

TANZANIA

On September 5th, 22 doctors, dentists, pharmacists and nurses set out from Scottsdale Bible Church to give medical and dental aid to a small Massai village called Mairowa. We flew about 30 hours and landed at Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. Our “hotel” in Arusha was about 100 miles from Mairowa. Electricity in our “hotel” was working 50% of the time which meant mostly cold showers and lousy food. This was to be sleeping quarters for the next 8 nights. We purchased about \$10,000 worth of medical supplies in Arusha which was waiting for us upon our arrival. Our little village was located 2 1/2 hours (about 100 miles) away over very primitive dirt roads in the bush to the primitive Massai tribe.

The first thing we noticed was the people. They were very tall, thin and sweet. After getting the jetlag cured, we started making the long trips to the Massai village. The first trip was very eventful with two trucks having flats and one making a wrong turn on the dirt road which resulted in a very long detour as there are no road signs.

The people were all trying to be seen at once. The crowd was waiting by the doorless clinic and all the small children came out to greet us with smiles and grabbing our hands. This we found was to be a normal daily occurrence.

There's no way to describe the multitude of medical problems with most being very thin, malnourished, filthy and tired. They had similar complaints that we have in the States, plus a lot of coughs from the smoke inside their huts. This is where they do all their cooking with no ventilation. The women do all the work getting water, food and caring for the children. We saw mostly young people (six to ten years-old) herding the goats and cows while the men, who do no work, were out of sight.

The first night returning from Mairowa to Arusha we failed to get back to town before nightfall and had three road blocks to navigate through (which is not the best of situations to be in). We decided not to let that happen again!

The next day I, my two great nurse helpers and three interpreters, again saw a slew of people. There was malaria, parasitosis, chronic coughs and a lot of women with muscle aches and weakness due to dehydration and malnutrition.

Every day heralded an adventure. One evening, the nurse who was working in my room decided to take a photo of one of the guard houses we passed. Bad idea! She was pulled from the Jeep and marched into the guard house with the guard wanting to handcuff her. Our driver was able to talk them out of it after she erased the picture and showed them the rest of her pictures of Tanzania from her camera.

We held clinics daily, both medical and dental, daily seeing as many as we could and unfortunately we still had to turn people away. Part of the mission was to observe the Child Food Program our church started last year. I had taken on an infant's feeding for

one year and wanted to see how well the mother was doing. The child was looking remarkably well. It was fantastic to meet the mother and hold her baby!

We had an opportunity to take an emergency into the Arusha hospital one night. A three-year-old was vomiting with blood, dehydrated, had diarrhea and terrible tenesmus with prolapse of the rectum. The Lutheran Hospital we took him to was very nice by Tanzanian standards and was able to diagnose Ascaris and re-hydrate the child. The bill for four days was \$45. Since the daily income of the Massai family is \$1, you can see they could not begin to pay for it. The last day, Carol and Chris Nahn, M.D., who were leading our group, were given a rooster by a lady in the village as a present. Now that brings back the days of old medicine.

Looking back on the mission, it was personally rewarding with many wonderful memories of the people who are in a terrible situation. The children are just beautiful with large eyes that look into your heart. The awesome burden that one didn't quite do enough is overwhelming. There is more, so much more, to be done.

Barbara A. Berry, M.D.
President