

## **2014 visit to Mwitikira** **by Roger Whitfield**

Friday November 21<sup>st</sup>: Arrived in Dar es Salaam at 1:30 pm and was able to get in touch with our cab driver Frank. He was a little late but had his wife meet me. Her name is Rose and she is a young, pretty woman. Before leaving the airport I changed some dollars and got 1740/-, a good rate. We got into Frank's van and it all felt so familiar, the dust, the industrial development along the Nyerere Road, the awful traffic and the ubiquitous street vendors. Frank is well and he seems to have lost the limp he had last year. He did let on that he has diabetes and has lost some feeling in his left foot. I have booked into a hotel, the Tanzanite, I found with Expedia. It is new to me but looked inviting and relatively cheap - \$64/night incl. breakfast. It is on the Morogoro road and I expected it to be more attractive than the Florida Inn location and not so far out as The Passionist Fathers. As a location it was a disappointment; it is downtown in a heavily commercial area, close to India Street, which is extremely busy. The Hotel itself is clean and modern and my room was attractive and the bathroom good. They have a "No Alcohol" policy and signs are posted prominently on each floor as you leave the elevator. An anachronism is that they have an elevator operator; all he does is push the buttons, but there he stands, a mind numbing job. Also as you enter the reception area from the elevator, there is a door and a doorman! Service is OK, but I am not a Rajah. I ate in their dining room, an OK meal. Eating out is not good in Dar; read almost non-existent.

Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup>: Slept well, awakened by the call to prayers from a nearby Mosque. The hotel has a comprehensive continental breakfast, all-in. After a leisurely morning I went out for a walk down the Morogoro Road. It is part of the Bus Rapid Transit route, the new system Dar is building to deal with their terrible traffic problem. The road is paved with flat, smooth, high quality concrete awaiting the buses that are supposed to start running next year. It was hot and I was sweating pretty soon. I walked to Davis and Shirtliff, the generator vendor, to see how far it was. Too far for regular trips, so I will have to visit them next week by taxi. I had not planned on seeing anyone, but Adeline (Mwarabu) was there and showed me the generator in the warehouse. It is a monster.

I walked back to the hotel and shed my sweaty clothes. Ate the evening meal at the hotel.

Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>: Late start to the day and skipped going to church - not sure where to go anyway - and after breakfast went walking. Found myself going to the waterfront and the fish market where there is always great activity. The old smokehouse has given way to an area for the BRT as Dar lurches into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Adjacent to the fish market is the center of government with the President's House and many agency buildings. It is a wooded and quiet area, very different from the market. The trees made it cooler and I walked around a golf course and to the street where the large hotels are located. I stopped in to the

Serena and had a couple of beers, thumbing my nose at the Tanzanite's policy. Again ate at the Hotel.

Monday, November 24<sup>th</sup>: Using a cab, I went to D&S. Adeline had told me on Saturday that Lilian Kityege would be my agent. She is a young engineer and is cordial + speaks English well. We went to the warehouse and looked at the generator again and this time I had my tape measure with me. It is 18 inches longer and 4 inches wider than the specifications of the generator I ordered. Also the nameplate model ID is not the one I ordered. Lilian also announced that they did not have enough of the riser pipe I ordered and had not placed an order for more. It was déjà vu of old times when people did not do what they said they were going to do. The agent I had been dealing with while in the US had left D&S – later I learned he had been fired – and clearly had not put things in order. Lilian got the office's managing director (Ben Munyao) involved and they tried to find out what was going on. I left with promises of explanation and action.

While I was in the office, another customer came in and we talked. Somehow travel to Dodoma came up and I told him I planned to fly this time but had used the bus in previous times. He wanted to know why I used the bus and I told him “to save money” – it is \$10 vs. \$250 one way. He scoffed and said: “you'll just spend what you save anyway”. I'd never thought about it that way and began regretting all the hi-jinks I had missed in the past by using the bus.

Tuesday, November 25<sup>th</sup>: Back to the office for the explanations. Lilian had promised to call me, but by 2:00 pm I had not heard and decided to precipitate a meeting by going to the office. Lilian told me that the generator was the right one but that the manufacturer had changed the dimensions of the enclosure and somehow the information had not filtered down to the local offices and the brochures had not been updated. There were no generators of the old dimensions available! The MD got involved and said he was sorry. He offered other generators but they were all significantly more costly. I guess I am getting a good deal. The pipe delay is a problem; they said they will not receive another pipe shipment until Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>, beyond my departure date of Dec. 14. He promised to try for Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, but I will be surprised if they do it. I will have to change the pumphouse modifications for the new generator size.

Wednesday, November 26<sup>th</sup>: Flew to Dodoma on FlightLink. The flight left at 7:00am, but they wanted us in the airport at 5:30am. Frank picked me up from the Hotel at 5:00. My bag was overweight but they passed it. The plane was a 30 passenger Embraer turboprop, speedy and comfortable. We arrived in Dodoma at 9:00 and I went straight to the familiar Dodoma Hotel. They allowed me to go straight to my room that early in the day; I even tried to cheat by going to breakfast and showing my key, but they twigged me and I got a 12,000/- charge.

After breakfast I went to the CK office. Pastor Noah was in charge with Emmanuel Petro as his assistant. I also met Judy Crosby, their new administrative Assistant from Charlottesville. We had dinner together at the Dodoma Hotel.

