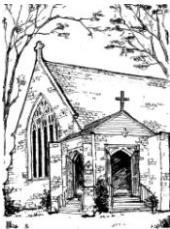


*Mally's African
Sabbatical
Adventure*



August 12, 2007-September 10, 2007



Christ Church Parish
Seeking Christ in Ourselves
Serving Christ in the World

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From Sunday, August 12

All packed up and ready (?) to go

Hi All,

We are almost packed and almost ready. Yes, a day later than my "more than you wanted to know itinerary" said, so I was off a day. We are only going for 7 days, so we'll be back on track soon.

Anyway, Thursday we hired a guide and wandered through the banana plantations with coffee and beans and other crops growing beneath the canopy, rich dark soil, well tilled. And spotted with homes and farm animals and people. Walked by the teacher's college and many local schools just as classes were getting out. The streets were crowded with children of all ages on their way home, dressed in the colorful British style uniform of each school. We have decided not to take picture of the people because they really don't like it AND they are not like lions on safari. So I don't know what we'll have for photos. We went up to a 30 meter waterfall and though an outdoor exhibit of the plight of the Chugga people--quite a moving history of oppression and victory. Ancient gods and traditions and modern hope, ending with a statue of a little boy peeing with the motto, "Don't piss upstream," a plea to take care of water and land. We ended our tour with a trip to the market--all sorts of fruits and vegetable, clothing and household goods, I bought a batik fabric from a seamstress and Anny got a cup and spoon to take on the trail. People eager to show us the different beans and spices they were selling. Friendly and

busy. We wound our way down through the permanent shops and back to Marangu Hotel quite tuckered out from all the sights and sounds, and our guide, Frank telling us over and over to ask him any question--a lot to take in.

Yesterday we went with our new Belgian friend Lud (her family is climbing), to Amani Children's Home in Moshi and spent the afternoon playing with the street children who live there. It's a wonderful program we can tell you more about when we get home. We did painting, drawing, coloring, played Uno, did puzzles and played Connect 4. Kids were engaged and charming. Quite good artists. We hung their pictures along the wall so they could have an art show at dinner. Eager to help us learn Swahili. It was sad to leave and they wanted us to come back tomorrow.

The next big adventure, the mountain begins as soon as I get off this machine and finish packing. Anny is filling water bottles and taking care of last minute details, so I'd better go.... Sorry, it is not well spell-checked, just pretend you are reading Swahili! [editor: typos were corrected!]

Peace,

Mally

From Friday, August 17:

Just Done It!

Hi All,

OK, so despite our best efforts to keep you advised of our whereabouts at all time, we were persuaded by the hotel management to go for a 7-day climb instead of an 8-day climb, so we actually summited Thursday at 8:30 a.m.!

We started our climbing "day" Wednesday morning at Horombo Hut (12,500 feet), climbed to Kibo Hut (15,500 feet), arriving at 3:00, had popcorn, arranged our climbing clothes for inspection by head guide Octavian, crawled into our bunks (in a bunkroom shared by 10 others and wind whistling through everytime someone walked into the room, which was about once every 2 minutes) and rested until dinner at 5:00. At 6:30 p.m., we turned in for the "night". We were awakened at 11:00 p.m, chowed down on tea and biscuits, donned our 4 lower layers and 7 upper layers, neckties, balaclavas, hats, headlamps and other appropriate fashion accessories.

After our last trip to the "long drop" pit toilets, we started up the trail at 12:00 midnight with our trusty guides Octavian and Konrad. We trudged "pole pole" (slowly slowly), one foot barely after the other over fields of scree for hour after hour under a flawless canopy of stars, with the only other light being the flickering headlamps of climbers zigzagging ahead of and behind us across the mountain, and the distant lights of the Kenya-Tanzanian border in the far distance.

Mally reminds me (this is Anny typing) this is supposed to be the short message, so we'll cut to the chase. At 6:10 a.m. we crested the edge of the crater at Gillman's Point, where we joined a crowd of revelers who were singing, hugging, crying (oh, that was us), taking photos and waiting for sunrise. After 6:30 sunrise through the clouds, we set out on the trek along the icy crater rim to Uhuru Peak, the undisputed summit of Kilimanjaro at 19,341 feet. We arrived there at 8:30 a.m., spent a few minutes taking in the amazing surroundings of ice and snow and glaciers. We then took the requisite victory photos, and headed back via Gillman's Point, then started the descent through boulders, rocks and scree (which could sort of be skied straight down like very dusty and dense powder snow). Actually, if we had climbed in daylight and seen what we were facing, we never would have done it!

