

Report on Visit to the ECD, June 2007

Companionship Amidst A Renaissance Summary of our June 15 to 29, 2007 visit to the Eastern and Coastal Diocese By: Bob and Deloris Langseth, July 2007

There is a renaissance taking place in the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of Tanzania with which we are partners due to our Companion Synod relationship. A revival of learning and architecture began in Italy during the 14th century and spread to other countries during the 15th and 16th centuries. It marked the transition from the medieval world to the modern. Seeds of a similar renewal are evident on the shore of the Indian Ocean where the Eastern and Coastal Diocese (ECD) is located. RENAISSANCE IN THE CITY: 2007 marked our 7th companionship visit. We had last been in Tanzania in 2004. But when we returned in June of '07 our senses were shocked by the renewal of Dar es Salaam's center city. Two skyscrapers now dominate the skyline of this 3 ½ million population. It reminds us of the twin towers in New York City prior to the 9/11 terrorist attack. Their blue-glass exteriors, just 3 blocks from Luther House, radiate a prosperity and a visionary future that was absent three years ago. And the huge construction cranes dotting the heaven's indicate this is but a beginning.

RENAISSANCE IN THE LUTHER COMPLEX: The heart of the city has been, and continues to be the city block of the Lutheran properties, i.e. the 3 story ECD office building, the Luther Hostel and the cathedral with its open space. In 2001 our Synod provided \$10,000 to renovate the interior of the hostel. When the 7 story bank buildings and hotels across the street redid their exteriors with an attractive creamish-yellow coating the diocese responded. New orange slate shingles were put on the cathedral. And all three church buildings were painted in the same cream-yellow as the neighbors. It brought the ECD facilities into the 21st century and brought the core of the city into one harmonious whole.

RENAISSANCE IN SPIRIT: There is an interior renaissance taking place as well. The cathedral initiated morning devotions that begin at 6:30 a.m. with singing until 7. Then Scripture, a devotional message, and prayer for the workers and events of the day occur. At 7:30 the benediction sends them out to be a blessing in their daily work.

Bishop Malasusa indicated that this draws anywhere from 600 to 900 people five days a week! Indeed, on the morning I spoke the sanctuary was jammed, people were standing in the vestibule doorways and about 100 people were in the balcony. What a renaissance of the Spirit!

One business man testified to its effectiveness. "I came to Dar three weeks ago, heard the 5:30 call of prayer by the mosque, and asked myself why weren't the Christians doing something similar. At 6:30 I heard the bells of the cathedral, got out of bed and I've been here each morning since. I belonged to the Pentacostal fellowship when I came but I am going back as a Lutheran Christian."

RENAISSANCE IN THE DIOCESE: During 2001-2003 the diocese was in turmoil and finally defrocked its new bishop. The negative publicity led to despondency in the lay people and clergy. Since the election of a fresh bishop the Holy Spirit has brought positive change.

Every district and congregation which we visited was positive, eager and excited about the future. An entrepreneurial spirit has invaded the hearts of the people. There are visions of new sub-congregations, new hospitals, new schools, new

service projects, new continuing education efforts for the evangelists, parish workers and clergy. And a belief that money will be available to undergird these efforts. The yearnings necessary for a renaissance are present!

Bob was requested to lead a study with the district pastors, evangelists and parish workers. He used the paragraphs in our ELCA constitution dealing with the Word of God. The ELCT does not have the distinction between Jesus, the Gospel, the Bible and the creeds as different aspects of the Word Of God. So our ELCA constitution is new to the 200 of them and it brought forth considerable discussion.

RENAISSANCE AT KISARAWA: Big changes have, and continue to take place at the Kisarawe Lutheran Secondary School for grades 6 – 12. After the era of socialism there was only one desk available in Tanzania for every 50 students who completed elementary school.

Thus, the government asked the ECD to build a secondary school and the ECD asked our synod to help construct a library.

The initial library consisted of two wooden fruit crates tipped on side with several dictionaries and teacher manuals. But no student had a textbook! We responded with 5 work crews and about \$180,000 in cash to construct a 33 ft. wide X 100 ft. long X three story tall library. The written mission statement of the diocese is that this shall be a model for eastern Tanzania "in serving 720 students, 72 teachers, 200 non-academic staff and their families plus the surrounding community." The exterior was completed by 2005.

However, there was need for a insulated ceiling to deaden the downpours on the steel roof, gutters and cisterns to harvest the rain from this roof, a computer lab, a large generator to provide steady electricity, cooling fans, tables, chairs, and desks. The synod applied for a grant of \$240,000, and received it, from USAid: Schools and Hospitals Abroad. A major focus of our visit was to check on these issues. We rejoice that the diocese replaced the architect/engineer who oversaw our earlier work crews. There has been a true renaissance in quality control, financial record keeping, and timely construction. We brought back financial invoices that should satisfy the synod's auditor.

In view of the quality facilities, the diocese replaced half of the school board, fired several teachers who were ineffective, engaged a disciplinary headmaster who kept tabs on attendance, grades and payment of fees. Parents were brought in to assist the school board. The joint decision was to double student tuition and double the salaries of the teachers so that this school could complete with the public school salaries. The tuition increase resulted in a temporary drop in enrollment. (Our synod provides a few scholarships but there is a desperate need for more.) The fruit of these decisions is apparent. We were guests at three classes and helped teach two. There is a renaissance attitude of purpose, meaning and innovation both among students and among teachers.



