

Jim's Journal

July 2010

Dear Friends,

It is a pleasure to be able to update you again on ministry in East Africa, and then on my plans to visit the West later this year. I have included a number of accounts of 'a day in the life of ...' to let you know some of the circumstances that I encounter in ministry. Also included, a brief account of ministry engaged in during my recent trip to Tanzania. Up-dates on the children in my home, and up-dated information on the work of Kima International School of Theology (8 miles from home) where I teach for 2 days weekly is included. Enjoy your read.

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A day in the life of a missionary – Easter Sunday 2010

The house bustled with children playing, doing errands, having breakfast and preparing for church in the morning. I left at 8.00am so as to share the message of the resurrection with two house-bound widows before church. I shared with the first, and prayed for her as her son had been involved in a serious accident just four days earlier. The next was just 10 minutes cycling further. A widow-friend was visiting her, so my audience was doubled as I read from the Gospels.

After meeting and talking with various folks on route, I arrived at church just after 10.00am. More and more people came. We began with a lot of singing praising God. Because we had some visitors, I knew I would not be asked to preach. Then the leader of the service announced that ‘after this song and a prayer Jacob Otieno (my African name) will bring the message, following which the visiting preacher will also speak!’ 10 minutes to prepare a sermon, and I trust God that it worked out well. Amazing though as always, how much more difficult it was for me to connect the audience than for the African preacher following me, who was much more proactive in telling people how to counter demonic attacks.

4 ½ hours later our Easter service was finished. I went to visit the husband to one of the girls who I had reared in my home for 10 years, who had been involved in the same motorbike accident above. I found him sore and in pain but apparently recovering. I was able to pray for him and his family, before taking the short-cut to my home by passing over the marsh having to carry my bicycle for much of the trip.

That evening a severely handicapped lady came to my home, to retrieve her child who had been staying with me for the prior 4 weeks. She had been in hospital for four days with malaria. Being too handicapped to keep him properly, she had arranged for the boy to be taken in by a nearby orphan project. The boy protested ...

A day in the life of a missionary – Saturday 1st May 2010

I happened to meet my pastor at the internet café having written to his donors. “What time will the funeral be” I asked? “We’ll start early” he told me. I reached his home at 10.30am and carried him along a nice new gravel road built by the Millennium project to the site of the burial (the home of the deceased) on the back of my bicycle. We walked up a short muddy path to the home arriving at 11.00am. “We will start the service as soon as we get there” the pastor had told me, but we had to wait till 12.00 noon as the people there were still setting up the shade. We sat amongst a growing maize and beans crop looking at the 8 foot-square temporary house built for the deceased for the purposes of the burial, and waited.

The deceased, who had left a wife and four children, had died (so we were told) as a result of cutting off a growth that was on his hand with a razor blade. Because he had been something of a loner, his funeral was not well attended (only about 120 people). He had attended our church just once; but we agreed to bury him as his wife attended more regularly. While I was the official preacher (as well as one of the interpreters) and shared on the Prodigal Son; there seemed to be many unofficial preachers before and after me. We moved 20 yards to a point alongside the main house where a grave had already been dug and sung as the soil was returned, the rain gradually building up in strength making the lush green vegetation around us gleam. A drunk entertained us with his foolish antics.

After the burial we were invited to a nearby home to eat chicken, before three of us walked on further to pray for another church member in the same village who had been unwell. I took the pastor home then managed to dodge the main rain-showers on my return to my own home about 4 miles distant.

At home I found a lad sitting on my veranda. He had received a serious injury to his leg months before from falling off a bicycle. He was coming home from having his injured leg treated, and chanced across two lads fighting on the path. Apparently without motive, one of the lads attacked him, grabbed his machete and slashed his arm with it as he tried to cycle past. His mother took him home with a (fortunately not too deep) gash on his arm to report the matter to our sub-chief.

Report on Children in my Home

Samson, aged 28, teaches locally, and has found his own accommodation.*

Christine, aged 12, is proving more and more helpful in the home.

Okoth, aged 21, is now very tall and has matured greatly.

Zachary, aged 14, is starting to hit adolescence.

Saul, aged 17, left us and is staying with his grandmother.*

Michael, aged 8, is growing fast, but needs to know how to handle problems in a mature way.

Doreen, aged 20, is approaching final secondary school examinations.

Ouso, aged 11, is a very helpful boy.

Michelle, aged 14 is acquiring the body of a woman while the mind remains that of a child.

Laura, aged 7, is now working hard on learning to read and write.

