

Report on Visit 2017 to Tanzania

Tuishime School

The school continues to be run well so that a positive atmosphere is maintained. There has been an increase in teacher numbers perhaps as a result of increasing the number of pupils. Teachers do not appear to be fully occupied and could be better used to improve lesson planning, development of resources or enhancing other aspects of the school.

The internal walls of classrooms need painting after cracks have been repaired in floors and walls. This will help to improve the learning environment in the classes. It is a good idea to install wall boards so that posters can be fixed without damaging the walls.

There does not appear to be regular meetings of senior staff (director, head teacher, deputy director). These were previously agreed as being needed and should be started. An agenda should be prepared and action minutes written. It is important that senior staff provide strong leadership so that the school progresses.

Teacher training should be encouraged and will be supported by HFT when the school doesn't have the funds. The process of applying for support, which has been given to the head teacher, must be followed and interviews of interested staff carried out by the head teacher. There is no guarantee that HFT will be able to support interested staff as it does depend on us having funds but we will try to help.

Financial planning is required to address the shortfall in income and to seek to balance the budget. The level of fees and the percentage of fees collected need to be considered as these are key factors in maximising income. Expenditure needs to be controlled. The number of teachers seems to be one area that could be reviewed to lower expenditure.

Business ideas to increase income for the school should be discussed with business people and a proposal made to HFT once outline costs and return on investment have been obtained.

A suggestion is that the Friday sports afternoon be split into Fridays for standard 4-7 and another day for the other classes (standard 1 -3 classes). This will avoid multiple bus journeys to the sports ground and allow better control of children during the sports sessions. More in depth tuition in football, throwing and catching and hitting a ball is possible as well as starting coaching in volleyball and running. Pre-primary classes could have more frequent but shorter games sessions and may not need to go to the sports ground.

The music keyboards must be used to teach children to play and read music which will allow school singing and dancing activities to be enhanced.

There is still significant scope to change the religion classes to be less like school and more of a relaxed and expressive time where children can discover God and play an active role themselves rather than having the lesson directed by the teacher. This will help to develop

children's spiritual lives and allow them to explore their relationship with God in a safe environment.

HFT values regular updates from the head teacher which allows our supporters to pray and support the school.

Singida Mission

The team consisted of four HFT volunteers, a young man from Dar, two pastors from Arusha and Deo. We worked with pastors from TAG churches. We funded a team from Here's Life Africa (<http://www.hereslifeafrica.com>) for two weeks to spearhead our mission to villages in Singida which we had previously been to and where Pastor Deo had worked for two years. The team showed the Jesus film and other films in 6 villages on multiple occasions with the usual pattern being to stay in each village for 2-3 days. Sometimes we slept in the village whilst on other occasions when there was no accommodation we travelled daily from our base into the village.

The villages we visited were Old Kiomboi, Yombwe, Nya haha, Mwandalya, Urughu, Ulyangombe.

Old Kiomboi – Pastor Benjamin is the TAG pastor and he has seen significant growth in the church since my last visit in 2016 with an almost doubling of church members. The church building is now too small and Kitusi plans to extend the building. Kitusi himself is a changed man having boldness in his speaking and pastoring. It is exciting to see. Deo has trained church members in mission and follow-up and the mission team is now strong and confident. They supported us during our home visits. As a result of generous donations from Christians in Duffield we were able to make a significant donation for the purchase of Bibles which were gratefully received by church members. I had the opportunity to preach in the church on one of the Sundays. We showed films on many occasions to large crowds, preached and invited people to church. The church visits people regularly in their homes so we were supplementing their usual program. Perhaps one of the most astonishing experiences was when we went to a bar where people were drinking home brewed liquor. Rather than condemn them, as perhaps that was what they expected, we spoke about God's love for them and answered many questions about Jesus and other spiritual areas. People wanted the church to visit and sing and dance so we have passed this message on. It was amazing that even in such a place that God can break into people's lives and they can move one step closer to following Jesus. Many people made commitments during the visits and film shows; it is a time for gathering the harvest in.

Yombwe, which is near Kiomboi was visited when we were not present so I cannot report much other than that the village has no church but the gospel message was enthusiastically received. Follow-up will be made by Kitusi's church.