On June 26th, Deloris and students opened boxes that contained \$20,000 worth of books provided by Rotary International. These texts were selected by the faculty and approved by the government office for curriculum. These are new texts on math, biology, chemistry, civics, English, and history all in the English language. The books were arranged according to grade level. They covered the entire 45 ft. wall of the library 4 shelves high! For the first time in their life students held a NEW textbook. The reaction of the students was one of awe and delight! Presently, the average school in Tanzania has one text for every 7 students. At Kisarawe there will now be 1 text for every 2 students. Higher test scores are now anticipated.



Also, on June 26th, Bob initiated the computer lab by providing a Bible lesson on "God's Plan Of Salvation" using photos from the Bethel Bible Series. For the first time in their lives 37 students touched a computer and used the "up" arrow to follow the pictures under Bob's directives. Bob says, "It was like experiencing Genesis 1:1. In the beginning was... the computer."

Our synod applied for a second grant from USAID. \$200,000 was authorized for the construction of a kitchen and dining complex to feed 400 people at a setting. The cement slab and ½ of the pillars are up. Finlandia University students helped lay the foundation blocks. The exterior is scheduled to be completed by October 1, 2007. The renaissance continues!

RENAISSANCE AT TUMAINI UNIVERSITY: The diocese "inherited" a sub-standard university in the center of Dar es Salaam. But it also has been turned around. In just two years the university enrollment has grown to 996 students. Bishop Malasusa is chairperson of the board and while we were there the board heard the desperate need to expand and decided to double the teaching staff and seek facilities that will accommodate 2000 students in 2008. Our synod offers an \$800 scholarship for a teacher at Kisarawe to upgrade their skills at Tumaini.

RENAISSANCE IN SCHOLARSHIP PROCEDURES: In view of the increase in scholarships for students and incentive programs for teachers our synod has requested improvement in procedures for providing scholarships. The School Board agreed and will develop the application forms. Those procedures will include a formal approval of need by the headmaster, a photo of – and a paragraph by – the student, along with requirements for corresponding with the donor(s) twice a year to report their progress

Malasusa is pursuing a change for teacher incentives. Scholarships train teachers who then are offered public positions at a high salary and leave Kisarawe. He is considering rewards in salary and housing for teachers whose pupils increase significantly in the national test scores.

A RENAISSANCE QUOTE:

" With a minimal investment in basic Education, billions of poor people can 'leapfrog' into the world of instant Communications and become part of The 21st century's global economy."

-Kofi Annan

U.N. Secretary General

RENAISSANCE IN THE MWANGAZA TEACHER CENTER

While in Arusha we visited Mwangaza. The center is in the first segment of evaluating all the schools of the ELCT. Seelah visited Kisarawe in May and noted that it is still recovering from its period of instability. The school needs improvements in salaries, housing and transportation in order to retain teachers. We provided her an update on the salaries, the new textbooks and the computer lab. We are to email her photos of the books and of the computers in use. Seelah informed us that the government has opened 400 or more secondary schools this past year. But instruction is terrible. Many teachers only receive one month of training before being placed in the classroom. Even so, these instructors receive \$400 salaries and some pension benefits. Trained teachers are in high demand and receive good salaries. This is the competition which Kisarawe must meet.

Seelah is concerned that new schools are being open but not quality controlled. She believes there must be upgrading by every diocese in the schools they already have and again be a model for any fresh developments.

One week at Mwangaza costs \$270. The center is capable of handling 3 teachers per year from schools like Kisarawe.

Three new programs are available. One is a community based program for women and children dealing with conflict management. The second is for women and men and deals with health and HIV issues. The third is computer partnerships.

Teachers in the Iowa synod have partnered with teachers in Tz. for the past three years.

They have developed joint lesson plans that meet government standards and are now available on line to any teacher in Tz. In June the Iowa folks come to Mwangaza to meet their counterparts face to face. With the internet available at Kisarawe, the teachers have the potential to do the same with teachers in our synod or other parts of the world in upgrading their skills.

The diocese should be alert to this possibility and consider incentives for usage by the Kisarawe faculty.

A RENAISSANCE IN CONGREGATIONAL CONTACTS:

Bishop Malasusa has requested Mr. Ngeliama --- the man who came to study how credit unions operate here in the U.S. and who stayed with Jean Hannemann --- to be the coordinator of congregation to congregation matches. That will be excellent as Jean is our synod coordinator for such matches. We believe this will lead to much improved communication and newness in our attempted match ups.

FOUR INFORMATIONAL PIECES

- We worshipped at the Kijitoyama congregation to express thanks from the synod for their enrichment of our people. In turn, they thanked us for the experience and their exposure to our rural lifestyle. The choir reiterated that they were very busy

but they expected such because this was an evangelism journey. They all were able to go to work the day after arriving home. They expressed amazement that there was no public transportation, nobody was walking, people left their doors unlocked and that dogs were pets in the house rather than watch dogs. Their three top joys were the Soo Locks, Mackinaw Bridge and Bond Falls. They provided us lunch and their four choirs each presented two numbers for our enjoyment.

- The Mtoni school for the differently inabled is building 2 new classrooms in their present location. They have also received land near the airport to construct a second unit as the government recognized Mtoni's skills and will put monies into this new facility.



- The Mkuza Women's Center's new dorm is being used for conferences and has received the excellent furniture which our synod and others help pay for. There is strong desire for a secondary school in the area and plans are being laid to develop this as a school for both boys and girls. Some are concerned that Kisarawe be developed into a first class school before the diocese begins another.

- The presiding bishop of the ELCT is ill. He is undergoing surgery out of the country. He has sent an email to all 22 diocese with the suggestion that they consider Malasusa to be his replacement. The ELCT will meet on July 18th with election of a bishop as one of the agenda items.