Thursday, November 27<sup>th</sup>: John Joseph drove me to Mwitikira. We got off to a late start because Erasto asked him to go to the market and buy lots of supplies. The new road out of Dodoma is a monumental change, smooth riding all the way to Mpunguzi. As is typical in Tanzania, they have made liberal use of speed bumps to control traffic speed; it seems like there is one every couple of miles. Where there is a speed limit, it is 50 km/hr or 30 mph and is closely enforced. From Mpunguzi the road is the same cart track and really makes you feel going into the back woods. Just outside the village the women drummers had gathered and greeted us. They processed us into town with great fanfare. Happy welcomed us and I settled in to the back room.

Friday, November 28<sup>th</sup>: I am feeling rather isolated here in Mwitikira. Those nightly demons were working on me, telling me that I am being duped by D&S and that they have an ulterior motive giving me the larger generator. I have asked for a spec. sheet trying to assuage my suspicions and thought about contacting the Nairobi head office. I liken it to the feelings that I think marginalized people might feel, where the system does not work in their favor, and that it may even work against them. They can see places where the system does work in favor of some groups, so they know perhaps what is possible; but they do know it does not work that way for them. We all need a support system and it can be very comforting when one feels that the "world" is a friendly place; however when the world feels hostile or just unsupportive it can be quite draining. It is why family, friends or one's religion can be so important. Another reason for my disturbance is that my electronics are not working with me. The iPhone has been a disappointment, being difficult to get to "hotspot" and more recently not sending data. I used up all the minutes on my other phone contacting AT&T.

Saturday Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>. Yesterday it rained heavily. I was in Erasto's office trying to get e-mail to work, with no success. The day was grey and around 10:00am there was thunder and the rain started, lasting for almost 2 hours. A huge amount of it washed over the land and went who knows where - ?opportunity?. I was expecting lots of mud but the land is heavily packed sand and it was still firm underfoot. Some of the plots by houses looked a little more fertile and householders were out there planting a crop, just digging a shallow hole with a backhoe, putting in a seed and covering it up. After a late lunch of goat stew (good!) we walked to the well. At the well, I found that the village has built a large masonry tank for engine cooling water. They had trouble with engine overheating and cracked 2 cylinder heads before taking this step. The concrete base I requested had been poured and it looked good. I found that my 8-foot dimension for the room width was wrong; it is 105 ins. or almost 9 ft. On this basis I decided that we did not need to widen the room, avoiding re-building a wall and relocating the switchgear; thus all that was needed was to enlarge the plinth size to 48" x 98". We walked back. Had chips for dinner.

During the day I discussed Suzanne's request with Erasto for "C" student performance data to provide guidance to GMC regarding their support. He provided a perspective that I found cogent and thoughtful. He said that we have lifted the CKs up and given them hope. We have enabled a number of them to achieve a passing grade in the Standard 7 exam, and although it was not part of the original plan, we are faced with whether to continue support. "Generous donor" originally decided to provide that support CK wide, but because of other things, particularly funding limitations, CK decided to limit that support to A&B students. In this action, he has thrown the decision back at us. Steve's decision was based purely on funding limits and not on the "worth" of A&Bs vs. Cs. Erasto will provide the C student performance study but will continue to be an advocate of C student support by St. Paul's.

I also discussed the Msmarias business license issue with Erasto. His perspective is that the women do not see themselves as independent business people. They have not been able to penetrate the Tanzania market to any extent.

Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>: It is the end of November and this morning I arose at 6:00 and made myself meditate, first thing. It is so difficult because there is so much going through my head. Being in the village, experiencing their life and contrasting it with mine is such a challenge to my mind; being unable to use the Internet is just one of the things that brings it into focus. Yesterday, Erasto, Albert and I went on a tour of the water system. It alarms me how it has deteriorated since we installed all the new points in 2009. We started at the tank, which is still in good shape. A World Food Program truck had run over the pipe that carries water to the church and had crushed it. There was no isolation valve so the tank emptied. They installed a new length of pipe but it was a different size and they left it above ground. Using the money Woodville raised, they have installed a new point close to the cookhouse to replace the point in school grounds, but the connection to the church line was a strap-on fitting that was not done well and does not work. We walked to Mgomwa and there, both taps were inoperable. At Chilanjililo, one tap was inoperable and they had lost the key to the sump cover lock. The line to Chinyika was not working and their gate valve was missing, also the Utamini point could not be used because of the line fault. The dispensary point did have water – a puzzle – but only one operable tap. The tank there has not been replaced since its support failed. I was depressed by the state of the system. Tap failure is a big problem and they need the ball valve type but do not like the cost. Erasto seems to be the only one who cares.

After all the walking I was tired and hot. It was a humid and sunny day and I sought refuge inside after lunch, resting until dinner.

On the way back from the well on Friday we walked by Stanley's house. It had been burned down. Erasto explained how Stanley's wife and one of his sons were killed and his other two sons are still in hospital. This all happened in October. Apparently Stanley's wife had some spiritual powers and was accused by the

villagers of being a witch. She admitted to having killed two villagers by giving them poison. Because of the village's anger, they were advised to leave town, but Stanley would have none of it. His sons, living in Dar, decided to defend their home and bought some weapons, pangas. One night the sons and villagers got into a confrontation; alcohol was involved, and a fight ensued. One of the sons struck a villager on the head with a panga and killed him. Following that a group of villagers organized and attacked the house, using gasoline to set it on fire, killing Mrs. Stanley and one of the sons and badly wounding the other two sons. Stanley was out of town and came home to the scene of devastation.

Last night Halima came by. She has purchased a piki piki and is learning to ride it. She is a spunky lady and stands in contrast to most of the village women who are quite subservient to the men and are loath to challenge male turf.

