

Friday, 04 July 2008

Dear Friends of Uhuru

July at around 28oC is classed as 'winter' here – never quite sure about that though it is nice to sleep under a couple of sheets at night.

The cooler, wetter weather seems to be favouring one of God's created little creatures, the mosquito, and we are experiencing a lot of malaria; I have never known so many mosquitoes in the room at nights. Thankfully thus far back in Kenya I have not been affected but many of our youngsters have with frequent visits to the hospital, and of course a resultant medical bill. Amazing the influence one tiny little mosquito can have if it manages to get inside the mosquito net at night.

Newsletter Trevor Birtle had hoped to get a summer newsletter out at about this time, but sadly his daughter Katy has been taken quite seriously ill; please pray a quick recovery for her.

General My return to Kenya, May 19th, went well and apart from finding a few nasty shocks regarding finances, things here were not too bad.

I usually sing the praises of Kenya Airways but I have to say for this flight that I was very impressed by the service, friendliness of British Airways, no lost bags even though through Terminal 5, good food and talks with cabin crew making the long haul flight a pleasure.



Bob Aston pictured left, has been very unwell so much so that at one point I really feared. He is now living in Nairobi with his aunt; I visited him there whilst I was in Nairobi and was a little encouraged by what I found. Sadly his condition deteriorated again necessitating an hospital admission, thankfully he is now back with his aunt and he sounds to be improving

Schooling generally seems to be going quite well. We have 34 youngsters in primary school, 23 in secondary schools, 6 in polytechnic/colleges, 2 at universities, and 3 at Jua Kali (craft training). Sadly we have 5 who have completed secondary schooling and must wait funding to proceed to college or university. Currently there are 16 a living in the Home, the remainder of the above are supported in the community. To avoid any wasting of time and money the guardians and children supported in the community have been told that we will only continue to support them if they maintain a certain school performance standard.

Politics Things in Kenya are not bad, the political situation seems settled but I would not go as far as saying is 'sorted'. There have been a few skirmishes here and there, but none of any large scale. Clearly the horror we witnessed in January and February was the result of long standing divisions with deep feelings of injustice and anger ignited by a belief that the presidential election result was rigged. The depth of anger resulted in over 1000 people killed and more than 350,000 displaced.

Kisumu is being rebuilt though the scars of the violence is still very evident The photo on the right is of the compound of one of our near neighbours whose home and property was torched. The picture below is of a burnt out hotel, named Kimwa, at Kondele some 2 kilometres from us. Kimwa was once, I believe a 200 bed



roomed hotel, now just a burnt out shell. It is said that the owner, a Kikuyu, died of a heart attack upon learning the news of the attack.

It is good to see some of the shops that when I left which were gutted are now either open or being

rebuilt. No such progress yet with Format Supermarket, pictured on the right, which was one of the largest supermarkets in Kisumu.

Clearly the consequences of the violence are there not only to be seen but also felt with more people out of work, and many displaced – one sees long queues of several hundreds of displaced persons waiting for food vouchers at Nakumatt supermarket.



New Children We have taken several new children who in one way or another were very badly affected by the violence. One such young person is Gilbert (2) a 14yr old, pictured on the left. He had been living in Nakuru with his parents and siblings when in January they and many other Luo's in the area were attacked, their house ransacked and burnt. The last he saw of his mother and father was of them being severely beaten by the mob. Gilbert was also attacked by the mob and slashed with a panga, a large machete type knife; evidenced by the scars on his scalp, Gilbert fled and was among other



displaced persons living for weeks in the main Nakuru police compound. He is does not know the whereabouts of the family and whether dead or alive. We are working with the children's department, police and Red Cross in an attempt to trace his family. I am sure the psychological scars are there, but as with most youngsters here who have experienced tragic events of such magnitude, Gilbert shows very little outward sign of distress.

Vitara my now ageing vehicle once again has many problems, a bit like its ageing owner! The driver's side door lock for the umpteenth time dropped inside a few weeks ago to be

followed shortly after by the one on the passenger side, a few days later, as though in sympathy, the tailgate boot door lock just suddenly stopped locking. The windows once again do not wind up nor down properly and the suspension is feeling a little suspicious. Our garage has told us that they cannot repair the lock as they can no longer get the spares. We have just paid out almost 200 pounds on repairs and I think we have reached a stage where we are chasing repairs and never really catching up with them.

Finance Kenya along with the rest of the world, but probably the more so due to the recent violence, and protracted drought, in addition to the affects of the world fuel rise costs etc. is experiencing terrible inflationary pressures. Officially it is now estimated that since Jan 1st of this year there has been a 31% increase in basic food and commodity prices. This clearly has its worst effect upon the poor, but is also badly hitting us. There was an interesting comment in the Nation newspaper here a couple or so weeks ago by the British High Commissioner in Tanzania following the budget there, he is quoted as saying that the Tanzanian total budget represented the equivalent of one third of the value of money for food thrown away each year in the U.K. When I look around and see, smell and touch the widespread poverty around it just make me cry, it is a criminal indictment of the West and I just fear for the West and its future.

For us over the past six or so months we have seen some increase in committed funding, for which we are truly very thankful, however this has been more than offset, not only by the above factors, but also from a fall in the pound sterling exchange rate, though thankfully, for us, this rate has started to increase again. Last month our transfer from the U.K. was 460 pounds down for the same amount of money transferred this time last year.

Caleb Mbori my manager, and I have already started drawing up the known financial expenditure we face for the rest of this year, as well as budget heads for next year, not a cheering picture, but we know that we have come through much difficulty in the past, and I believe in God we can come through this too, though we may have to take some tough decisions to do so

Personal I am booked to return to UK on Aug 10th; I brought this date forward from Sept 21st. There were several reasons for making this decision. One of these reasons, and the most exciting one, is that a fourth grandchild is on the way. Naomi is expecting her second child late January 2009 and I very much want to be closer at hand than Kenya for this. I hope to return to Kenya for approx 4 weeks mid November and to be back again U.K. before Christmas. If this goes to plan then I would look to come back to Kenya mid to late February 2009. I am looking forward to spending some time with Thelma and the rest of the family and to celebrate a certain birthday with Thelma.

It was good to be invited to speak at the Hexham Rotary in May and there to be presented, with the Paul Harris Fellow award, this was a total surprise and I considered it a great privilege. We are thankful to both Hexham and Tynedale Rotaries for their recent donations. With their grants we are going to install a wood burning stove which should be far more efficient and cheaper than our current charcoal stoves, also a little more environmentally friendly.

A big thank you to all of you for all your interest and support, some of your support I know is very sacrificially given.

May you each be very blessed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Terry