

****Report on Visit by Graham Pountain - October 2024****

****Flights:**** I once again traveled with Turkish Airlines due to their competitive pricing and short flight times. Both the outbound and return flights were on time. For the internal flights, I used Air Tanzania, which also maintained a punctual schedule. I carried two bags, each weighing 23 kilos, along with hand luggage totaling 8 kilos and a shoulder bag of 3 kilos. On the outbound journey, I left home at 7 a.m. and arrived at Bethany at 9 a.m. the following day. For the return trip, I had an overnight stay in Dar, which cost \$40, plus 15,000 Tsh for a meal and 20,000 Tsh for two taxi fares.

****Agriculture:**** My visit coincided with the start of the rainy season, bringing long cloudy spells with occasional downpours. Jesca informed me that they were waiting for the first substantial rain so the tractor could begin plowing our land in preparation for planting maize and other crops. This finally happened toward the end of my trip. The children were often busy early in the morning watering the vegetables they had planted.

Emmakulatha spoke to me at length about various issues, particularly the urgent need for a secondary school for girls. This topic was included in the agenda for our Annual General Meeting (AGM) held during the last weekend of my visit. Jesca, Nick, and baby Nathan seemed very happy, although Jesca was struggling with itchy eyes and lack of sleep. She looked forward to when Nathan would be able to sleep for longer periods!

****New Children:**** Jesca agreed to accept eight new children who arrived during my stay, and I had the opportunity to take photos and videos of each group.

****English Lessons:**** It became clear to me that the staff needed to improve their spoken English and comprehension skills, as many adult care workers felt embarrassed when attempting to speak English due to children laughing at their mistakes. The same applies to the teaching staff. During this trip, I focused on the nine Standard 7 leavers who were waiting for their results before starting secondary school in January 2025. We covered 147 idioms and worked on retelling Bible stories in their own words. The idiom they found the funniest was "drop dead gorgeous," which was challenging to explain. They also assisted me with afternoon lessons for the care workers.

****New Work:**** Mwita and Kulwa Chacha were busy with three main projects: refurbishing the old toilets in the girls' dormitory into storage rooms, renewing the hand wash basins in the dining hall, and tiling the washing area for pots, pans, plates, and cups. These projects were completed before I left.

Sarah John (Ezekiel) was preparing to leave for university, where she will undertake a five-year medical degree. She was learning to use a secondhand laptop and a very old mobile phone, both essential for her studies. We wished her well and prayed for her as she embarked on this five-year journey, hoping she will return to Bethany qualified, potentially to help establish a clinic for the surrounding area.

****Arts and Crafts:**** The children were divided into eight groups to work on their chosen projects. A video of their creations can be found below.

****Sogeska Secondary School:**** It appears that Bethany is facing issues with some male staff at the secondary school, who are suggesting inappropriate relationships with our girls. Jesca, Winifrida, and Happiness visited the school to warn the teachers about the consequences of such behaviour. This issue is compounded by the fact that some older boy students, some in their early twenties, are also involved. Adding to the concern, both Form 2 and Form 4 students are required to live at the school, sleeping on mattresses in the classrooms.

****Maintenance:**** Most dormitories are equipped with their own solar systems, providing light during power outages. However, the solar power is limited and insufficient to power appliances such as irons or kettles.

****General:**** Overall, the children seemed very happy and enjoy our primary school. However, those in secondary school, particularly the girls, expressed dissatisfaction with their education, but little can be done to address these issues, as the school is government-run and we must adhere to their regulations.

Graham Pountain