Monday, December 1<sup>st</sup>: It rained during the night, not a lot, and the air this morning is much cooler. Yesterday it was most uncomfortable, very humid and barely a breath of air. In church I was sweating profusely. For breakfast Happy had prepared some chapattis and they were a welcome change from the bread and honey that has been breakfast fare for the past few days. Church was at 10:00 and I got there on the dot and sat in the line away from the altar. Rehema, the parish secretary gave me an English bible. It was the typical service with much singing but less dancing than previously. Erasto preached and Joseph read prayers. Poor Joseph, he did not pass his Form 4 exam and has to re-do the final year and exam. He had started his priest's diploma course work at Msalato and was doing well, but a new administrator there decided that he should get his Form 4 certificate before continuing; so he is here back in the village and I am not sure how he is going forward. He seems upbeat but Erasto says he was incredibly disappointed to fail the exam.

I received many thanks and applause during the service. In my short speech to the congregation I told them about Kate's decision to leave St. Paul's and sail around the world. They were shocked and could not understand why she was doing it. Erasto told them "it is her decision" but even he seems perplexed by what she is doing. We talked about it and decided that it is part of her development as a person and that should she decide to resume her priesthood after the voyages, she will be a better priest. He sees being a priest as a calling and as something he would never give up, so he struggles with the apparent discontinuation of Kate's calling. I have given him her e-mail address and encouraged him to contact her.

In the afternoon Erasto and I visited Alice and Joseph and saw the new Roger. He is a chunky kid and looks very healthy. His birthday is October 8<sup>th</sup>, so he is just 13 months old and is already walking. He does not say much, but seems very comfortable with himself. I noticed that he pee-ed in his pants. Alice did not respond in any way even though his jeans were wet and there were tracks on the floor. I did not think it appropriate to ask about diapers etc. but wondered how they handled such affairs here. He did not exhibit the typical bulge from diapers.

Later Happy excelled herself with cooking, preparing some pork by searing it and adding some small onions; quite delicious.

Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. (again, this is a reflection on Monday). Yesterday I got up early again and meditated, even though there were many distractions – cocks crowing, the school triangle etc.. I knew I was leaving for town in the afternoon, so it was a time for collecting thoughts and wrapping up details. I did get a bag size estimate from Rebecca, but not much else followed the plan. Somehow we got talking about Henry Ford and mass production – I was watching Rebecca prepare many swatches of stiffened cloth for glasses cases – and I tried to find my video on the Pontiac plant but could not. I ended up giving Erasto many of our slides from the visit to the Holy Land, and had to name many of them. All this took until 1:00pm, leaving just enough time for lunch and packing. John Joseph came at 3:00 and I took off, a little grateful that I was going to get internet time and plenty of battery charging facilities. On the way to Dodoma we drove through heavy rain after Mpunguzi. It was odd how localized it was, with some areas saturated and others bone dry.

I booked an air-conditioned room at the DoHo and am glad for it. I also gave them my laundry – 6 shirts etc. and settled down with a Tuskers beer.

Wednesday December 3<sup>rd</sup>: This morning is not starting out well: I found an envelope from Holy Comforter that I should have given to the CK office and it has a bunch of questions they want answered. Also I have not been able to make contact with Eunice. Judy was out yesterday – not feeling well – and I am wondering what support I will get from her, although she has been good in the past.

Yesterday! I am enjoying the A/C because the weather is very sticky and the A/C provides some relief. This was my day to visit the Institute of Rural Development Planning, Dr. Francis Njau. Erasto decided to come with me to the meeting and I am very glad he did because there was so much information and so many good ideas. The Institute is a large degree level school on the road to Arusha. They have 5000 students and one of their buildings is the highest in Dodoma. It is down the part of the Arusha road that is unmade, so it is rather an oasis in undevelopment. The European Union funded a 32 month project (700,000 Euros) to demonstrate how some rural communities may take steps to alleviate the effects of global warming on their lives. The project began in 2011 and unknown to us, Mwitikira was one of the candidates, but because it was not “desperate” enough, it was not chosen. Rather, the village of Chololo, near Chilonwa, was chosen and it has become a model of how village sustainability can be changed. Although it was cast as measures against climate change, many of the measures are applicable in general. Dr. Njau is the project leader – they have received a 48 month extension – and he has been very busy along with other experts. They call it the Chololo EcoVillage project. The project has made changes in agriculture and a large proportion of the community has accepted changes in livestock, water, energy and forestry. Change is difficult

and permanent change is very elusive. Dr. Njau has devoted his life over the past 3 years to this work and he still visits the village 3-4 times a week, plus he is an agricultural expert. Some of the changes, on the face of it, are simple, but getting their acceptance is the challenge. They have published an excellent brochure, of which I have a copy. Example: 1) changing the timing of crop planting from when the rains first start to after Christmas makes a huge change in the survivability of the crop, 2) rotating crops, 3) plant spacing, 4) tilling the land so that moisture soaks into the ground rather than runs off, 5) using animal dung as fertilizer, 6) collecting rainwater, 7) planting trees. Some of the things are more complex and may require some funding or training to implement: 1) generating biogas, 2) high efficiency wood-burning stoves, 3) drought resistant seeds, 4) improving the breed of cattle, cows, goats and chickens, 5) leather tanning, 6) land use planning, 7) solar power for water supply. It is a bewildering cornucopia of ideas and short of implementing such a project in Mwitikira, one is left wondering what to do. Fortunately Erasto heard the story and was taken with it. He has many copies of the Swahili version of the brochure and will discuss it with the village. Perhaps we can coordinate with them and develop a plan to take advantage of some of the things presented. Dr. Njau stands ready to help, but we cannot expect a clone of their EcoVillage Project.