Nya haha is a remote village in the semi-desert which has a small church. Last year we visited and saw a number of people make commitments but sadly the church is still small with little discipleship having been carried out. Various obstacles were highlighted such as

the village not having its own church building and no electricity. But the basic reason why the church has not grown is that Pastor Oscar and his wife Dorcas have low education and have not been trained as pastors. But Dorcas is a charismatic lady, an amazing dancer and easily builds rapport with children and women so is a key person in the growth of the church. We showed films on two evenings and visited people in their homes during the day. It was amazing to see the life of Jesus and the gospel message being proclaimed in an arid environment under a star studded night sky and then witness the most energetic dancing at the end of the film. No one wanted to go home, the atmosphere was electric and we all sensed that the Holy Spirit had powerfully worked in the lives of hundreds of people. We talked at length to Oscar and Dorcas about the way forward for the church and said that we would like to offer Bible training to them this year from Deo and next year by sending Oscar away for short training sessions. Oscar and Dorcas, along with a few Christians, need to devote themselves to teaching and visiting the new Christians. At least half the people watching the film were children and young people so Dorcas needs to give herself to holding Bible studies in an age appropriate way. We also agreed to fund a solar panel for Oscar's house which will allow a social centre to be established through provision of lighting, mobile phone charging and the playing of Christian dance music using the music speaker system that Oscar already has. Felix spoke with a village elder who has now given land for a church building to be constructed which will allow the church to have a more visible presence. As Tanzanians love the visual, I also said that we would print pictures of Bible stories and laminate them for Oscar and Dorcas to use in their teaching since preaching is not the best method to communicate Biblical truths.

Mwandalya is a village 5 km away from Nya haha which we visited as it was one that Oscar is planning to move to as it has a larger population and a small Christian presence. The owner of an empty unfinished house has allowed Christians to meet in it until such time that a church is built. Land and bricks have been bought by local Christians and we talked with young men who offered their effort for free to construct the church building. We received a tremendous welcome on the days we visited and had many wonderful conversations with people including many older people who were drinking liquor. We spoke about the deep satisfaction that only Jesus can bring. The films were avidly watched by young and old and many people made commitments so we were greatly encouraged that a fledgling church had been started. We proposed to Oscar that he divides his time between Mwandalya and Nya ha ha in order to keep the momentum going and disciple the new Christians.

Urughu has a long established TAG church under the watchful eye of Pastor Julius who started the church 20 years ago. We visited homes during one afternoon and showed films on three evenings. During the day we trained church members in mission giving them the opportunity to practice giving a gospel presentation, sharing their personal testimony and praying the prayer of commitment. We also trained them in mission to Muslims. Church members are slowly being built into a strong mission team and we expect the church to act as a hub for the local area where there are many villages.

Ulyangombe is one nearby village, 5 km from Urughu that we visited on two occasions spending much time meeting people and sharing Jesus with them. No one had visited the

village before but we were warmly welcomed and had great conversations. The response was fantastic and many people, including a number from one family making commitments. On the day after we left the church mission team again visited to tell people about the church gathering that was to be held next day in the village. This would have been the first gathering of a new church. One Muslim man promised Deo that Christians could meet in the grounds outside his house so we felt great favour on that day.

Future Strategy

Our strategy for the mission of planting churches in this area of Singida (“Singida for Jesus”) is to identify hub churches where we can train and motivate church members in mission and equip them to disciple new believers so that they become the primary workers. Old Kiombo TAG church is the first such hub church; we feel that Pastor Benjamin already has a strong mission team and the church is experiencing a period of significant numerical and spiritual growth. This church will continue to make mission visits to Yombwe with the eventual aim being to establish a church there. Urughu TAG church will be another hub church although further training and support from Deo will be required before they are fully ready for mission, particularly in relation to how they develop the fledging church at Ulyangombe which needs to be strengthened so that momentum is not lost.

