

TANZANIA

More Notes from the WORSLEYS 9

Greetings to everyone.

We hope you enjoy reading our Tanzanian news and haven't dropped off the radar yet. Several people have emailed saying – 'never a dull moment' or similar things, and that does seem to be the case, but it's not 'life in the fast lane' all the time. There is much beauty in this place which we all enjoy. We'll certainly miss it. The frangipani trees are lovely, especially from the second floor of the staff-room block. We can see the tops of the trees from there and they're a mass of delicate flowers, pink or white, depending on the tree.

Red or orange bouganvillea hedges are quite spectacular too. Their flowers tumble in great profusion and luckily most are left untrimmed - a wonderful picture of Nature gone mad! Hibiscus flowers are in many gardens, along with cactii, various ferns, kapok trees and other shrubs nameless to me. Students help to keep the college gardens attractive by watering them regularly as part of their 'Work for a Book' scheme. Every student is encouraged to give practical as well as theoretical service.

Because Charles and I are almost at the end of our stint in Msalato, we've been asked to set exams early, for our classes. Tomorrow, the Diploma 3 class sits my exam – 'Ecclesiology and the Theology of Mission'. Two students will sit the same exam on Saturday morning as secondary school exams required by the government clash with our timetable. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning next week, this same class will sit Charles' two exams - 'The Book of Job' and 'Faith'.

Meanwhile, there is frustration with frequent power cuts, photocopier 'stuff-ups', the library being closed for renovations and internet 'shagalabagala!' (You don't need to know the literal meaning of this Swahili word. It means just the way it sounds.)

Jo Rogers, another Nelson Kiwi, is now back in harness. Jo dashed off to Brisbane for a fortnight, for her daughter's wedding and had a wonderful time. All went well until she returned to Msalato where she promptly went down in a heap with a horrible infection. Luckily, we had some rehydration salts and antibiotics she was able to use, and her neighbour friend, Lynn, gave much loving care. (There is usually a medical person who lives here but works at Dodoma Hospital. At the moment he's in the UK or Croatia – not sure which.) Jo has recovered now and that's lovely. It's great that students in her classes prayed for her recovery each day, both in English and in Swahili. This whole campus is a fine example of Christian love. Both Charles and I are very impressed with the atmosphere and spirituality in this place. We're so glad we came.

Unfortunately, witchcraft continues to rear its ugly head in Tanzania. According to news reports from the BBC last week, trafficking in human body parts is rife in this country,

particularly in the case of albino Africans. For some reason, the witchdoctors seem to think albino parts will have the best magical effects. (What about the poor fellow forced to donate such parts? A few survive. There are more albinos in Tanzania than other countries.)

From our point of view, Tanzania is a land of huge contrasts, especially spiritual beliefs. There's so much to be done here ... yet who's to say that 'western' answers are better? We know that our world has a myriad of problems as well.

Staff meetings ... yesterday we were promised a short staff meeting. They always occur from 2.30pm, when the temperature is climbing. (I find it extremely hard to keep awake after teaching from 8am till 1.30pm and I'm sure others do likewise.) For many reasons, this meeting, like all the other staff meetings we've attended, went on a bit. It eventually finished at 5.20pm. Pastor Iri Mato immediately prayed, thanking God for the 'short' meeting. We were really glad it wasn't a long one!

Sunday

Great news on the internet today that the All Blacks are still in the hunt, thanks to their good effort against the Argentinians. It's funny how they still have a bit of magic for the likes of us, especially when we're far from home. (I'm beginning to sound like our sons when they were on their OE's many years ago!) Perhaps it's second childhood!

Charles preached at Dodoma Cathedral this morning. He certainly had some positive comments afterwards – not because it was over at last(!) - but because they heard a very different 'take' on some of the parables, particularly the Great Banquet from Matthew 22. I thought it was a beauty but then I'm a bit biased. By the way, Marion McChesney from St Peter's, Kaikoura, led the service, Charles preached the sermon and I read the gospel. We all sang too. Howzat for a 'takeover' of Dodoma Cathedral by ex-pat whale-watchers? Later, we met up with a lovely young African couple and their first sweet little cherub – an eighteen month old poppet named Naomi - sadly with malaria. She gave us some cute little waves but simply could not keep her eyes open long enough to watch Marion's camera. Thank goodness she's having the right treatment for her condition.

Just to let you know, we've been bombarded with high-powered evangelising by some character with a microphone who loves to hear his own voice getting louder than most decibels can record. He's been 'at it' for at least five afternoons this past week, usually lasting from 4pm till 7pm, non-stop. (I can't think how to describe the racket without thinking wicked thoughts, so hopefully you've got the message. None of the staff we've spoken to can stand it either.) Apparently, it's a local evangelistic meeting ... and they surely make a job of it. We've had absolute misery trying to mark exam papers all afternoon with something like a megaphone blasting through all four eardrums at once! (Does the person actually take a breath between words? I doubt it.) The upside is that we really appreciate silence when he eventually packs up for the night!

So much for this week's epistle. Charles is worn out with marking right now, but sends his love.

Thank you for your prayers ... and God bless you all

Mary and zzzzzzzzzzzzz

PS We had the tiniest shower of rain this morning in Dodoma - the cathedral steps and nearby paths were slightly wet. It's the first actual precipitation since March! (There's no point in cleaning shoes or doing much dusting on a regular basis in this place!)

