

End-month news February 2020 – by Jim Harries

Dear Friends,

An article I've just had published: Harries, Jim, 2019, 'Magic, divine revelation and translation in theological education in the majority world today (with a focus on Africa),' *Missionalia*, 47(2), 165-176. <https://missionalia.journals.ac.za/pub/article/view/265> DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7832/47-2-265>

Here are [a few seconds of video recording of the Coptic church](#) I attended in Tanzania on 16th Feb. 2020.

Having taught at the Bible school in Babati in Tanzania for just over a month, I left Babati on 13th Feb., arriving at Buhigwe in Tanzania (Kigoma Province, very near Burundi) on the 14th. I was travelling with a Tanzanian colleague, who made a very good travel companion and then fellow teacher once we'd arrived in Buhigwe. Buhigwe, we discovered, is now a fast-growing village, recently made the main town of a new district in Tanzania, so while very rural it had electricity (most of the time), and decent internet access. We ate and slept in an accommodation centre alongside a church building that could apparently sit 2000 people. I didn't count, but I should say certainly over 1000 attended the church on the Sunday (see video above). Saturday we taught a seminar to the youth of the church, Monday we taught the deacons, Tuesday was married-couples, Wednesday was other church leaders. Thursday we travelled 5 miles to give teaching to a nearby Coptic Church, and then Friday the same to another church 15 miles in the other direction. Saturday was a long day's travel to Mwanza, that is on Lake Victoria. Here I talked with the Mennonite bishop (an ex-student of mine) about how to help them with a theological education programme for their pastors in the future. I may well come back to do some teaching in the next few months ... Yesterday I arrived back in Kisumu in Kenya, and today (25th Feb.) plan to get home, visiting a few people in Kisumu on the way.

Trips like this are always learning experiences as well as opportunities to teach. Some years ago, a colleague told me, the Tanzanian government nationalised all church schools. The reason: because the schools were Christian, Muslims were getting left behind educationally. Making education 'secular' was a way of trying to make it available to Muslims. Ironically, that conceals how Christian churches continue to be the foundation for almost everything that is going on in Tanzania! ... I agree that the blessings of God should be shared with Muslims. My problem is thinking about how some Westerners have been so hood-winked by secularism that they no longer realise that the Word of God is the foundation for what goes on around them. It seems that we need to find a way of sharing good things with Muslims without concealing God's word or God's truth from view. **(See some pictures below.)**

Jim



My Tanzanian colleague teaching about marriage in the church



Procession into church on Sunday morning



A selfie, in the church



View of the Coptic Church building



Myself and one of the Coptic Fathers.