



# TANZANIA

More Notes from the WORSLEYS 3

Witchcraft and Corruption  
Day of prayer and fasting  
End of Ramadan holiday

Hi Everyone

Thursday's Swahili service was magnificent. At one point four male and one female students came to the front to lead the worship. A drum started to beat. Soon some of the male students were coming out of the pews to dance and sing in the aisle. We know now why the chapel has such a wide central aisle! At times two of the dancers were leaping high in the air and their smiling faces radiated with joy in worshipping God. What an atmosphere to worship in, even though we couldn't understand much of what was said. We wouldn't want to miss that service for anything!

We've started walking in the evening with other teachers. A short distance from the college, we passed several large, white concrete markers and were told "That's the Dodoma International Airport". Apparently, the World Bank made a loan for this project, with a condition that work had to start before the funds were handed over. Just before the deadline, the mud houses (shacks) were demolished and boundary stones were set in place. Nothing else has happened in the last few years. The people who once lived there, were paid a pittance for their houses and they moved deeper into the country. Now they're living in an even more drought-prone area. Life may be tough at the top but it's very, very tough at the bottom!

On Sunday, Iri and Kate Mato from NZ, took a service in an outlying part of the diocese. Many of the people are now surviving on one meal every second day. While the health of the students looks quite good, many have returned from the holidays with stomach problems. Life is not easy, but the people are still so outgoing and happy. Their smiles are almost ear to ear, setting off their shining white teeth wonderfully. It is a joy to be here among them.

Both of us are well. We haven't had any health problems since arriving. Charles' back was great on the long journey here and for the next week. He then had to attend a service at a local church. The service lasted over three hours, most of it sitting on a hard wooden bench with no back. The result is that he has been carefully protecting his back since then. It hasn't stopped him working, but it's a pain.

Some of the flowering trees here are beautiful, with bright colours – especially the frangipani. The dry season marches on. We haven't seen any rain in Dodoma yet and the locals tell us that there won't be any until October. Each day is wall-to-wall sunshine, broken only by a few fluffy white clouds passing over. The temperatures peak at 27-29°, dropping to 15-16° at night. At 6am we're still at the night time low. By 10am it is often only 17-18°. By mid-day it is about 19° and moves slowly to the peak in mid-afternoon. The temperatures have been easy to cope with so far, but should become steadily hotter. The locals take it all in their stride. They tell us the rain will be here soon – November!

Phanuel, one of the senior staff has a farmlet. Whenever there's enough demand, he kills and cuts up a pig. It is very nice meat, but we have to remove the bone ourselves. This seems common practice here. Butcher shops are at the markets, and we've found that they sell fillet steak at about NZ \$4.50 a kilo. The trouble is that they often sell out early as the restaurants grab the lot if they can.

Muslims celebrate the Festival of Eid to mark the end of Ramadan each year. Because the Tanzanian Government has a policy of fairness to both Christian and Islam faiths, we all join in celebrating Eid. The interesting thing is that people don't know when Eid will actually happen. It depends on the phase of the moon and whether a Muslim from any part of Tanzania, reports having seen a cloud covering the moon the night before! If he sees the moon without cloud, then the information is transferred to the local mulah or imam and two days of holiday are announced to whoever is around. Well, that's all very nice, but we all expected Eid to be today. Not so. The report indicates that tomorrow and Thursday will be the days. Can you imagine how this affects all sorts of people in industry, business, education etc? (Tanzania has 26 public holidays a year – WOW!) Eid certainly confuses people and must lead to a slowdown in the economy. Thank goodness most of us had prepared our class work for today ... but those who were convinced we'd all be getting up later were a bit shell-shocked! The students were OK. They just laughed. We'll all have a 'sleep-in' tomorrow morning.

Witchcraft seems to be very near the surface in Tanzania. (We know there is witchcraft in NZ too but it doesn't seem to be so widespread.) The theolog. students realise that it's not part of the Christian way and they try to convince their people but it's not easy. Many families and friends are scared of the witchdoctor and believe that obedience is the only response or something worse will happen. They're very fearful. With most local people being related to everyone in the village, there are plenty of folk who may take offence if someone stands against the general underlying trend. Witchcraft reaches the surface particularly when someone in the family breaks a rule or is ill etc. Sadly, this whole business seems bound to continue obstructing Tanzania's efforts to improve its living standards in today's world.

Today we have an electrician at our house. He's come out from Dodoma (twenty minutes away on a bumpy, unsealed road, to find out why our little stove in the kitchen is behaving oddly. Why does one of the two elements give up every time the oven below is heated ... and vice versa? What's more, both the kitchen and pantry have the same light switch, but only the pantry light works. Happy days but not so great nights! The evening meal is traditionally at 7pm - it's quite dark then.

Guess what – the electrician has just solved the problem. He's a genius and it's all systems go... so we can celebrate. I feel like turning the switch on and off, on and off, on ... For the last 26 days we've had the bedside lamp sitting on top of the fridge at least

shining a bit of light in the direction of the kitchen sink. The problem is when we do the dishes the light shines on our backs! Interesting eh? By the way, we paid for the labour, only to discover that the cost amounted to about \$NZ4 for three hours work including travel. Would you like his telephone number?

A fortnight ago, two of the ladies on the staff went with me to buy some dress material in Dodoma then take it to a seamstress. We all chose Tanzanian patterns and styles. The seamstress completed all the garments within the week and had them delivered to Msalato for us. Two needed slight alterations which were done the following Saturday morning, while we waited about 15 minutes. How's that for efficiency? We were delighted with everything she made and the cost was peanuts!

That's about enough for this epistle. People work hard here, including the staff and students, but there's always fascination with so much. We know that being in this country is a marvellous opportunity and a real privilege.

Hopefully, things are going well with you all and you have a good week. (We look forward to your emails – it's great to keep in touch. Thank you.)

Love and blessings  
Charles & Mary