It drizzled for the rest of the day so I took advantage of the chance to catch up on e-mails. I am bothered by D&S unwillingness to grasp the project. They have not told me who is responsible for it, so our plans are too fluid and are too easy to have responsibility evaded.

Tried contacting Eunice – my bad for not doing this sooner – and could not get an answer from her. But she did reply later and we are to talk tomorrow at 10:00.

Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup>: It is 8:00am and I feel as if my day is just evaporating. I awoke about 5:30am and worked myself up into a tizz about my preparations for unloading the generator at the well site and lifting it into the pump house. There has been a lot of rain and the ground is getting soft, particularly where the crane and truck might have to park. The generator weighs 1250 kg (2750 lbs) and is bulky. Also there are trees around the house and the ground is uneven, all of which will limit the flexibility of the truck and crane operators. Perhaps my best option is to try and do everything from the road that runs to one side of the house, but it will need a crane with a long reach. I have asked Pastor Noah to meet with me and discuss this.

Yesterday was a little unreal. I had talked with Rev. Daniel Fweda, the new (new in 2012) priest at Chilonwa about coming back to his village for a visit. Erasto is in town and he was interested in visiting too and planned to combine it with a visit to his parents who live close to Chilonwa. John Joseph drove us there; the road had been significantly improved since 2011 and although it is a long way, it is fast travel. Daniel had submitted an itinerary to Erasto and it included a tour of the system and some lunch. I was not ready for the welcome; it was the full treatment. A crowd of more than 50 were waiting at the secondary school with drums and whistles and

they processed us to the church. Fr. Daniel and his wife, Karyn, treated us to tea and chapattis – he is a great guy and his wife is very beautiful and vivacious, also there was a heavy downpour during breakfast – and then we went on a 2 hour tour of the system. It is currently not operating because of many breaks in the pipe. Daniel has taken upon himself to get the system up and running again but he is stymied by lack of money and skills; the repairs, as I found out years ago, are not easy. We discussed some things he could try and he seemed pleased to have someone to talk to. I think I was some help. After the tour the festivities started. They have renovated their church and it is now a very welcoming space. About 300 were gathered in the church and they all applauded my entry. The CK committee was there and well over 50 Kids. Five choirs sang songs written for me, and their performance was exceptional – makes Mwitikira look like amateurs. Lots of speeches and a manifesto written in my honor and read to everyone there. All this followed by a good meal. I was quite overwhelmed, particularly since the system was not even working, but I guess just showing up is often all that is needed. Erasto left to go to his family and I drove back to Dodoma with John Joseph. He does not speak English and I have forgotten all my Kiswahili, so it was a silent trip. I asked Judy to have a beer with me to help me decompress, but she is not a great sounding board. So here I am, trying to commit it all to paper.

I really like Daniel. D&S has appointed Lilian Kityege as the project coordinator. I am not overwhelmed but hope to be surprised.

I went with Pastor Noah to see the crane he has found for us to use. It is a truck with a boom crane behind the cab. The boom is extendable 3-piece, with a max. length of around 20 feet. It can handle 3000 kg, comfortably above the 1250 kg of the generator. The operator, Deo, seems eager for our business and gave me an all-in price of 450,000/-. Since the truck is capable of transporting the generator, I evolved the plan of transferring everything to this truck in Dodoma, perhaps lowering the charge from the Dar-Dodoma trip and having one less vehicle at the site. My concern is that Deo does not have any straps to put around the generator, rather he is proposing to use chains and protect the gen. from damage by putting old tires between the generator canopy and the chain!! I lost some sleep thinking about that, but the current plan is to use him.

Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>: Last day in Dodoma for a while. Lilian has written that the pipes will arrive in Dar on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>, 3 days later than I had hoped for. I made up a new schedule and figured that leaving on Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> will not work and thus, reluctantly, called Ethiopian and changed the departure date to Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>. It costs \$150 and I have to go to their office and pay it. They will accept payment on Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> and I have the reservation.

Yesterday I did meet with Eunice. We talked for over a couple of hours. She is a little frustrated that the Msmarias are resistant to trying new activities and are content to stay with the current way of conducting their business. I summarized the meeting in a note to Susan.

Today, Erasto was returning from his father's and I met him in town. He was to call the Dar shipper and apprise him of our plans but, inexplicably, he did not receive the text I sent him from the iPhone. He called him right away and everything seems to be in order. A good break is that the shipper's truck also has a boom crane and is willing to unload and lift the generator into the pump house, all included in the 1,700,000/- price. We accepted this arrangement and cancelled the deal with Deo (I gave him 50,000/- for his trouble). I feel better about this since this shipper will already have had experience lifting the generator and has the right kind of slings.

Erasto took 200,000/- and bought food in the market. We will be eating well!!

Frank drove me to Mwitikira. While Erasto was shopping we went to a café (the Point) and had lunch. I had Samaki, a fish fried in aromatic spices. Although it did not look inviting, head, tail and fins still in place, the meat was excellent. Good arrival in Mwitikira: no drums and cheering crowds, just Happy and Rebecca at the door. Grass is beginning to grow here and the landscape is looking a lot more inviting and gentle.