After being joyfully greeted by two of our porters just at the edge of camp, we reached Kibo Hut at 12:00 noon, had a 1-hour nap, lunch at 1:00 and left at 2:00 to hike back to Horombo Hut, where we arrived in time for a 5:00 p.m. 5-gallon two-bowl "hot water for washing" bandana bath. We had just crawled into our sleeping bags when Mally's porter, Josef knocked on the door to announce dinner in the dining hall. e ate in a trance-like state, said goodnight and crawled into our bunks by 7:30 p.m.

Today we hiked the remaining 12 miles back to Marangu Hotel where we'll be for the day and night tomorrow. Mally leaves Sunday morning for Kenya and Anny leaves Sunday evening to return home.

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Thank you for your thoughts and prayers which propelled us to the summit (even if they were a day late!).

Peace,

Mally

From Monday, August 20:

Maseno, Kenya

Hi All,

Sister Anny & I parted at 6:20 am yesterday, after the alarm failed to go off and I scrambled around to get ready in 15 minutes. Anyway, she stayed at Marangu Hotel for the day waiting for her evening flight. I had a day of travel from Kilimanjaro to Maseno, Kenya--two plane flights, one in a little prop plane, a taxi tour of Nairobi which included a walk around Uhuru Park, the equivalent of the Boston Common or Central Park right in the middle of the city, where they were setting up for a giant outdoor church service with visiting evangelists. Many families in their church clothes were out enjoying the green space. Next we went to the snake park to view Africa's finest, again many families touring the exhibit. I was the only white person there. And finally I had lunch at a Nairobi tourist delight--The Carnivore--enjoyed crocodile and ostrich along with regular barbeque delights.

Arrived at Kisumu airport about 6:30 pm and was greeted by Nan & Gerry Hardison. Gerry drove in true Kenyan style (makes Boston drivers look tame), from Kisumu up to

Maseno in time for dinner with two young women, Zuma & Julie who were leaving after two weeks here working with Gerry in the hospital. They had made (delicious) enchiladas as a thank you to Nan & Gerry. We arrived at St. Philip's Seminary where the Hardisons live and I am staying by about 8:45. They showed me to my room in the guest house and explained the system of meals, keys, water, etc. and left me to unpack and fall into bed.

Today (Monday the 20th) dawned clear and crisp with mother and baby goats grazing outside my back door--now it is clear and hot! The seminary is hosting a conference for lay readers and evangelists, so I have been on my own. I puttered and explored the compound (took a nap) and had lunch with the young men who are sharing the guesthouse and boiled and treated drinking water. Then I set out to explore Maseno and find the Cyber Cafe. So here I am, a little dazed and looking forward to being in one place for the next ten days or so.

If you want to learn a little about the issues facing modern day Kenya, I recommend *Unbowed*, by Wangeri Maathai. I will write specifics about life here after I've experienced a little more. Am just beginning to meet the professors at the seminary and the staff around the grounds. Met some women from the Mother's Union, but didn't have a chance to talk to them. Tomorrow I think I am going to the hospital with Gerry. I feel very safe and welcome both in the

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seminary and in the town, but everyone says not to be out at night, so I won't.

Hope all is well with each and every one of you!

Peace,

Mally

From Tuesday, August 28

Maseno II

Hi All,

Am back at the Cybercafe plugging along at a snail's pace, but glad to hear from a few of you. This morning I went to a meeting of part of the Mother's Union which organizes the church-based feeding program for local orphans. There are 35 parishes, 15 of which are funded to offer on Saturdays one meal per week along with classes and games to orphaned children, about 350 children per parish. So on Thursday, the women gather to receive baggies of nutrition-laced flour-like substance (I still can't quite get the name) and an envelope of cash to go to the market and get whatever else they need to feed that week. Thursday is market day in Luanda where we met. The meeting involved singing and praying, reports from the churches who sponsor the programs and from the directors. Lots of thanks and back patting and reminders that the program is not for profit by anyone! Many women had walked over an hour to be there for the half hour meeting and then go to market.

Tomorrow they will cook, Saturday do the feeding and Sunday they will be leaders in their churches--many of them have children of their own as well as housing 4 or five orphans. All of this is volunteer work--pretty amazing. Saturday, I will go and visit some of the locations of the feeding and help where I can, but they really don't need much help! (Note: there are still 20 parishes which need funding for their orphan's meal--\$4500 per year gets the meal; another \$4000 gets visits from the mobile clinic.)

