

# TANZANIA

JULY – AUGUST 2000

## THURSDAY JULY 20 – SUNDAY AUGUST 13

Many thanks for your prayers and support. Jane and I had a wonderful holiday for the first two weeks. We stayed first on a coffee growing farm just South of Mt Kilimanjaro National Park and then in the Arusha National Park (see map!). Moshi, and especially Arusha, are relatively prosperous towns due to the tourist trade. Most of Tanzania's best parks are near Arusha, and the presence of many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's – e.g. Oxfam, Compassion International....), and also the huge United Nations War Trials (Rwanda) which are based in Arusha, provide much well paid employment.

The Anglican Church is quite small in Tanzania; there is a strong Lutheran presence (Tanzania was a German colony until 1918), substantial Pentecostal influence and large numbers of Catholics. The country is approximately 40% Christian, 40% Muslim, 20% tribal religions, although the Christian influence seems to be growing.

We were guests of the Anglican Diocese of Mt Kilimanjaro, led by Bishop Simon Mahindi who has 60 priests, and perhaps 300 congregations. It is one of the largest of 16 Anglican Dioceses (cf 4 dioceses in Zambia, but population of Tanzania is 40 million, Zambia 10 million)

Jane and I were guests of TANAPA (Tanzania National Parks Association) and were treated royally. For a week we had the director's car, his driver, and a ranger, Albano, and for the last four days a National Park car, a driver, and the same ranger.

We drove or walked through most of the National Park, seeing much wildlife, probably 100 species of butterfly, photographing about 70 species. The National Park is very beautiful, it contains Mt Meru (4500 m). We drove to the first hut (2200 m) and walked down. There were lakes, rain forest, mountain forest, lowland forest, and scrub. Monkeys and baboons abounded, giraffe and buffalo are very common, we saw many species of deer, warthogs, hippo, and one elephant (elephant dung was everywhere, but the herds hid in the forest). Masses of wild flowers, and birds ranging from eagles to kingfishers, via superb starlings, spectacular bee eaters and turacos. Butterflies included some of Africa's largest Swallowtails, the Mother of Pearl, and the glorious Gold-banded Forester (iridescent purple wings with gold bands). As we were in the dry season numbers and species were relatively small, but there was plenty to keep us occupied. We lived in the Rest Lodge, self-catering, with a wonderful view of Meru to the West and Kilimanjaro to the east. In the night, buffalo came to eat the ivy on the house; in the morning giraffe came within a few yards of the rest house, and Jane met a buffalo in the early morning mist (not recommended). Weather was very cold at night, and pleasantly hot when the sun came out. High up on the mountains three 'English' species of butterfly were seen – Painted Lady, Clouded Yellow, and Small Copper.

On Neil Baker's coffee estate we met serious bird watchers, found up to 50 blue swallowtails' mud puddings' at a stream junction, and had my rucksack 'stolen' by the local police – returned when an irate Neil arrived plus 'dog collared' John!

Jane left on Saturday, July 24. I stayed with Bishop Simon and Martha before the team arrived on Tuesday evening. I preached in the Cathedral on Sunday morning. This proved significant as it opened the way for later services. The team arrived - the Revd Alison Morgan, the Revd John Lee (curate), Dr Mike Hutchison (leader of healing team), Alex and Ann Scott (teachers and house group leaders), all from Holy Trinity Leicester and the rest of the time was spent in prayer and preparation. On Wednesday we left for Mbulu in two cars, the second driven by the O'Keefe's, an ex-pat. retired couple working in Moshi hospital. They had considered working for Elizabeth Feilden (small world!!) Mbulu is a town of some size, over a mountain range, about 4 hours drive (100 miles) South West. Nigel Rooms, Cbus Links

Missioner and Vicar in Moshi, drove us and organised us superbly. It was wonderful to have an English priest totally with us spiritually and practically. We arrived in Mbulu, a large straggling town dominated by a huge Catholic cathedral said to seat 5000!! (JW estimated 3000 plus 2000 standing). The next day we travelled several hours into the 'bush', first visiting Mongowamono, where some of the bush people, Wahadzebe, came for an open air service. Eventually about 100 attended, about 10 responded to an evangelistic sermon, and one nominal Muslim demanded baptism. We were brilliantly strengthened by the local Anglican vicar, Pastor Jacob and his local leaders. We also prayed for healing. After a brief picnic, we drove a short distance to Mandagew where we met the local Wairaqu congregation. Fortunately they spoke Swahili. After a lively service we had a long period of ministry which included some

evangelism, healing and a few clear cases of deliverance. We had an excellent Tanzanian pastor Paul

Mtoye with us who had worked in Mbulu as a government official in the past. He has a 'charismatic' ministry in Moshi, and had many stories of dramatic healings to tell, including a girl at the point of death for HIV rehabilitation whom I met, radiant and apparently completely well.