To bed around 9:00 after a good meal of grilled pork. Sandra called and we had a long conversation. She is very busy with the move arrangements and I was able to help a little with some contacts. Since it is next to impossible to access the Internet here, she will have to soldier on alone. Finished "Blue Highways" by William Least Heat Moon and I feel like I have lost an old friend. Started "World Order" by Henry Kissinger and it lacks some of Heat Moon's warmth and humanity. Heat Moon is a bold man: his marriage had failed and rather than sit around and mope, he set out on this journey with intentions to meet and engage people. The resulting book suffered 8 re-writes and innumerable publisher rejections, yet he prevailed and got on the NYT Best Seller list. It puts me in mind of Wilson, one of the craft hawkers in Dodoma. Wilson is different in that he makes his own wares. His craftsmanship is not considered to be high but he is the most persistent salesman. He lives 60 km outside Dodoma and travels into town 4-5 times a week. He is a small guy, always impeccably dressed in natty colors and his English is very passable. The Dodoma Hotel allows him access to their common areas and he is almost a fixture. He approaches all western travelers and, from what I can see, is frequently rebuffed, but he keeps at it. He does not have Heat Moon's talents but shares his optimism and tenacity.

Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>: Today I am in Mwitikira and it is a beautiful morning. I slept well and have had a good bath. I am catching up the blog, so cannot reflect on previous days because I have already covered them. I bought a bible yesterday and will spend time preparing my sermon for tomorrow.

Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>: Still in Mwitikira. I spent much of yesterday on my sermon. Such things are always a challenge to me, particularly when I do not have access to resource material and have to rely on my own creativity. The Bible I bought has just

the biblical text, no commentary. Erasto has a bible with commentary, but it was more geared to the significance of the text, e.g. this passage can be used to comfort those under stress etc., rather than interpretive comments, and is of more value to someone in a pastoral role; so I am still on my own.

There was a wedding here yesterday afternoon. I was not invited but decided to attend simply as a member of the congregation. Moses and Sophia were getting married. Moses is Evelina's (Happy's sister) son and Sophia is from Singida and they met on the Internet!! Sophia is quite beautiful, young and deferential. She was here with her mother who is a Helicopter Mom. She was all the time adjusting Sophia's veil, the folds in her dress, her smile etc. etc.. I must say that the dress was spectacular, snow white taffeta and a 6 foot train and the Mom was well dressed too, so Moses is a lucky man. The service – Erasto officiating – had many steps in it and after each one there was dancing and singing. Happy was wild, jumping up at every opportunity and luluing, twirling a stole and doing the “strut”. I determined to sit and watch from the rear of the room but could not keep it up and decided to join the dance. There were a few cheers and perhaps relief that the mzungu quit being aloof. The church ceremonies did not end until 7:30, so we did not go to the reception. Later Matthew came by and reported that Moses and his sister Shukrani (?), the Msmaria Shukrani, had got into a fistfight in front of all the guests and his new wife. We all wondered what that meant and how it would flavor the nuptials. Erasto said that new couples do not go on honeymoons.

Joseph talked to me yesterday. He is a man under some strain and asked for some help. I did not commit. Apparently Alice has to have babies using a C-section; all three have been birthed this way. The government pays for the procedure, but it takes her a long time to recover and she is unable to work to produce food. Joseph says that having to buy food vs. grow it puts their household under considerable strain. I am sympathetic but need more details, e.g. Alice is one of the Msmarias and should be able to do that work.

Our intent was to visit the well yesterday but there was too much going on.

#### Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>:

Off to an early start yesterday, writing out the sermon by hand. I talked about God's faithfulness and being quiet while waiting for Jesus to come. Erasto translated for me and it seemed to go well – no booing. The service was a Eucharist; that and the blessing of two grave markers made for a 2½ hour service and it was hot in church. I believe I dozed off a couple of time and hope it was not noticed. After the service we went to the graveyard to put the markers on the grave stones; a simple ceremony but with many members of the family being present and all putting a flower on the grave. Erasto, the old rascal, had me re-bless the markers, as if I had something special to offer. Happy had prepared lunch so we had a quick one and then went to the celebration the family was holding, which meant a second lunch. That and the heat, I was done for, but there was a church elders' at 4:00, which I had

to attend. So much for the day of rest. The meeting with the elders went well as I assured them of our continuing support. They again wanted to know about Kate and, understandably, are fascinated by her choice.

Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>: A clear but slightly hazy day after yesterday's brightness and beautiful fluffy clouds. The stars last night were brilliant and many.

Erasto and I went to the well yesterday morning to explore removing the roof to allow that as access for the generator. It looks like a big job since the roof trusses are let into the building walls. Entry of the truck to the site from the E-W road looks straightforward and the ground appears firm. It also appears possible for the truck to approach the pump house without crossing ground where the system pipes are buried. On this basis our preferred option is to gain access to the building through a large hole in the sidewall, avoiding the complexity of roof entry. We pray that the rain will hold off until this stage is completed.

I am tensing up as the date for pipe delivery approaches.

As I write this, the women are outside sweeping the ground before our house. They do this each day to collect the leaves that have fallen during the day. Women's lives here are bound by so many duties, cleaning the house, collecting water and firewood, cooking the meals, washing clothes and the men contribute nothing to these activities. It feels like a confined society. Esta, Erasto's daughter, will be 14 on Saturday, and I asked him whether she had a boy friend. He said "no" and that she is instructed not to have one, and boys are similarly instructed. The fear of a pregnancy leads this; a pregnancy outside of marriage dooms a woman in a rural community; even in town it can create huge difficulties for the woman's future.

We went to the well and Chairman Albert was already there with a crew cleaning up the pump house. They began knocking a hole in the sidewall and made good progress. An oxcart arrived to take the old flourmill engine powered generator back to the flourmill. Hope and pray we never have to use it again.