Stella, aged 16, has settled in very well and seems to be a glue to the 'family' as a whole.

Esther, aged 26, has remarried and is living nearby.*

Karen, aged 1.5, is living nearby with her mother Esther.*

David, aged 13, has recently joined us, and appreciates having lots of playmates.

* no longer living with me permanently. (False names used throughout.)

A day in the life of a missionary – Sunday 2nd May 2010

Having to take the long route to church because of mud forced me to go through an area known for thuggery. A lad told me to give him food. When I refused he seemed threatening ... On route to church I met the chairman of our youth group, a close colleague. He asked me to chair the service that day. I found people already singing beautiful songs. I formally opened the service at 10.20. An hour later the large brick church, recently built by donors from the UK, was packed. The praise and worship was terrific and powerful.

A lady testified to an incident at the home of her brother. Lightning had struck and blown up his television, amongst other things. The incident was described to us as if the lightning entering the house was a white animal that resembled a cockerel. It went past the lady of the house and blew up the TV and some kind of fuel store. It then went up to grandma's house causing grandma to fall over onto her bed (on which she had been sitting) with two grandchildren and her daughter falling on top of her. "Pray for our home" said the lady testifying, understanding this as just the latest of many attacks on her extended family (the only remaining out of three brothers is bedridden after a motorbike accident). (The same lightning bolt had struck my home nearby on the same day while I was out. It gave the children a serious shock but did not destroy anything.)

The preacher, a neighbour and long-time colleague, gave us a powerful message – that was very much ‘African’ in context. He was followed by a prophet, husband to a church member, who had requested an opportunity to share. There followed an hour or so of warnings to the effect that God was going to destroy the church after 15 minutes; a message the prophet had received as a part of a dream which he recited to us in detail. The dream included blue clouds coming and removing priestesses from in front of a church. He told us he was taking the same message, essentially of repentance, church to church, Sunday after Sunday. (I noted that one thing for which we were to repent, was going to church to get money from White people instead of to worship God.)

The church service ended at 2.30pm after some fundraising. I got home to find one child with a high fever, and another a painful lip. After administering some first aid, that night we were reading two story books with the children (in Kiswahili), before and after our regular daily fellowship, singing and prayer.

Tanzania Ministry

(Written 16th April 2010.) I have just come from a six-day period of Christian ministry amongst the Irawq people living in Mbulu in Tanzania, a highland region largely cut-off from the surrounding communities by steep mountain slopes.

My host pastor, a long-time Tanzanian friend, proved to be both extremely enthusiastic and energetic and had us ministering from 9.00am to almost midnight most days. Walking was amongst incredibly beautiful mountain scenery up and down steep slopes and through valleys so as to visit people at their subsistence ‘crofts’.

The said crofts strike a Westerner as being extremely dirty, dank and smelly. Very often manure is piled up inside and outside of the houses. People spend their time in close proximity to goats, sheep, cattle, chickens and pigs. Women cook on smoky wood fires with dirty children playing around them. The people scrape a living from their animals and crops planted often on very steep slopes.

We walked from house to house, and were invariably invited in to sit on low stools to share something of the Scriptures, typically with the mother of the house, often with the man sitting to one side. The people were warm and welcoming. At times my host would use the local language (*Kiirawq*), and at times we would all use *Kiswahili* as we talked of the Christian life and shared from the Scriptures.

The context of ministry was clearly one in which evil spirits were constantly encroaching onto people’s lives. ‘Pray for the people to be blessed’ my host told me, as he would drive away spirits of disease and calamity through prayer in the name of Jesus.

Evenings from about 9.00pm to as late as midnight were spent with 40 or 50 young people gathered from various churches. The first hour they presented one song after another in a number of choirs. We sang some choruses, before the pastors present including myself elaborated on an aspect of the Christian life such as love, how to avoid sin, one’s calling as a Christian ... etc.

Pray for these people, living in a rapidly overpopulating largely cut off highland region

bounding on government game-reserves that is extremely liable to soil erosion. Fear of attack by the jealous (witchcraft) has them bound in a constant cycle of extreme poverty from which the Gospel of Christ could bring liberty.

Wanaigaiga

'*Wanaigaiga*' said a report by Tanzanians about Tanzanians that I read recently. That is 'they want to copy everything', and do nothing of their own accord. Once told sufficiently frequently that what one does for oneself cannot work, people loose faith in themselves. Instead they want to depend on donors for everything that pertains to their development; the report goes on to say, and to do everything that other countries are doing whether or not it can work for them (2003:42).