We stayed the night in tents – very windy!! The next day we drove on trails to Marish, an arid desert village, inaccessible in the wet season because of rivers. Saw vast herds of cattle and Masai herdsmen, desert and defoliation. Far too many cattle (they are Masai wealth). Service with congregation of nearly 200 in the afternoon. We had 31 baptised in the open air and an adult convert in the late afternoon who wanted baptism. Required triple translation – English – Swahili – Wairaqu. Much prayer and ministry. After the lengthy baptism, JW gave a talk on the healing of the paralysed man which was livened up by his lying on the ground, to give the talk and acting out the paralysed man's exploits!

(Photographic evidence available).

The drive back involved following a non-existent track over the hills until we met the main road. The next day we were promised a drive and a short walk to visit Kokomay, a village congregation keen on evangelism who had left the Lutheran Church (too dull) and become Anglicans!! We drove for one and a half hours and then walked for two and a half hours down 800 m. of a steep mountain. JW's walking boot fell apart (sewn up by the locals on arrival). No time for lunch, brief service (one and a quarter hours), and brief meal before three and a half hour walk back up the precipice. Pastor Mtoye (60+), Dr Mike and JW struggled a little. The congregation were very appreciative of our visit, and are trying to raise £300 for good instruments for evangelism. They walk miles to visit the other churches and help with worship and evangelism. We gave the whole parish around £150 to help them and other causes. They have great musical gifts, and a moving faith. It all seemed very New Testament.

On Sunday we had services in Mbulu and the Marish choir walked 10 miles to join us. Ministry there was limited by approaching darkness as the choir had to walk back.

We were very surprised with the parish and its four outlying congregations, and sensed that Pastor Jacob had a real bent for evangelism. They wanted to hear about healing and the gifts of the Spirit, and training lay leaders, and women's ministry. Most of us stayed in considerable comfort in a Catholic lady's house, excellently fed, and with lots of scalding hot water.

Drove back on Monday, and our next base was the Spiritual Retreat House, a house for Catholic Missionaries, which provided bed and excellent meals and washing of clothes for £8 a day!!

On Tuesday – Thursday (August 1 – 3), we moved to the Accounting College for the Clergy Conference. About 80-90 turned up, about 55 clergy, some wives, and a few widows. Holy Trinity Leicester had paid (with your help) for this to take place. It was followed on Friday and Saturday by the Diocesan Synod – from which we escaped for a break!! The clergy conference was probably the most important thing that we did.

The conference was based on Ephesians. The outline programme was worship, teaching, seminars in the morning. The Bishop and his staff dealt with issues of marriage, sex, finance, theological education by extension, Mothers' Union in the afternoon, and we had a double teaching session before the evening meal!

The programme worked well, although timing could be erratic, and seemed to be much appreciated. About 55 clergy, 30 wives, and some widows attended. The conference, and the two day Synod which followed was funded by gifts mostly from Holy Trinity Leicester (but also from Shepton) and cost about £60 per head. It took place in the Accounting College (job for Paul Treby?). Facilities were adequate and it was a quiet place just on the edge of the town.

Alex and Ann Scott led some English classes, translated into Swahili, and the wives especially, often lead the singing of Pambios (local choruses). We were spared the singing of Victorian hymns in Swahili which is so common in both Anglican and Lutheran churches.

I set the scene with an exposition of Ephesians Ch. 1, and then we had three revolving seminars (each person attending a different one each day). Alison Morgan did a fine seminar on prayer in the first day which led to much prayer (Eph. 3: 14-21) – 'Chinese' style with everyone praying aloud, and louder, at once. (Margaret Dyke would have loved it). Dr Mike Hutchinson and Alex Scott tackled Christian lifestyle (Eph.4:17-5:5), and the Revd John Lee and Ann Scott tackled the difficult issue of relationships (Eph.5:2 – 6:9). These seminars led to discussion and prayer, and opened up a lot of important issues. The Bishop obviously gave a frank and amusing talk on marriage in the afternoon and dealt with the difficult issues in a powerful and friendly way. We were absent, partly to save translation, and partly so that they would not be embarrassed to discuss things freely.