Today is Tanzania's Independence Day anniversary and is a holiday. The schools are out and the CK committee has organized a celebratory lunch for the whole CK contingent. They were all there in the church except for: 17 standard 7 kids who took the exam, 12 passing with a "C" and 5 failing, plus 7 Form 4 student who have taken their exams but have not yet received the result. Both Erasto and Joseph took the occasion to lobby for supporting students passing the standard 7 exam with a "C". Nonetheless, it was an impressive crowd and good to realize the benefit St. Paul's has been to their lives. Again there were many speeches of gratitude, a number of the secondary school students having good English skills. They are building laboratories to encourage science studies but have no lab equipment promised and 2 students asked for help. One student asked for a history of CK and I responded. A CK committee person asked about justice in the US, citing the shooting by police of a child with a toy gun. I tried to describe our racial history and how we

are still victims of it. Food figures big in these celebrations and I have already had 3 large meals and one more yet to come.

Thursday December 11<sup>th</sup>: Today is a clear but slightly hazy day, with no rain imminent. Somehow I missed reporting yesterday. Perhaps it was my concern about word on shipping the pipes.

Yesterday we went to the well and Stephano has done a nice job cleaning out the pump house and washing down the walls. It is ready for the generator. Continuing with yesterday, Erasto came late to breakfast because he was dealing with a person possessed by a demon. He had been awakened at 5:00 and asked for help. He has a committee that is constituted to address demons and they had all been at church praying with this person. I could hear the prayers and the shouts of the one possessed. He says this is a frequent occurrence in the village and it can be a demon sent to someone by someone else or a failure of someone to obtain protection. Magic and demons are a part of rural life and people place faith in witchdoctors and their "ability" to provide medicine to enable things to take place. As a Christian he does not subscribe to this culture but he has to contend with it. It made me think of how we make intercessory prayers and are comfortable with things we don't completely understand; I guess the difference is that we trust God to provide the help rather than some other source.

At noon I received a message from D&S (Lilian) that the pipes are held up in customs at the Kenya/Tanzania border and we should not expect them before December 15<sup>th</sup>. This is making me crazy. I talked it over with Erasto and we decided to request shipment of the generator immediately, proceed with that installation and do the pipes later. The jobs can be split but I was trying to do them together to have a complete job to do and avoid double trips by the technicians. D&S has responded and yesterday evening the truck was on its way, arrival expected around noon today. I have not received a firm schedule from Lilian for the installation crew, but Friday travel has been mentioned.

The Msmarias, Erasto and I met to discuss the business registration issue with them that I had discussed earlier with Eunice. It was a cordial meeting and provided a different perspective from the one I received from Eunice. The Msmarias seemed more progressive than the picture Eunice painted, willing to develop business in Tanzania and not expecting Susan to do all the selling for them. They also are receptive to obtaining a business license but they saw a few obstacles with which they wanted help. It exemplifies the difficulty of US/Tanzania communication. The Msmarias seemed grateful for the chance to talk about their work and invited us to dinner that evening. They say they like working with Eunice, but I wonder.

God is good, keeping the rain off. A heavy rain could make unloading the truck impossible.

Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup>: Another clear day although it looks like the humidity is increasing with perhaps some rain possible. Since the two days of rain early in the month there has been none. A number of farmers planted their seeds when the first rains came; their plants are popping up and the sun is killing them, all their efforts wasted.

The generator hauler drove overnight and arrived in Dodoma early in the morning. He completed the journey to Mwitikira by 10:00am and drove up to our compound. A large crowd gathered in no time - a lot of them were kids skipping school - and began chanting and drumming and cheered me as I came out of the door. They insisted on processing and dancing before the truck as it made its way to the well, taking almost an hour to get there.

At the well the truck was able to get close to the pump house but the opening we had made in the side wall was not large enough, although we could get the generator part way through it. The crane operator asked for part of the roof to be taken off and he hoisted a young villager on to it - the guy grasped the hook and was lifted up - and he proceeded to pull the nails and removed 3 sheets of the corrugated iron. After that it was simple to position the generator on the concrete pad the village had prepared. It is truly a monster and takes up much of the pumphouse floor space, although there is enough room to work around it.

Once it was in place there were the obligatory speeches but Mr. Albert, the village chairman added a nice touch asking everyone to put their hand on the generator and bless it. There it sits awaiting the D&S installation crew. Lilian is being evasive regarding the timing of their arrival.

I changed my flight from Dodoma to Dar and could only get Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>, which means I will need to leave the village on Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>. It thus seems increasingly unlikely that I will see the pipes installed. I will be grateful to see the generator start up.

Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup>: Another clear but slightly hazy day; no sign of rain yet although the wind is not quite sure of itself, which is often a sign of impending rain. The landscape is green and has a pastoral quality that I do not remember. It does not have the lushness of an English scene but is such a welcome change from the brownness of other seasons. Everyone is busy preparing for his or her crops. It is a delight to see newly ploughed land and to imagine the promise. The generator sits there with no further action to date.

Yesterday Erasto went to Dodoma and left me in Joseph's charge. We walked to the well and back, like concerned parents. There was no activity; we are all awaiting news from Davis and Shirtliff. Lilian has promised to give me the name and phone number of the installing technician (fundi) but at noon I had not heard from her, so I called. It turns out that the fundi has fallen sick and is in Mwanza receiving care. She did not have a proposal and was still unsure of the pipe delivery. I demanded that she find someone to install the generator before I left Mwitikira on Tuesday and

she agreed to get back to me. She did, saying that she expected the pipes to arrive in Dar on Sunday and that she would ship them to Mwitikira on Monday along with the pipe and Generator fundis with total installation to take place on Tuesday. Not what I wanted to hear, but I determined that I could gain an extra day (Tuesday) in the village if I used the bus to travel to Dar on Thursday. It means I forfeit my airfare but seems like the best thing in the circumstances. What is it: Hobson's choice? Erasto is furious at what is going on and has demanded the names and phone numbers of all the shippers and fundis so that he can keep track of their location and actions. It all seems to be cascading into a mad rush at the end, something I had hoped to avoid.

