

The Amani Messenger

P.O. BOX 2094, DODOMA, TANZANIA

November 2006

An Urgent Appeal for Continued Support

Greetings from 'hopeful' Makang'wa. I say 'hopeful' as we are nearing the normal beginning of the early rains. The large baobab tree near the well is flowering. The villagers point to it and say, "The rain is coming! When the baobab trees flower the rain is coming." May their hopes be fulfilled.

The food situation remains critical. In fact the need has increased as the months unfolded. This will be the constant situation until there is a harvest. Now the few 'professional' people in the villages are coming and begging for food relief and work opportunity. In this region Makang'wa is known as the 'blessed village' because of the steady assistance we have been able to provide. That assistance has flowed on to surrounding village communities as we now divide the Relief Work Group participants equally between Makang'wa and other villages. The Friday afternoon maize distribution also includes elderly people who come with reference from their village Executive. We provide without discrimination. Some regional churches and denominations provide only for their own members or people willing to join that church. Happily the Anglican Church has never practiced such discrimination.

I mentioned the 'blessed village! However today a young 'goatherd' boy called out to me and asked for a drink of water. I was working in an area of the land where we have installed the distribution system. He came and drank from the tap and then pointed to some 'fruit' on a nearby native tree, indicating that he wanted some. However this 'fruit' is inedible. It was then that I noticed, through his ragged clothes, his distended stomach. He was severely malnourished. I suspect this is more common than we realize. I see these goatherd boys passing every day. We shall try to make some provision for a good 'snack'. Yes, people do fall through the cracks, especially children from these families. Orphans probably do better because they are more readily 'noticed'.

In contrast to this lad a young family man, Kenneth Sausi, is now our Assistant Well Operator. Kenneth is a wonderful human being. When I first met Kenneth about nine months ago he was thin, sickly and beaten down with worry over the care of his 'extended family'. He is now a transformed man, glowing with good health, cheerful, highly intelligent and able to learn new processes quickly. Kenneth is just one example of the blessings which flow from the support provided from friends in the USA and Australia. Recently someone said to me, "No one is crying in Makang'wa." We praise God for that assessment – but I now 'see' that young lad and understand that some 'crying' is quiet and unnoticed.

I want to share in some detail about the Relief Work Program therefore this letter will be longer than I might have wished but I do believe this is necessary. The Program operates on several levels. Firstly, there are fifty to sixty people who work from 7.00am to 12.45pm Monday to Friday, receiving a good meal at 1.15pm each day and a 'tin' of maize, milled, on Friday afternoon. The second group consists of the two cooks and ten other people who are 'leaders' or 'foremen'. They

receive the meal, the tin of maize and from 5,000/- to 10,000/- shillings a week. (5,000/- shillings is about \$4.50). To mention a few: Barton, supervises the growing of about 4,000 tomato and pepper plants. Another, Leonard, supervises the vineyard development; Joseph organizes a lot of our lighter concrete work; Musa supervises the block making; Peter leads the 'stump gang'. Another older man has just joined us. He is an 'expert' at working with cement and stone – and he speaks English! These are key people. As the Center develops they will 'move up' in position.

There is a third level, the Special Work Team. These are twenty two young men I engaged for a two week period to dig grape trenches. Well, through some special support two weeks has extended into hour and a half months! Very much has been achieved. Even more significantly they are now all 'healthy' young men. They are a 'joy'. It seems that we can keep them for about another four weeks and then I will need to reduce the number to seven permanents. That will be a severe process!

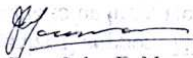
In addition there has been a fourth level. Here I do truly believe we see God at work. Makang'wa village is conducting its 'militia training program'. Daily, 150 young man and women train early in the morning and then again from two in the afternoon. As a way of saying "Thank you" to Amani the Commandant has been sending the contingent to work at the Center. On eight occasions now we have had the 'militia' turn up with hoes, picks and shovels. They have dug many, many meters of grape trenches, built a retaining wall, moved soil and gravel, etc. etc. As I write this on a Wednesday evening they are coming tomorrow and Friday (with buckets) to spread manure in the trenches. They have moved us ahead about a year in expected progress! This serves to illustrate the high esteem in which the Amani Center is held – and this results from the generous support provided by many 'friends'.

This week a young man, a High School student, came to the Center seeking work so that he can pay his school fees. He attends an Anglican High School in Dodoma. He is an orphan and has no 'organized' support. His home village is about sixty kilometers from Makang'wa. I asked him how he came to be here. He said, "Everyone has heard of the Amani Center. Friends advised me to come here because this place loves people." A comment like that makes one feel very humble, especially as I remember my occasional outburst of frustration!

Yes, we must "love people". 'God so loved the world' the Spirit says through the Evangelist. If we consider ourselves to be the 'body of Christ' then we must reflect that love to all about us. Thank you for your participation in sharing that love with people in this region. Please continue 'to love the people here' until the rains come and the harvest is gathered – and even then still love them.

As we move through the Thanksgiving Season (I shall celebrate with chicken!) I ask you to remember the urgent needs here. If you are moved to assist with this ministry send gifts to:
Amani for Africa USA Foundation
% Mrs. Doris Gerstner
4311 Loma Vista
Billings, MT 59106

Doris is the Treasurer of the Foundation. All gifts are tax deductible. Do NOT put my name on a check. May God bless you richly as you offer yourselves in His service.


The Rev. John F. Naumann
Missionary, Diocese of Montana.