The first evening we had a biblical exposition (Eph. 2:1-10) (John Lee) and a session of healing and deliverance, from a medical point of view (Dr Mike). He is also the HTL healing team leader and works sometimes in hospitals in Ethiopia and Tanzania – and JW from a biblical perspective. They seemed to be enjoyed. We had two important prayer sessions after supper with individuals.

The second day (Wed. Aug. 2) opened with a strong exposition from the Revd Alison Morgan on the every-member-ministry (Eph. 4:7-16), a vital issue in a church where the Pastor tries to do everything and delegates work to evangelists in his other congregations who also try to do everything. They seemed pleased to be taught by a woman.

We planned the evening to be our main 'prayer' session. This proved wise. We were nearly thwarted by 'African time' and a car breakdown which combined to make us late for the vital session. I expounded on Eph.5:15-20, mentioned three sets of time – English time, African time, and God's time, which caused some amusement especially to the Bishop whose time keeping (see below) is notorious! I then challenged everyone to be open to be filled with the Spirit, and Dr Mike expounded on particular spiritual gifts associated with listening and healing. Then we sang and invited prayer. There was a small upper podium shielded from the main lecture room, and six teams gathered to pray. Each of us teamed up with a good English speaker. About 15 people spoke English (Swahili is the national language of Tanzania – the only African country to take this decision) and a number were excellent translators – if they got it wrong pandemonium and laughter followed as the other English speakers corrected them!

The Bishop tried to alter proceedings and get people to go away to a classroom for prayer, but Nigel Rooms bravely overruled him which was very fortuitous! About 50 men and women came for prayer during the course of the next one and a half hours. Many important prayers were made, some confessions, and a discreet gift was able to overrule one indiscretion. There was a good sense of joy and God's presence. The congregation below in the lecture room sang throughout proceedings.

On the Thursday, Alison opened up with a gentle, but cheerful talk on women's ministry, then after the seminars, we planned a final session and Communion Service. John Lee gave a great talk on reconciliation and unity (Eph.2:11-22 & 4:11-6). We discussed a few alarming situations – viz. a 'suspended' priest still living near his old parish, and a focus for opposition and disunity. But there was a general sense of working together and friendship among the clergy, and lack of theological disharmony – rather different from the UK! Some wives exercised powerful ministries, but I had the feeling that their husbands appreciated this, and kept control!

The Communion service was supposed to start at 5.00. The Bishop had delegated it to the sub-dean, a splendid priest, Kaedman, who had served in a tough Loughborough parish for three years, but there was a reluctance to start without episcopal presence!! At about 6.00, we began and at 6.15 I started my last (brief) talk on spiritual warfare (Eph.6:10-20). The Bishop arrived and walked in with local 'Compassion' officials.

Compassion is a wonderful organisation, an offshoot of TEAR Fund and a US charity, which Susie met with in Uganda. It cares for orphaned children and has just opened up in Arusho.

The conference ended with great thanks and a sense of God's blessing. Many people commented afterwards, and a week later the comments were just as positive. I think they appreciated the balanced teaching, the variety of teachers, and above all, as bishop, clergy and wives, to spend time together. They hadn't done this for three years (last SOMA trip) because of the impossibly high cost.

We then had a two day bird safari – mainly for Alison's benefit! This was a much needed break and took me back to Arusha National Park. The weather was less favourable, and the difference between being a tourist and a TANAPA guest was very noticeable. We had a good guide. Had a rather dull walk on the first day and a trip around the lake. I saw Albano and arranged to meet him, but somehow it didn't happen (my fault). The second day we had a much more interesting arranged walk, but the weather was awful. The sunny morning gave way to mountain mist, drizzle, brief sun (during which one spectacular butterfly emerged briefly), and pouring rain in the afternoon. We returned wet and visited a snake park on the way back to Arusha. This was quite entertaining. We saw how prolific snakes are, how well camouflaged. The gibbon viper, often seen in my other haunts in Kakamega is amazingly camouflaged, even in a snake pit below glass! Our enthusiastic guide described how he'd caught a spitting cobra one-handed under a bed in a nearby shamba holding his defective goggles with his left hand. My sort of ministry sounds a lot simpler!

Sunday was a very typically African Sunday. Two of the team had a great time in a township church, praying for over 100 at the end of a long service; two were picked up at 8.30 for a service that started at 8.00. Discovering they weren't expected, they rejoined me at the Cathedral (the Cathedral had a new congregation. The service (9.00-11.15) included the ordination of 5 priests (a sixth didn't turn up!), the making of a new canon (a further 12 appointed for the Cathedral – six priests, six lay, including two women, who seemed to be for a bishops' council). We knew almost all of them, they included Kevin the sub-dean, Leonard, the diocesan administrator, Paul Mtoye who had helped us the previous week, Jacob the vicar general (a sort of suffragan bishop with a mitre), and Zechariah who was to be our next host. Paul missed the ceremony by about two minutes and was done in the next service!!