There is a music teacher here from a town north of Dodoma and he is teaching the choir some new songs. They worked on two for over four hours. They have no sheet music, so the tune and lyrics all have to be committed to memory. Also the "moves" have to be taught and learned. The moves look simple but to look good they need some grace of movement, something not everyone has!! When it is all in place, it will be a show.

Sunday December 14<sup>th</sup>: Another sunny but hazy day. Dark clouds came close yesterday but did not drop any rain. Maybe today. The village is getting short of water. The system has not been running for almost a month now and they have been relying on the water that collected from the earlier rains, but that is getting short and also contaminated. A farmer has a well and sells water to villagers at 200/- per bucket vs. 50/- from the system. He does it reluctantly because it is for his crops. It is hard; here in the compound they had a 2500 liter tank full when I arrived and it is now almost empty. We got word yesterday that the pipes have cleared the Kenya/Tanzania border and are on their way to Dar es Salaam, where they will be loaded on another truck along with other materials and sent here. If all goes well, they should be here late Monday.

Erasto just mentioned it yesterday, but the septic tank for his house had collapsed from the rain earlier this month. He is having another dug while doing things in a not completely sanitary way. Their trials seem endless.

Yesterday was his daughter, Ester's, birthday. To celebrate, she and her friend Priska cooked lunch for family and friends, two varieties of rice, veggies, stewed chicken and pineapple for desert. She was 14 and is exhibiting significant woman skills. Over the past few days she has been working in the church on their altar hangings – they don't have our marble and mosaics and rely on satin cloth hung in various patterns to provide the focus. It is very elaborate effect and shows some of her maturity.

This lunch was rather late, around 2, and then the church elders prepared dinner in my honor at 6. This was a full-blown affair with 10 dishes, including chicken and beef. Earlier in the day Erasto and I had visited a parishioner's shamba (farm). It was a long ride on the piki-piki (he still does not have a seat or foot rests for the

illion rider). This parishioner is a retired government worker and was given his land by the village council. To me it does not look like good land, more like hard clay. He has drilled a well and has plans to irrigate. He has a large network of drip irrigation pipes that sit above ground. Some how I believe he is going to have to loosen the earth to make it effective. He does have chickens. They are in chicken runs and are fed commercial feed rather than fending for themselves, as is so common here. His wife fed us 6 very fine eggs, and this was before Ester's lunch. Lot of food yesterday!!

Mwitikira is big. We must have travelled 5 miles to get to the shamba. Villagers farm the intervening land, so there is a lot more cultivated land than is apparent to a village visitor. I would guess most villagers have 5-10 acres to farm.

Monday December 15<sup>th</sup>: It is getting increasingly hazy and hopes for rain are rising.

Yesterday was a quiet day as one would expect for a Sunday. It was also Election Day for village leadership – Chairman and Village Council. In the run-up days there were sound trucks going through the village urging them to vote but yesterday seemed like very few were responding. Erasto said he wasn't even registered. I went to a polling booth to see the action and there were just two elderly people voting. They use paper ballots and stuff them through a slot into a big box.

Many of the catechists were working the polling booths so the morning service was light on helpers. Joseph preached and the choir performed their new number. Both went down well. At the end of the service the parishioners gave me a fine carved nativity set, which was a welcome change from the more usual clothing. There were many kind words of thanks and good wishes for St. Paul's.

Later in the day Erasto and I strolled through the village intending to visit Mr. Kenneth, the former Water Committee treasurer, but he was at his shamba. I was surprised to see that he had a large herd of cattle. We continued the stroll to Mr. Jackson's house, the Parish Secretary and a primary school teacher. He also was not there and too has a large herd of cattle + goats, all signifying some wealth. Erasto cautioned however that it is not a secure wealth because disease can easily wipe out a herd. When the cattle are not out foraging they are kept in a small enclosure at the owner's house. One can imagine that anything contagious will spread quickly. The ability of villagers to accumulate secure wealth is very limited. Erasto mentioned how Mpunguzi has developed since being connected to the electricity grid; there are many new businesses there and he now uses many of them in preference to going to Dodoma. Mwitikira needs that kind of spark.

On the way home the election results were announced and there were crowds out celebrating. I guess there was more poll activity than I thought. Mr. Albert was re-elected.

Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>: Another clear but hazy day. The village waits for rain. Those who planted early, when the first rain came (Nov. 29) have lost their crop and will have to replant. Also the green ground cover is beginning to wilt and show more of the sandy soil.

Yesterday was a day of waiting, waiting for D&S to show their hand and their commitment to a schedule. Erasto and I talked to them early in the day and it did not sound promising. The installation and pipe fundis were still in Dar waiting to catch the bus and the pipes were on the way from Arusha. They did not appear to know that Mwitikira is 40 km outside Dodoma and is a significant trip. They have made no plans for that trip. We told them that the bus to Mwitikira leaves at 1:00pm and 2:00pm, which means that the fundis would not arrive until the afternoon today. I insisted that they make plans to get here in the early morning – so I can observe the gen. start-up before leaving tomorrow – but I have little confidence it will happen.

Eunice came yesterday to meet with the Msmarias and me. The meeting went well and ended with an agreement for them to proceed with business registration. The Msmarias are very shy around me but they seem to enjoy being around Eunice. They have a big bag of goods for me to bring back.

