

Dear Friends,

It's been a long time since I've written, as I waited until I was able to update you on what was happening with the work, rather than to keep you informed about the corruption and frustrations that seem to have been rather prevalent in my past letters...they're still there, but let's change the focus and see the good things that have happened.

I am currently in Nairobi, where I returned two days ago, after having spent the month on two different work sites. Initially, the plan was to go to India in early February, and then, upon my return, head over to Lake Victoria, to add to the project we began on Sigulu island last year. When I began making plans for India, somehow I continued to push against doors that wouldn't open easily. I'm sure that if I'd pushed hard enough, I would have managed to go through, but since my heart wasn't 100% behind the trip at that particular time (only a year had passed since my dad had passed away while I was in India, and I wasn't excited about heading back in the same season), I put the trip off until a later time. I then tried to move toward working on the Sigulu project, but because of the elections in Uganda which could become volatile, as well as lack of preparation on the Ugandan side with regards to the authorization I was asking from from the Revenue Authority, I was forced to hold back.

During that same time, I finally understood some 'signposts' that God seemed to have put in my life over the past months, which were directing me to Madagascar. Very similar to the way he directed me to Lamu in the first instance, Madagascar came up a few times in a very short span of time, and when I was praying about what I was to be doing with the time and money He had put into my hands via our friends and donors, I clued into Madagascar, and very quickly made the decision to head over there and start a new work...

When I made this seemingly rash decision, my Canadian missionary friends, Andy and Rebecca DesRoches happened to be in Shela again, enjoying a few relaxing days by the sea. I mentioned that I was going to go to Madagascar, with no idea where to go to, or which population exactly to start with (I had heard that the southwest was very poor). They mentioned that they knew an American Missionary couple over there, put me in contact, and lo and behold, within two weeks, I was there!

Getting there though complicated, was the easy part..finding a supplier that would give us a reasonable price to purchase the tanks seemed to be another story. In the shops, I was getting quotes of US \$500 per tank, even if I wanted to purchase them in quantity!! I must admit, I had more than a few moments of discouragement during those days, as it was looking like I had gone over to do 10 tanks...a weak start. Again, by God's grace, I was introduced via a new found relative by marriage, to one of her relatives who was from Madagascar, and who knew someone who owns a company which makes tanks!! We began communicating via email and sms, and somehow, this person first of all gave me the price he gave to dealers, and later, trusted I would forward him the money I owed, as I needed to transfer that money from Switzerland, and it was proving to be slightly slow due to various issues. So, about a week after arriving in Tulear, the tanks arrived in the area which the ministers with whom I'd

been put in contact, Todd and Patsy McGregor had shown me. The needs were certainly there – people drinking filthy, muddy water which they had salvaged from the ruts which the oxcarts had made, or as Patsy had once seen, water being sponged off the tarred road and drunk from the sponge... We managed to purchase 20 tanks with the money I had left in our account, and 2 were spontaneously donated by a couple from England, who had been touched by the kindness of a particular village when the husband broke his leg as we were coming back from scouting the areas where we were to put the tanks.

We distributed tanks, iron sheets (most homes were made of mud and thatch) and gutters, and we painted Tia Anao Jesoa (Jesus loves you, in Malagash) on each tank. It was a beautiful sight to see them going with the tanks perched high on their oxcarts...they were very grateful for them, needless to say!

After leaving Madagascar, I returned to Nairobi for 3 days – had a quick visit with my furry companion in life, Punki, who was staying with Andy and Rebecca, the Canadian missionaries I spoke of earlier in this letter. Happy as a clam in the loving family environment, I was able to leave in peace again, for the western part of Kenya, starting with a flight to Kisumu.. From Kisumu, I took a vehicle 1.5hrs to an area called Bumala, which has a small hotel which boasts clean rooms and hot water...a rare commodity in such an area!! From Bumala, I would take a matatu (a local taxi bus) which took 1hour each morning to reach Port Victoria, where along with Pastor Douglas Adika and two men from his church, Pastor Simon and Christopher, we prepared the tanks for distribution. You can imagine the work it took to prepare 70 tanks...first the plumbers who put the taps on, then Simon who stamped WOGI (Wings of Grace International) into each tank with a small stamping tool, Christopher who sanded the front area and cleaned the front area of each tank in preparation for me to paint them, and finally myself, who painted YESU ANAKUPENDA (Jesus loves You in Swahili) on each tank...and again Simon, who painted the series and identification number on each tank.