I was asked to preach, and as it was Sunday, August 6, I gave a brief testimony of my call to the priesthood exactly 33 years ago, and a strong challenge to the priests based on the Transfiguration cloud of prayer, the law and the prophets, the challenge of Jesus to follow him to Jerusalem, and the disputes of the disciples about who was the greatest (which seemed appropriate after all the excitement and disappointment about who should be a Canon!).

The second service, due to start at 11.00, started at 11.30 and somehow finished at 1.30. It included choral items (I wasn't invited into the choir this time!), the making of a Canon, sermon from me on the epileptic boy at the foot of the mountain and healing, prayer ministry – we had 8 people including a splendid doctor who translated for us, one of the new priests (Patrick who was to become a good friend in the next week), Paul Mtoye, and Leonard (who I don't think had done this before), each paired with one of our team. It seemed to go well, I had emphasised reconciliation in my sermon, and this seemed to apply to lots of people, about 30 came up for prayer out of a congregation of about 150. A German Lutheran delegation (there to help with water supplies) looked open mouthed, especially when I said that Luther was a great prayer for healing! They didn't seem to know this!. There were also prayers, two families (a good practice), greetings of newcomers! (excellent) and prayer for Africa Day (Aug.13), when they are planning a great multi-national service. Arusha is an international centre both for tourism, NGO's, and the Rwandan War Trials. Everyone is coming in national costume to, celebrate what is good about Africa, and pray for its problems. After all this, we shared communion and retired to coffee, and eventually lunch!

Hoping for a rest, the ever enthusiastic Cathedral administrator took me and Dr Mike off to pray for a Pentecostal Pastor whose family was in disarray. He works with the administrator, at the War Trials. In his extended family we met HIV, mental illness, epilepsy, eczema.... and great faith!!

The next day, Monday Aug.7, we were due to set off at 11.00 for Babiti and Katesh (see map).but it was African time! We met the evangelist, Stanley, at 2.00 and set off at 2.15 having been fed with avocados, bananas, tomatoes, bread... by the Catholic rest house where we were staying.

We arrived at Babiti in the dark, and three of the team (Alison, John, Mike) set off for an hour of bad roads to Katesh, while I stayed with Alex and Ann and Patrick, who was to translate for us. His dedication was breathtaking. His parish was just out of reach, his sixth child had been born the day before the clergy conference, and he hadn't seen his wife and children since just after the birth. He translated for us wonderfully although he'd never done it before, lodged with me in various houses, and came back to Arusha to pick up T.E.E. material BEFORE returning to his family.

The last four days were a slight anti-climax as the trip wasn't prepared properly beforehand. In Babiti, the local pastor disappeared to a meeting in Arusha, and a small number of leaders gathered on a public holiday. We had a pleasant final event visiting hippo in the local lake. They roam the streets at night. In the afternoon, with about 40 present, I persuaded the choir into the open air and did some preaching, listening to by an extra crowd on the main road. The next day we walked about an hour to a similarly rather small meeting. Our hosts had apparently only just heard about our coming, although the Tanzanian cleric in charge had known about it for 5 months!

The other three suffered similar disappointment, but God overruled with some direct house-to-house evangelism and a dramatic healing of a woman who had had a tumour in the nose for years which just disappeared. They saw at least one other significant healing and about ten professions of faith.

The return journey was accomplished on time and with a pleasant visit to one of the clergy who had helped us in the first week. We had a good debrief with the Bishop and other leaders, heard that the Cathedral were starting training five people for healing services next week, and concluded with a lovely supper at the Bishop's house. The Bishop asked Dr Mike searching questions about GM crops which he answered with clarity and elegance (basically in favour with certain reservations).

My trip ended with an interesting 36 hours in Dar-el-Salaam with Kyle and Jane Macfarlane who are doing school work mainly in secondary schools. Kyle has one difficult one to visit about 50 miles away where there are always problems (sudden electrical difficulties, snakes, .....). It is on the site of a former slave trade post and clearly needs major prayer for healing and protection.

Thank you for all your prayers and good wishes. I had a lovely holiday plus three weeks hard work, which included 11 days of solid teaching and prayer plus many days of travel.

JOHN WOOLMER