In the afternoon Erasto and I walked to a new church that he is building, replacing an old, mud building. Stephano, the well pump attendant is the building committee chairman and was there supervising work. They are laying the concrete floor. I understand now why so many concrete floors here have large holes in them: the laying procedure is to make a base of hard packed sand and then cover it with a veneer of cement. It is truly a veneer, not much more than paper thickness. Like a veneer, it looks good but does not have the durability of solid concrete. The weight of people is not a problem, but a dropped chair or bench will fracture the thin cover and a hole will begin. The sand bed provides no support for the cracked cement.

Walking with Erasto is an experience. Everyone greets him and seems to have an issue to discuss. He gives them all the attention they need and they revere him for it. We talked about his and Rebecca's visit this coming spring and he wanted to know what the parish would like to learn from him. I gave him a few ideas.

We have the name and phone number of the fundis coming from Dar. At 8:00pm Erasto spoke to one of them. They were still on the bus. Amazingly, we learned, the pipes are on a BUS from Arusha. I have no idea how the fundis and pipes will connect with each other!!! We keep praying for some commitment to our work.

Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>: Another clear and hazy day and yet no rain. Briefly yesterday afternoon there were some dark clouds but whatever rain fell fell in other than Mwitikira.

Somehow things coalesced yesterday. Overnight, the generator fundi had arrived in Dodoma, but was still planning to use the bus to come to Mwitikira – and the bus does not leave until 2:00pm!! We interceded and arranged a taxi for him and he arrived with his gear at 10:00am. After that it was a breeze; he made sure all the generator life fluids (fuel, oil and water) were present, made the electrical connections and, bingo, we're pumping water. It actually took a little longer than that, so it was more like 2:30pm before the water flowed, but it was straightforward. We do still have to replace the pump riser piping – the piping that carries water from the pump 230 ft. up to ground level. There is still uncertainty about them. The fundi who is to install them is in Dodoma but the pipes themselves are on a bus from Dar (yes! Dar, not Arusha!!) and supposed to arrive that evening. Again we plan to intercede with transportation because of D&S's wooden headedness and hopefully today the whole job will be completed.

There was much relief and long lines at the water points that afternoon.

Continuing with Wednesday, in the afternoon: I have arrived in Dodoma and on the next to last leg home.

This morning the pipes and the fundi arrived, thanks to Erasto arranging transportation again. They started work at 10:00am and were finished at 1:00pm, so the work on the system is complete, talk about a cliffhanger. Again lots of speeches, prayers and handshakes; it is tempting to trivialize all the ceremony but I truly believe there is deep gratitude in the village and a desire to remain in touch with us.

Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup>: The morning is clear and although there was some thunder overnight, there is no sign of any precipitation.

Yesterday evening I settled the transportation charges with Pastor Noah and then met Judy Crosby for a beer. The CK office frequently loses Internet access and earlier in the week they were without power for 2 days. When this happens she goes home and it is frustrating. Her father died last week of complications from his Parkinson's disease. It happened quickly so she did not have the opportunity to go back home. The separation from her family is taking a toll on her psyche during this time. Fortunately she has a friend from England coming to visit over Christmas and hopefully that will lift some of the burden.

I slept well in the Dodoma Hotel A/C room and had an early breakfast. Erasto kindly promised to come to town and see me off; I welcomed it because he can deal with the bus issues that my lack of Swahili makes difficult. I went to MacKay to complete my payment to Pastor Noah for transportation and while there, Erasto arranged a brief audience with the new bishop, Dickson Chilongani. He looks like a small man and greeted me cordially. Erasto had primed him on what I was doing and he asked some good questions, particularly about the use of solar power. I made a pitch for Carpenter's Kids but he made no affirmative or negative comment. He doesn't have Mdimi's sparkle and seems to me to be more of an efficient administrator. Since he

did not get a handover from Mdimi, he said he is making a top-bottom evaluation of all diocesan activities, using a UK consulting company Codat. When this is completed – 2-3 weeks - we can expect some statement of his priorities. Interestingly, it was the first time Erasto had met him.

Shabiby has some new buses and the driver was more tempered than my previous experience. It is still however a grueling trip, 8 hours and a constant fight to deal with the traffic and road conditions. This Dar/Dodoma road is heavily travelled by commercial traffic, large trucks and gasoline tankers – there are no pipelines from Dar inland and all fuel has to be transported by truck. The trucks are heavily laden and travel slowly compared to bus and car traffic. Since the road is only two lanes, there is a constant tussle to pass the slow movers. When we get close to Dar there are many villages, which further slow things down. Tanzania has chosen not to have police patrolling the roads for traffic control, rather they use speed bumps to slow things down. They seem to be every two miles such that a journey is a series of accelerations, braking and jolts; not in the least restful.

Frank met me and, at his recommendation, took me to the Rainbow Hotel. It was \$60 per night for an A/C room. Compared to the Tanzanite, I thought it came in second. Indians run it with little imagination. Although the room was large, it was neglected and it was missing drinking water and shampoo. There was a safe but they advised against putting money and jewelry in it, just documents, so that they would not be held responsible for theft. The evening meal was forgettable and again, like the Tanzanite, no alcohol.

Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup>: Slept well but eager to get last minute things done.

First thing was to pay Ethiopian for my flight date change. Frank took me to their office and the first surprise was that they had not changed my reservation per my earlier phone call. Somehow we worked through that but the next surprise was that the charge was \$300 vs. \$150 from the earlier call.

Next was the meeting with Davis & Shirtliff. I had e-mailed Lilian and agenda and we went through it in a cordial way. Since there was work remaining – no big stuff – they agreed to holding back \$200 of the final payment. I asked them to pay the Ethiopian flight change charge and they agreed to take it to their general manager. They agreed to respond promptly to any village concerns, but the proof of this will be in their future performance.

At last to the airport and thanks to Frank for his care of me.