

# Tanzania Mission Trip Report

---

*Theresa Kunich*

*July 28, 2011*

Hello Church Family,

Thank you so much for your prayers and support during our recent trip to Tanzania, Africa. I cannot begin to tell you how amazing the trip was and how once again, we felt so welcomed. When we arrived, we were greeted by a team from MEA and other members of our Africa family, included Alice (the headmistress of the St Augustine Primary School), Cecelia, a friend from previous years, Ally Jumane, a 15 year old friend we met last year whom Anne and Bob Hinley support and send to school, and lastly John Gao, director of MEA and his team. We hugged, kissed, and cried as we were greeted by our friends. Our new team members were keenly aware of the love shared between the two teams from opposite ends of the globe.

Gao (as we affectionately call him) and his team from MEA are always such a blessing to us while in Tanzania. Gao, (or someone from MEA) serve as constant guides to us. They set our schedules and keep us on track with visits to schools, churches and work projects. MEA is a much needed organization developed by The Archbishop, Valentine Mokiwa and John Gao does a mighty job serving as it's head. MEA serves as the overseers of incoming funds for the schools and the clinics. MEA also participates in the development of new churches, new schools and new clinics within the diocese of Tanzania. In the past two years, I have seen dreams come true for the people in the Anglican diocese of Tanzania. Churches are being planted and built. Dormitories for children, who travel many miles to school, are being built due to the guidance and funneling of appropriated funds orchestrated and overseen by Gao. Their culture is such that when they receive funds, donations or grants, even loans, they distribute them quickly to people in need and sometimes only to certain families. The Arch Bishop saw a great need for MEA and the structure and stability it provides. MEA is instrumental in churches being built, wells being dug, clinics to have needed supplies and orphans going to school and having clothing and food.

Their needs are great, sometimes overwhelming, and as we traveled around we identified many needs. (Which are too many to mention). One desire of the Arch Bishop is to develop churches, a school and a clinic in a Muslim area called Kibindu, where there are about 5000 people. The diocese has begun construction on the church and already has converted many Muslim. We set out one day to visit Kibindu, on a supposed short journey, which ended up taking 15 hours from start to finish. The long journey included 2 1/2 hours on bumpy dirt roads. Along the journey we passed many primitive living villages which opened my eyes to where we were heading. One may travel several miles and see many different lifestyles such as a family in a corn field or a small group sitting by the road or Masai warriors tending their goats. We finally reached our appointed destination to find the pastor and three church members waiting for us. The Bishop had them give us an accounting of their progress and he read from Matthew 28, The Great Commission. Just as God had sent our group to Africa, he was sending the Arch Bishop and his team including this converted Muslim, who was now set to pastor this church, into a village to spread the word of God's kingdom! Many resources, including: money, love and prayer will be needed in this venture. St. Luke's hopes to take a medical team to this area next year to begin the process of building relationships and to discern how God is calling us to help in the development of this area.

On our way to Kibindu we visited a pastor who is planting two churches and building a parsonage. The place where they worship now is a basically a hut with no walls. It had homemade wooden benches that would seat about 30 people. When asked how many people worship there each Sunday he said "about 100." The first church is moving right along with walls already up. We prayed in the church and the

presence of the Holy Spirit was right there with us. God has mighty plans for that place and those people! The pastor proudly showed us through the small rooms of the parsonage that had no floors and no windows but was "ready" for the family to move in. They asked for \$3000.00 to complete the churches and the parsonage.

With so many needs it is an awesome feeling to be able to see the fruits of our labors over the years and the joy it is producing. Every year God provides funds for us to take with us. The Church Mouse is a huge supporter to this mission and several members of the church have donated to the mission as well this year. These donations allow us to go over and address some of their needs immediately. We take food to the people in the slums that MEA has identified as indigent and homebound due to illness. We prayed in the slums for a young girl who is dying of aids. Last year it was brought to our teams attention that her brother could not afford go to school. We were able to donate immediate funds, through MEA to send him to school. We see children in the schools and someone will point out that through St Luke's donations they are able to attend school. Private schools run about \$500.00 a year and the government run schools are usually \$100 to \$150.00 a year. School is free for no one in Tanzania.