This is increasingly the case in Kenya as well as Tanzania. If a donor wants to do something, people will jump at it. If no donor is involved, most will not see the point in it (unless a funeral).

The donors, of course, are mostly Western nations. This means that people in this area want to do what Westerners are doing, while despising what they themselves do. Anyone who wants to work with them without having donors or being a donor, is despised (unless they have exceptional spiritual powers) – especially a foreigner who refuses to 'buy' people

Challenges of Theological Teaching Programmes

Pray for us in Yala and Siaya theological centres in respect to the above; because we do not have donors, many people see it as a waste of time to study God's Word with us. This disease of 'dependency' is eating deeply at the African people. Pray that more donors realise this and learn to disconnect God's word from donorism. Some things are so important (God's Word), that people ought to be interested whether there is a donor or not! (I am teaching three classes weekly in Siaya and Yala as from 10th May 2010.)

Give thanks for the many visitors, mostly connected to Alliance for Vulnerable Mission activities, I have been having in recent months. Dr. Stan Nussbaum (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission board member) visited me in January, as did Concorde Nyigena from Rwanda. My parents came in February. I had a visit from Pirwoth Atido, a student at NEGST (Nairobi Evangelical School of Theology), in March. Andrew Dickson, a missionary working in Uganda visited me in April. A couple called Gord and Carole Sawatsky (AIM missionaries) are due to visit me in May. We are expecting two pastors (Eliya Dahhi and Abednego Munde) from Tanzania to help us in ministry in July. ... The only space left currently is for June. Welcome!

As I write, we are in the throes of opening KIST. We are short of students, and short of money, our administration tells us. The duly appointed new Principal is having trouble raising funds in the USA, this delaying his arrival here from the anticipated July now to December this year at the earliest. This keeps us in the school in a state of 'limbo'. Give thanks that we are expecting the Bayers to arrive in early June. The Baltes are already here.

New KIST Colleagues

Below is the new team of American missionaries expected and / or on the ground already at KIST. Pray that we be able to work together effectively for God's glory.

Jeff & Lisa Baltes (present)

Jeff is the New Academic Dean and will bring his IT expertise to the Computer Training Program. Lisa will help administer the scholarship program and hospitality.

Rod & Jan Dormer (expected)

As the new Principal of KIST Rod, and his wife Jan bring expertise in education and over 10 years of Missions Seminary experience. (Jan has a doctorate in education)

Dave, Bonnie, Joshua,

Michael Baylor (expected June 2010)

Dave will be Director of the Extension Program taking KIST training outside the campus walls. Bonnie will work the areas of hospitality, student life, and grief ministry.

Ernie & Lori Nicholas (expected)

Ernie will be teaching in the Theological Education Programs. Lori will be the new Campus Nurse.

Imminent Trip to Visit Theological and Missionary Training Colleges

Below is my programme for visits to colleges beginning September 2010. Please pray for these times of sharing about things that I have learned in the course of 22 years of serving the Lord in Africa. Give thanks for all the invitations below. Pray for much wisdom in explaining vulnerable mission. Pray that some of those I speak to will be inspired to serve the Lord in 'vulnerable' ways. (For more about vulnerable mission, see www.vulnerablemission.com)

Name of institution	City	Country	Dates
Missions conference in Germany	Stuttgart, Germany	Germ	3rd to 5th September 2010
Fritzlar Bible College	Fritzlar, Germany	Germ	6th to 10th Sep. 2010
Andover Baptist Church	Andover	UK	14th to 27th September
Oakhill College	Southgate, London	UK	22nd to 23rd September
Trinity college, Bristol.	Bristol, UK	UK	27th Sep. to 2nd Oct.
Redcliffe College, Gloucester.	Gloucester, UK	UK	2nd to 9th October
University of Toronto, Canada.	Toronto, Canada	Canada	9th Oct to 16th October
Eastern University, St. Davids, PA	St. David's, PA	USA	16th to 23rd October
Ambridge, PA.	Ambridge, PA	USA	23rd to 30th October
Anderson University, Indiana	Anderson, Indiana	USA	30th Oct. - 6th Nov.
Wheaton, Chicago	Chicago	USA	6th -13th November
Abilene Christian University, Texas.	Abilene, Texas	USA	13th - 20th November
WCIU, Pasadena, California.	Pasadena, California	USA	22nd - 27th November
Mid Atlantic Christian University	Elizabeth City, NC	USA	27th Nov. - 1st Dec.
New York University	New York	USA	1st to 6th December.