The approach to Nya hha and Mwandalya needs to be different as Pastor Oscar and Dorcas need to be trained as they have low Bible knowledge and little capability to prepare sermons, teach or run Bible studies. The spiritual needs of children and young people in these villages need to be specifically met, educational resources given to them and activities run in order to keep them interested in the Lord. The harvest field is ripe but if we fail to gather the harvest in it will spoil. Deo will spend much time with Pastor Oscar and Dorcas during the next few months so that Dorcas is able to keep the churches going when Oscar starts his Bible training in early 2018, which we will support. The way this training is carried out and at which college has yet to be confirmed.

There continues to be a huge need for Swahili Bibles for new believers in all these villages, and of course the ones we will visit, so we should continue to prioritise this by increasing our donations.

I spoke at great length with Pastor Deo who remains a key person in the Singida mission thrust. We agreed that he would devote himself to mission and give up running any business activities as this is where his passion lies. Initially he will spend time with Pastor Oscar and Dorcas. When Deo senses it is the right time to develop the work he will carry out scouting activities to gain an understanding of the opportunities in surrounding villages and identify new hub churches for missional training. We will together adopt a cautious, yet ambitious approach, so that we do not move on before the harvest in one area has been fully gathered in. Deo will recruit people from his church to accompany him on mission trips although there will be additional cost when this happens.

Deo, being competent in business and social development areas, is keen to help church members and their communities to address needs such as lack of water, low income and

poor farming practices. He has the time and capacity to work in these areas although our financial support will be required as costs could be quite significant. For instance, the water supply in Urugu is dire with a large population relying on water which is dirty and sometimes contaminated such that children suffer terribly from typhoid. The construction of a well or borehole would be greatly valued by the community allowing them to increase their health and productivity.

I will keep in contact with Pastor Deo, Pastor Julius and Pastor Benjamin to encourage them and find out how the work is progressing. It is my plan, God willing, to return to Singida with Here's Life next autumn to continue our work. I hope to visit for an extended time with very few people from UK and supplemented by a few Tanzanians. The nature of the visit will depend on how the hub churches have developed their ministry and will be greatly influenced by reports from Deo and the other pastors. I anticipate us living in a basic way with few facilities and minimal comfort so that we minimise distances travelled and identify closer with people. It is important for us to reduce barriers between us and the people we are trying to reach and not be seen as a team who bank role projects.

Finances

I will financially support Pastor Deo for the next 4 years to allow him to look after the needs of his family in Mwanza, keep a base in Kiomboi and travel to the hub churches and satellite villages. The funding level is not 100% and I have encouraged him to connect with wealthy Christians in Mwanza to increase his income which will allow the work to be expanded. He will aim to promote his work by enthusing others and cultivate financial and prayer support.

As the mission continues more and more people will become Christians which will require churches to extend their buildings or build new ones. These need to be appropriate in quality but ambitious in scale. New Christians will require Bibles. Additional workers, e.g. from Deo's church will require support. Pastors may need to be trained and given study resources. As the population of young people and children is so high in Tanzania, children and youth workers may need to be funded to harness the energy of them and allow them to grow spiritually or else they will be a lost generation. I have a large number of pictures illustrating Bible stories and characters from the internet which will be a valuable resource for Pastors and children's works to use when they teach. There will be a cost associated with printing and laminating them.

Christians and their communities will need assistance in practical ways as well as to initiate income generating businesses to decrease their poverty level. Whilst we are not ready to start these, due to lack of primary research, it is likely that our missional thrust will benefit hugely from supporting these ventures provided they are evaluated carefully and managed competently.

Peter has agreed to fund a solar panel, battery and charging station for Pastor Oscar in Nya haha to power his music DVD unit and a light, both of which will be highly effective in building a church through worship and community cohesion. I am sure that other one-off ideas will arise from time-to-time.

Concluding Remarks

Fervent prayer is needed to allow the Holy Spirit to continue his work of harvesting and discipling and to stall the attacks of Satan. In many ways we are seeking to bolster and strengthen the church against the influence of Islam which is gradually moving through sub-Saharan Africa. We need to be prepared to sacrifice ourselves and to expect the same from Tanzanians so our contribution to the great commission of Jesus Christ can continue without hindrance or limitation. In many ways we need to re-discover the zeal that the early missionaries to Africa had and to see it as being all consuming. What better way to work and live.

Martin Grosvenor

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