children are educated.

HOPAC is a most impressive school, funded by high fees so the resources are superb. It was set-up for children of missionaries but also takes Tanzanian children to fill up the places. There are frustrations in the running of the school but it appeared to me to be a fine representation of living out Christian values in a school. The director is leading monthly sessions with the teachers on a Biblical world view and how this can be brought into the school life. The Director and head of primary are fully supportive of visits from Tuishime School teachers to learn a different teaching style and absorb the Christian ethos of the school.

In Mwanza we visited a number of relatives of Felix and Naomi in addition to Pastor Deo. We took a ferry across Lake Victoria followed by a bus journey to Ngara, home of both Felix and Naomi. Ngara is close to the Rwandan and Burundi border and the road is pounded by lorries heading for these countries as it is the main supply route of goods including petrol and oil. The condition of the road was terrible although when we last came along it in 2011 it was in good condition.

The Ngara experience was amazing and I felt privileged to be introduced to so many people. On one day we had a walking safari through fields, past primitive houses and frequently bumped into relatives of Felix, popping out of nowhere. It was quite extraordinary. We met his father, his 110 year old aunt, so many brothers that I have lost count. Step mothers, aunts and cousins.

Certainly Felix's family is large. We were entertained and dined and I was able to see a part of Tanzania hidden from most foreigners. We saw the house that Felix grew up in, the tree he and his brothers climber and the rock he used to jump off. We saw the graves of Naomi's parents and the field that will become Naomi's when her step mother dies. We saw the large plot of land that Felix owns and the foundations of a house which he may get round to building one day. We saw the place where Felix was baptised (although the church has long since been demolished. We saw the primary school Felix was first taught at although none of the original buildings remain. Those that have been built more recently look as though they should be demolished such is their terrible state and the total lack of resources in the school.

But my highlight was meeting Felix's father, a sprightly man of 106. He was converted in 1933 when Mr Bakewell, an Australian missionary came to Ngara. Then people did not wear clothes and money did not exist. Life was primitive, and for many people in the area it still is even to this day. Through the witness of Mr Bakewell and the working of the Holy Spirit many people were born again, learnt to read the Bible and churches sprang up across the region. Felix's dad has become an inspiration to many. Despite his age he sings Christian songs during the day and in the early hours of the morning, he talks longingly of the Lord and is looking forward to going to heaven. He is a deeply spiritual man.

Of course we met Steve Kweka who is now head teacher of a large government school whose pupils are over 50% Muslim. Gradually Steve is making changes and seeking to bring a Christian witness into the school. He is a great man of God who is full of fun and a source of encouragement and advice to me over many years. He has been a great help to Tuishime School in its early years as he was heavily involved in the design and building of classrooms.

I visited Mosses and his family and was encouraged by how Mosses is doing. He is sponsored by HFT in his B.Ed degree and is juggling studying with working as a ward education officer, father to the family, builder of houses and sewers, keeper of livestock. I just hope that he has time to put God first in his life. The children are growing up well and Mkape is waiting for his Form 4 results. He is not academic and hopes to do vocational training as an electrician. Mary still suffers from breathing difficulties and has pain in her leg as a result of the motorbike accident she and Tabitha suffered. Mary cooked two wonderful meals for me in true Maasai style.

I met Thomas Godfrey, an ex-pupil of Tuishime School, who is sponsored by HFT now that he is in Form 4 at Arusha Secondary School on two occasions. He is doing very well and is turning into a thoughtful and confident young man. Despite his small stature he is a strong person who can only mature into somebody, who I believe can be quite remarkable. He is well placed to do very well in his Form 4 exams and then to go on to higher secondary and University. We should continue to keep in close communication with him and to sponsor him throughout his education since he comes from a desperately poor family. He longed for me to visit his home although sadly there was not time during this visit.

Eric Temu was in the first cohort of pupils that passed through Tuishime School. He is physically bigger than Thomas and the contrast between the two of them when they visited the school is surprising albeit immaterial. Eric is a delightful boy and he will turn into a fine young man who can achieve positive things for Tanzania. Eric has passed his Form 4 exam results and is waiting to hear what options he has for study in Form 5 in the near future. I agreed that HFT would pay for his fees since Renalda and her family are not in a good financial situation.

Godfrey Augustino is an educational officer in the Arusha Municipality who is responsible for AV resources and strategies. He was accused of paying salaries to retired and deceased teachers and a court case was brought against him. The court case has been dropped and he has been cleared of all charges. He was re-instated to his previous job in the last week of my visit and is absolutely delighted. His back pay will be returned and he will be paid his previous salary. I really sense, as he does, that God has done a deeply profound work in his life through this most difficult of periods. He has learnt to trust God in a new way and I can see a spiritual change in him. I believe that God will honour him and that he will get a promotion for he is greatly in favour with people in the office who speak highly of him. I received some unexpected news which was greatly pleasing. HFT helped provide him with bail (£1000) and I have reached agreement with Augustino that this money be returned to Tuishime School. Naomi will use it to complete the construction of the new building (staff room and offices). I view the Augustino affair has real demonstration of the power of prayer as the odds were stacked against him and it initially appeared that he would be the scape-goat. But our God can do exceedingly more than we can ever ask for or believe and this has been amply demonstrated in this matter.