Sunday, 20 churches of one of the deaneries are gathering to worship together and collect their quarterly offering to the deanery. I have been invited to preach to the gathered people (400-1000 of them!), so pray for me as I prepare a sermon on Jonah in the belly of the whale and Revelation 1. They do Morning Prayer here almost every week because it is so expensive to buy bread and wine. The Church of Kenya requires that churches buy official altar wine which used to be cheaper than table wine, but now it is more expensive. Anyway, it is wonderful to hear Anglican chant in Swahili!

Yesterday, I went on rounds at the hospital with Dr. Gerry Hardison. Many, if not most, of the patients are in for complications of HIV/AIDS. The hospital has a great clinic and support groups for AIDS patients and their families. It is amazing what this little hospital can do for people with limited staff and short supplies. One young girl, 2 or 3 years old had gotten up in the middle of the night and caught her clothes on fire with a candle. Dr. Hardison says they don't do well with burns--not enough staff to keep the wounds clean enough, but this little girl, in great discomfort, was doing pretty well. Still in the end there were 2 out of perhaps 25 patients for whom the medical staff could do virtually nothing. In a bigger or better hospital, surgery or

dialysis would help each of them, but they simply can't afford to go there and pay for the treatment.

After the doctors moved on the next patient, I asked if I could pray with the patient just left. Every one said yes, and so I did a laying on of hands for healing-wish I had brought my chism. I will go back tomorrow (Friday) and do the same. Next week the hospital chaplain wants me to lead morning devotions for the staff. That should be interesting.

It is hard to put into words yet, what this experience is like. Every hour there is something new to try to understand, something new to see, someone new to listen to. It is a very hard life without many of what we consider necessities. What the people I've talked to want more than anything is clean water and education--a chance to break the cycle of poverty. But then it's more complicated than that in a culture and political climate that seeks personal gain over the common good. (Sound familiar?) There is a lot for me and for us to learn here, and I am trying my best to listen and notice.

Hope all is well with you!

Peace,

Mally

From Thursday, August 30

Maseno III

Hi All,

I can't believe my time here is almost over! I leave tomorrow night to meet Gale Morris in Dar Es Salaam sometime close to midnight and then we head to Zanzibar on Thursday.

Today I went with the AIDS clinic team way out into the country to a remote clinic where people who had signed up for their program could come and receive their medications for the next few months and check in with a doctor. "We" saw 43 patients and many of their children. It was a long day of waiting for many of them, but it saved them a whole day walk to and from the Hospital. Most were doing well on their anti retrovirals, and the staff seemed encouraged as did the patients.

Yesterday another visitor, The Rev. Carolynne Williams from the cathedral in Atlanta and I accompanied Padre Betty, hospital chaplain, on her rounds. . We prayed with every patient in the hospital and many members of the staff and all the nursing students. The little girl with burns is much better, though she still hides when groups come into the room. There was a young man who had come home for a few days from his job in Nairobi, so a gang of men, thinking he probably had money, broke into his house, cut him up with a machette and took everything, including his mattress. Hard to work to improve your lot when this is the result.

Carolynne and I both found it exhausting to try to hear what patients were saying through Betty's translation and to go from one patient to another without break. We both realize that pastoral calls in the parish are often broken up by a

little time in the car to change gears.

Church on Sunday was quite an event. When we arrived for the 10:30 service at about 10:15, we were ushered into the vicarage for tea and nuts and bananas and butter sandwiches (yum!!!). Church started about 11:15 and true to form the church didn't fill up until the service was well underway. As I said in my last email, a student from St. Philip's read Morning Prayer in Swahili. I was invited to pronounce the absolution form the new Kenyan prayer book in English. There was a lot of singing and Anglican Chant in Swahili which I kind of mumbled along to. It was quite uplifting even though I really couldn't understand a word of it. Then came announcements by one of the lay readers and the deacon vicar and several other people. Then by about 1:00 it was time for me to preach. I did a typical Mally sermon with show and tell about how Jonah tried to keep God in a box and so do we. the translator was great. People seemed to like it OK. Then it was time for the deanery ingathering. After the regular collection, each parish was called up to a table set up right at the altar rail with 2 treasurers sitting at it and worship leaders and visitors right behind. Each offering was dumped out and counted right there, announced to the congregation and more encouraged. All in all the service began to drag a little at this point, despite the choir singing. The final blessing was pronounced by the archdeacon at about 2 or 2:15. They say they kept the service short for the visitors. We were served a delicious lunch of chicken, beef, ugali and gravy and got home by about 3:30. Can't wait for the first liturgy planning meeting at Christ Church!!!

