

Dear all

It is my privilege to write to you all again, I hope you are all well and enjoying the Summer! The weather here has cooled down quite a lot. In the night we are getting to a low of 21 degrees which is cold for us! There is always a cool wind during the day. We have had some rain which re-filled the rainwater tank. We have been very happy with how the rainwater system has been working. At the moment the water is sucked up from the tank into a pressurised system, the water goes through one particle filter and we are just in the process of trying to add a bacteria filter to make it safer. The water is used for drinking, cooking, washing clothes and watering the many trees and plants. Our crops are doing well after a bad start, and we have been able to pick the first fruits of the harvest. We planted tomatoes, 1.5 acres of beans, and 1.5 acres of green grams and maize mixed together. The maize did not do as well as the other crops. For many people it has been a bad season, as once again the rain was late; it came very heavy then stopped, so the crops sprung up and then died because of no water.

When we see the seasons come and go, we see the seeds being planted begin to grow, then finally, harvested and we see the goodness of God. Over 4000 years ago God promised Noah this would be the case; seedtime and harvest, seasons and days until the end of time. How dependent we are upon the mercy of God for our life, our food and our drink.

Here the people seem to be far more dependent; there are no government schemes or insurances to fall back on should God withhold His hand. If there is too much rain, the crops fail, if there is not enough rain, the crops fail. If there is a plague of rats or pests, the crops are destroyed and if you don't have enough money to replant you are relying on the mercy of family, friends and neighbours; or if you are a believer you bring your needs to Him who is able. This is what we find at our Saturday afternoon prayer meeting. Every Saturday a prayer meeting is held, and the needs are written on the chalkboard: "can we pray about the crops" one will say, or "can we pray about the rain". Last year we were praying that the Lord would intervene as the crops were being destroyed by rats and whole fields were being eaten. We have seen how God answers the prayers of His people and it was like this with the rats as a storm came soon after the prayer meeting filling their holes drowning many of them. Often family members and neighbours are prayed for, and often, one by one the people who are prayed for start coming to the church.

Three weeks ago our neighbour, who has not been into a church since 1995, turned up and sat through the Bible study and preaching service, listening intently. The following week he was not there. The next prayer meeting we prayed for him, then he came again and has attended since. About five weeks ago we brought a tree for a local family to be cut up to make doors. The father said he was a Catholic but had not attended a service for a very long time. We invited him to the service here. A month ago he arrived in time for the Bible study, asked many questions and stayed through the preaching service. After he said "I have never heard anything like it (the truth), no churches around here teach these things". He came again and on the third week he stood up at the end of the service and said "I have come to realise that I am not saved, although I thought I was, now I know I am not." Although these are great blessings to us, as people come to know the truth and very humbling to witness the work of God here, we have also seen the work of Satan. There have been some nasty rumours spread about us here. Gossiping and the spreading of lies is rife in this village environment. We have now fully formed a church, and have welcomed 4 locals into membership with us. We pray that many more may be moved by the Holy Spirit to confession and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mapema and Michael have been walking around the local area 3 days per week, getting to know people and telling them the Gospel. On their walks they've discovered some very sick/vulnerable people. One is a 30 year old lady called Agnes. She is bedridden with aids and has been deserted by her husband. Two of her children (12 & 7) were found looking for work they could do to earn money to feed their Mum and pay their school fees. They were brought to the mission and given clothes, food aid, and the church now pays their school fees.

Hannah, Elsie and the women who attend the church visited her and her elderly mother last week. They were in a very poor condition and it appears her rich brother wants them to starve so that he can have the land. It was a pitiful sight. They hadn't eaten anything for over 24 hours. We are keeping a close eye on her, though there is not much that can be done for her medically. Her children come to collect food aid regularly.

Elsie is continuing with the Sunday school each week, and up to 70 children come still. They have been learning about the Ten Commandments and new hymns like 'We plough the fields and scatter'. The Women's Bible Class continues on the first Saturday of each month. Though challenging, Elsie feels it has united some of the women of the church and helped them to address confusing aspects of their culture and look at what is right in the Bible instead of what is 'normal' around them. We hope and pray they will be able to become good examples of Christ-like people living in a place with so many false 'christians'.

It's been so good to have the landrover back after 6 weeks in a garage in Nairobi! It has a new (low mileage) engine and various other parts fixed. It feels like new to drive! Whilst it was being fixed we were left without a vehicle at the mission which meant that the weekly town trip was 20 minutes on the back of motorbikes to the main road, then matatu bus taking up to 2 hours to the town of Ukunda, often rammed with up to double the people intended for the bus! Then a 3 wheeled tuk tuk taxi round town doing errands and shopping, then home an hour and half in a little car taxi with cheery driver Ken! Various visitors from the UK quite enjoyed joining in the weekly trips, with Deborah and Gilly Devogel and Peter Devogel even deciding to take all 6 of the Gudgeon children to town to swim in a pool in this way! The children were happy!

The new house is now complete after 5 months work. Sam's brothers, Matthew and Richard came for 2 weeks, wiring the house and tiling the bathroom which was a great help. The Kingham family have moved in and are settling in well. Hannah continues to help out with cleaning the mission Church, classroom, clinic etc and helps with homeschool when she can. We now hope to do some concrete paths and hardstanding areas so we can walk to and fro without wading through the mud in the rainy seasons! Sam is still waiting for his work permit. This is causing some frustration as they are here on a tourist visa and keep having to extend it each time the permit is delayed. The clinic here is not officially open yet, however people can come if there is an emergency and are treated for free. As many of you will be aware, a few weeks ago a lady brought a 2 ½ year old girl suffering with severe malnutrition and dehydration. She had been getting 'help' from the witch doctor for the past weeks but had steadily grown worse. Sadly, despite doing what we could, she died in hospital a couple of days later. Yesterday a lady was taken to hospital with a snake bite and thankfully she survived, seemingly without lasting effects.

Sam continues to take the Bible class each Thursday and the regular turn out and zeal has been encouraging, with some joining in recent weeks. Three women also regularly attend. This week he went to the Maasai village again with Mapema and discovered a very different situation there to here at the mission. It has not rained there for months, and the landscape is very dry. All of the crops have failed and people are in real need of food aid. The Red Cross have been contacted but are unable to help, so we are in the process of trying to work out the best thing to do. It is well over an hour inland on bad roads, so logistically it is a challenge. We are also trying to arrange a temporary residence at the Maasai village to begin a work there.

In May Elsie, Florence and Daisy returned to the UK with Jesse for a check-up appointment in London. He has to return each year and half now because he is 12 and growing fast! The doctor wants to keep an eye on his spine and pain levels/medication etc. He keeps very well but had been experiencing quite a lot of pain at times, so we are thankful, since returning, he's responded well to his new, regular pain relief. Just before they left Kenya, Elsie had some concerns about her pregnancy. She was 21 weeks. Sadly, after having a scan in the UK it was confirmed the baby had passed away. Although this was a very hard time for us, being separated, we saw the mercy and wisdom of God in it all. Had it happened here it would have been a very

different story, the level of care and love she received from the staff, family and friends was very humbling, and arrangements were very kindly and discreetly made for her to bury the baby at the Dicker. She thankfully recovered quickly and was able to fly back 2 weeks later.

We once again thank you all for you continued interest and support.

From us all at the mission