We took reading books to the Primary and Secondary Schools this year. These books were donated largely by a book drive at HH Prep led by 17 Year Old and Tanzania Team member, Emily Blackshire. We would also like to thank Sea Pines Montessori Academy and the Jr DOK at St. Luke's as well for their participation in collecting books. What a joy it was to see the faces of our "helpers" at the Secondary school as they were counting the books and adding them to their shelves. It took almost two hours to do this because they were stopping to read every chance they got. Teachers were coming in to read and enjoy the books as well. We were also able to take and donate bibles to St. Marks Seminary donated by St. Luke's church member. Layettes donated by the DOK and other church members were put to good use in the clinic as well. We even saw a tiny baby fully outfitted in the little American hat and receiving blanket. Many blessings!

We were also able to donate \$800.00 worth of curriculum to the primary school this year mainly due to a donation given to Kathie before our departure. The curriculum purchase would have not been possible otherwise. Curriculum for the whole school, 600 children was \$800.00! We also painted the secondary school with help from the students. We have plans and a team working to try and establish their computer program, finish their dorms and complete an addition to their library. However, we were able to meet all of their immediate needs this year with your donations.

We also were blessed by the dedication of a well at the St Augustine Primary School. This dedication was made possible by a fundraiser led by a 13 year old, St Luke's Church member, Ella Patrick. Ella raised \$1500.00 by way of a letter to her volleyball team requesting the funds. The well has several spouts to allow children to wash before meals and have clean drinking water. This well cuts down on many bacterial infections, parasites and host of other problems. This well will save lives. Haleigh Kunich was honored to have been asked to dedicate this well on Ella's behalf.

A program is already in place at the school to feed the children. It came to the attention of Joni Vanderslice and Susan Ketchum on a previous trip that some of the children at St Augustine could not afford to eat the lunches that were being served. They led a campaign after that trip to raise funds for the lunch program. It is an ongoing fundraiser and costs \$92.00 a year to feed one child. I was there to see children have their lunch and asked if everyone was being fed; Alice nodded with a smile and said, "every child is being fed lunch!" Amen! What an answer to prayer.

The Vanderslices are also leading a fundraising effort to build a much needed orphanage in the slum village of Buguruni. This orphanage will serve the needs of the MEA orphans we visit every year. We were warmly greeted by a group of about 40 orphans on our last Saturday in Tanzania. Many of the same kids we met last year and delivered shoes to were among the group. The ones that knew us, quickly ran and hugged us and the teenagers they had bonded with on our previous trips. We took pictures and handed out books, writing tablets, pencils and clothing. MEA helps to support these orphans as best they can, with little to no funding. Some are in homes with extended families, some are with house mothers. These are only the children MEA has identified; there are many more who have not been identified and

have nothing and no one. The orphanage is a much needed entity and we all request your prayers and your heartfelt donations towards this effort.

There are so many stories about what we have been able to do and are doing for this community and the people of Tanzania. The Body of Christ has come together in a huge way to minister to the needs of these people and bring them blessings. However, the most profound story this year was about one of our own. Sandra Bass, who has made this trip six years in a row, was obviously not doing well during our trip. She stayed behind a couple of days to rest and she slept most of the time. Close to the end of our trip on the way home from our Safari, Gao mentioned she may have malaria. We took her straight to the clinic, which is supported by the diocese, where she tested positive for Malaria. The next day was our departure day. Dr. Mokiwa made a "housecall" to the Hotel to be sure she was capable of traveling and to administer her malaria medication. She was experiencing a great deal abdominal pain which concerned him so he sent for the sonogram machine. This machine coincidentally was donated to St Luke's by the Crisis Pregnancy Center of Hilton Head and was delivered to the clinic this spring by Dr. Rick Vanderslice. This time, however, we were on the receiving end of our donation. The ambulance that brought the machine and the technician to Sandy waited outside her room to deliver her to the hospital if need be. The St Luke's team had purchased a new engine for the ambulance just last year. The blessings and fruits of our labor came full circle this year as we dealt with Sandy's illness.

The doctor cleared Sandy to travel and we began our long journey home. While in flight we kept a watchful eye on our beloved friend. In DC, we were concerned about her condition so we sought medical treatment. She has since been diagnosed with numerous cancerous tumors and bone lesions. At the moment our prayer is for a miracle, the miracle of complete healing. However, Gods ways are not our ways and we have to submit to his will, whatever it may be. We are praying that she can come home and be surrounded and embraced by her loving church family at Mt Calvary Missionary Baptist Church. Whatever God has in store for Sandy we will accept. However, I do know that Sandy loves the people and the country of Tanzania. Her perseverance to travel in the condition she was in is astounding and certainly a gift from God. He found grace to send her once more to the country she called the "motherland".