During the time I was at Port Victoria, we were also negotiating the transport of the tanks with local boats, and also going back and forth by phone with the Ugandan team who were trying to get the authorization from their officials for the transport of the tanks into Ugandan waters. This was proving to be frustrating, as the officials in question were waiting for their palms to be greased...which I absolutely refuse to do. As Easter weekend was suddenly there, we lost the Friday and the Monday, and I was begged to wait until the Tuesday to get the paper in hand. Against my desires, I agreed, but gave a deadline until noon on Tuesday, which is when I would begin detouring the tanks into Kenyan waters. When noon arrived and I'd had no communication to say that the papers were in hand, I arrived moments later in Port Vic, and immediately went to a branch of the Police to find out which offices I needed to deal with, and was directed toward the fisheries officer, Mr. Mbogo Onyango, who told me of a tiny Kenyan island close by, but also of some villages on semi-islands in Kenyan waters, who desperately needed our help. I finally decided to agree to help these semi - islands (these places could only be reached by the majority of inhabitants by water, which involves going through a long,difficult channel). I imagined them having to negotiate it with a sick person on board during the rains, and was happy to supply them with tanks-their lives are not easy. These places are apparently accessible also by road, but it takes a very long time, and it would be by foot, because no one owns a vehicle and public transport may not go that deep in.

While we were in the process of setting up the Kenyan distribution, the pastor from Sigulu called and begged me to distribute half the tanks to them. After discussing with Ps. Douglas, realizing that it was neither the fault of the inhabitants nor of Pastor Joram who had done the on site organizing, we decided we would share half the tanks with Sigulu.. He had already cleared us with the Revenue Authority on the island, who has promised to give it to me on paper. So, with no real plans to start a new project, we did, and did just over half of the work planned in Uganda. In fact, they fared quite well, as I had supplied them before the authorization came through, with 6 tanks of 2000litre capacity for the schools. I found out when I arrived, that 9 schools had been promised those tanks, so this week, with the money we have left in our account, I will honour the supply of the 3 tanks, as a personal friend had kindly sponsored the cement needed to build a strong support for them.

So, in the month of April 2011, we have supplied 98,000 litres of rainwater harvesting capacity covering 15 – 20,000 people, perhaps more, and the quantity of litres will increase by 6000 before the end of this week. We also gave 6m of gutters to a school on the Kenyan side, as they had been given a 10,000 litre tank by another NGO, but were lacking gutters to fill the tank. Since we detoured the tanks going to that village over to Sigulu, we have compensated with gutters, so that the tank can be filled quickly, and the whole village will have access to the water.

I want to say a special thanks to Johann Tschoppe and his family for the fundraising dinner in November 2010, which raised the bulk of the money for these tanks. There have been other donors who have also given amounts which were quite substantial when put together, and which have made all the difference in arriving at so many litres of holding capacity.. My heartfelt appreciation – I am the one who gets the thanks up front, but without ALL of you, there would be no thanks to receive – I transmit to you the gratitude of the recipients, and remind you that God see's every gesture of sacrifice and kindness, and will be faithful to bless you in return.

Thanks also for trusting me with your hard earned money, and for standing with me in prayer – there have been many challenging decisions to make, and much work to do in a very short period of time... It's not as organized as I would have preferred (I was not able to visit the tanks and take pics and gps readings as I usually do, due to time constraints), but I now have to trust that the onground management teams will make sure that the stands are completed and all runs smoothly, and God willing, I will catch up next time on the readings and pictures.

By the way, I felt just before I left for Madagascar, that I am now to hand over the management of the various projects to local Christian groups, who will consider it a ministry. I will still have the final say, and the tanks will still belong to WOGI in Switzerland, but I will no longer manage them – my job will be to set up new, and increase existing projects according to the needs that I am made aware of and prompted to act upon.

Warmest greetings and heartfelt thanks again to each of you,

Tasmin