

helping
the poorest
help themselves



the mutunga partnership

the mutunga update
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Nkosi Sikal'el I Africa!

God Bless Africa. Let her spirit soar.

Barb and I are now in London fresh from spending 11 days in Kenya. What an amazing 11 days it has been!



We have spent time with our local partners in Tala and Kangundo and Mavoko and Kitengela. We have met with and commissioned the local board and initial staff in Kenya. We have had the privilege of interacting with some of Kenya's brightest and best. As impressive a collection of under 35's as you could ever meet - and elders with such wisdom.

The women are the centre and the strength of communities, and are proving, as I expected, to be the worthy beneficiaries of our generosity

and compassion. These days have been perhaps the most useful days of my life- ever! We have been exposed again to the reality of chronic poverty, its scourge, its shrinking of human dignity, and its fellow travellers: disease, hunger, destitution and slavery of the mind. But this shields a treasure, deep within the human spirit: the ability to create, to innovate, to survive and to retain some sign of human dignity. **There is so much more to the poor than their poverty.** In the West we know so much about how the poor die. We know very little about how they live!

In the midst of all this tragedy, there is hope, and there is the smile and the laugh of the poor, in defiance of all the forces that would diminish and destroy them. Today provides opportunities and, with a helping hand, tomorrow promises something better for the mothers, their children and their fathers. MUTUNGA is now becoming that helping hand, and the hope for tomorrow is the creativity and ingenuity of the poor in Africa as they work hard to shape their destiny. Ours is the privilege of partnership with these special people:

the evidence of the very image of God, the most fundamental ingredient that we all share in common.



In Tala we met a health professional – Monica. She has established a health centre which cares for over 400 babies and their mothers each month, in addition to delivering birth control education, immunisation programmes, ante-natal and post-natal care, child health education, and dealing with women living with aids. She has one assistant! Her premises are rented, cramped, dingy, without electricity, and woefully inadequate. And the more patients she caters for the higher her rapacious landlord puts her rent up! She has a vision for a new health centre, with a small maternity wing where she can provide quality services for mothers in their confinement. Monica is a qualified nurse, she was

formerly a researcher with the health commission, but she felt she just had to respond to the needs of the poor, so she left her secure employment to start this centre. It is the trend-setter in this area where there are two other health centres, and no hospital for 65,000 people! Her husband Pearson will be working as a trainer and finance development officer in Tala and Kangundo- one of the first two projects. I first met him 13 years ago on my first visit to Kenya. They are an impressive couple, and are representative of the sort of people with whom we will be working to deliver services to the poor.

We have gained so much from our meetings with partners here and with the poor whom we shall all be assisting. We have been told that our initiative is timely; that it is necessary and urgent, that it is an answer to their prayers over a long time; that the time to have begun was the day before yesterday! We have been told that our approach of service and partnership pays respect, encourages responsibility and engenders discipline and enterprise. It is what they have hoped for. We have invited the people here to join with us in this journey of faith, and they have responded in like manner. Needless to say we have been challenged, humbled, inspired and energised by these words and return

to Australia with renewed confidence in this vision its relevance and its origin in Almighty God. As a hand meets a glove, our vision in Australia has found its home in the testimony of people in Africa who have been praying for and anticipating its coming. I feel like I've been walking on hallowed ground.

Now to the business end of things! Our visit and interactions here have pushed things a quantum step forward. Because the need is so great our partners are being approached to open up many new fronts. The projects are likely to build thick and fast. Therefore I need to encourage us all to redouble our efforts to work to raise the funds necessary to support them. We have set as our goal the establishment and funding of 20 client communities by the end of 2006! Our launch in November is crucial. Please plan to be there, invite other interested people (invitations available from Jill Vanaria). And please pray for the launch as well as the entire venture.

I would ask you all to set aside Monday 14th November as a day of prayer and fasting for The Mutunga Partnership. Join us if this is convenient, and if you can, meet with us corporately at 16 Paxton street for an hour of prayer at the end of the day. On my return, I'll send further details.

Sorry for the length of this one, but I thought that our first 'field trip' deserved some space. The personal last word is from Barb.

"Our reunion with Jonathan, Katrina, Beck and others has been sweet. As we walked towards Beck's apartment to meet her, she jumped out from behind some bushes with a yell of greeting! We sobbed with joy on each other's shoulders.

After almost a week here I am still trying to process a head-full of our 11 days in Kenya. It was encouraging, disturbing, shocking, beautiful and overwhelming - all at once! I'll highlight a couple of examples.

Along a 6 hour drive to Garissa near the Somali border we witnessed lots of people begging for water along the roadside. In Garissa we toured a new school and missionary training college run by an 'indigenous' African mission. We also discussed micro-enterprise ideas with honey producing women in mind. As it was Ramadan, the call to prayer could be heard often in the town. At about 1am I could hear Morris snoring. Soon after the call to prayer hours of singing and praying



could be heard all over town. "Peace at last" was my hope as I settled down to sleep near dawn. But alas the cat was hungry and meowed loudly in hope of being fed so as to feed her 3 babies. The rooster wouldn't be outdone nor could the school bus which departed from the driveway by our window at 5.45am each day to collect students from all over town for school. That sleepless night was followed by the return 6 hour drive to Nairobi [no tooth-brushing as there was no water running in the morning] with people again begging for water along the roadside plus the sight of people digging for water in dry riverbeds. Those impressions will never leave me.

A few days earlier we met about a dozen church leaders in Tala to discuss Micro Enterprise proposals. These were met with much enthusiasm. At the end there was a closing prayer and suddenly huge drops of rain could be heard hitting the roof. Then it bucketed down, the first rain since April. We all burst out laughing. "This is a sign of God's blessing!" they exclaimed.

The needs are overwhelming and the thought of meeting those needs and paying the workers to facilitate that is just as scary. Only God is able as we trust in Him to bring about continuing transformation in Kenya as well as in rich countries like Australia.

Look forward to seeing you soon! Barb"



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