I've had wonderful conversations with lots of Maseno folks that i am trying to keep track of in my journal, too much to go into in this email, I think, farming, family life, healthcare,

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government, women & children, men, theological education, the Anglican Church, parents, etc. I happened to bring along a picture of my kids. That sparks a tremendous amount of conversation, too.

This computer is acting weird, so I am going to send this before I lose it--sorry for typos. More from Zanzibar if we can find internet.

Peace,

Mally

From Thursday, August 30

Zanzibar

Hi All,

Just a quick update.

Gale & I made it to Zanzibar this morning. We drove across the island from village to village seeing the largely Muslim population at work and school. Our driver, Rasheed pointed out many of the local crop producing plants and described local building styles, mud and sticks or block and cement. We drove through the village where he grew up. He hopes to bring the bride his mother arranges for him to live in a two room home he is building for her, even though he doesn't yet know who she is.

Eventually, we checked into the Blue Bay Resort about 11 am and were forced to contemplate the azure seas for a while before taking a dip in the great body surfing waves of the Indian Ocean (Can you name all of the world's oceans?) We

are carefully guarded by Maasai warriors who patrol diligently day and night. And did we mention that the food is pretty good?

Tomorrow we hope to continue this strenuous routine by getting massages. Saturday, we leave at 8 am sharp for a 5 hour snorkeling trip, and Sunday we move to Stone Town for church at the Anglican Cathedral, built on the sight of the former slave market, followed by a tour of the city. We will spend the night at the Serena Inn, and Monday have a tour of the spice trade history before heading to safari late that evening.

Peace,

Mally & Gale

From Wednesday, September 5

Tanzania

Hi All,

We had a great time on Zanzibar capped off by a night in Stone Town, a city of 200,000 which dates back to the Portuguese traders in 1501, but more recently has been settled by a varied of Eastern peoples. We went to church at the cathedral built on the sight of the slave market. In fact the whipping post was located in front of what is now the high altar. A tour or the slave quarters and system for sale was heart wrenching. Pictures will tell some of the story.

The Anglican church and the British were instrumental in ending slave trade in 1873--something we can be proud of.

We took an night flight Monday to Kilimanjaro Airport and met up with the other 5 women in our group. They had come from So. Africa and Bostwana adventures. We are integrating nicely as we travel around in out Toyota Landcruiser driven by Honest our guide. Last night we were at a tented lodge on the shores of Lake Eyasi, an alkaline lake in the Rift Valley--flamingos, storks. Yesterday and today we visited with the Totoga and Haradze tribes who are trying hard to hold on to the REAL African way of life. We visited two different homes, a blacksmith and this morning we got up at 5:30 am to go hunting with the bushmen. They actually killed a vervet monkey for their breakfast. We have had great translators, so we have been able to talk a little bit to the families about their lives. They work hard to eek out an existence. In all of the homes we visited, the men had 2-3 wives and quite a few children. I think they were glad for our visits and respect for their way of life.

They showed us traditional dances; the blacksmith made an arrowhead and all offered us a chance to buy their crafts. It still feels a little bit intrusive. We also visited a primary school--Level 4 class, 9-12 year olds and one 20 year old who missed a chance for an education so is starting now. The children sang for us and asked us lots of questions, and we asked them questions, too. They all knew the name of our president. Do you know the name of the President of Tanzania?

Tomorrow we get up early again to get down into the crater before the other tours--in the cool of the day and before the cars kick up too much dust. We hope to see some of the

20,000 animals who live in this caldera--more on that another day.

I continue to marvel at the geography--within one hour we passed from Katura, the onion capital of Tanzania through dry and barren bush land with scattered huts and houses to the lush rain forest of the crater. Pretty amazing. The people are remarkably welcoming to the tourists--and don't seem to mind us taking photos, except at the markets.

Will stop now so I have some time left to read incoming email.

I hope we will have one more chance to email, but if we don't, we will be back in Boston @ 10 am next Monday--hard to believe!

Love to all of you,

Mally

From Monday, September 10

Safari and Home

Hi All,

We landed in Boston about 11 am today (Monday) after 38 hours of travel. It's great to be home and to discover that the Red Sox are doing well and the Patriot's are off to a good start! Oh, and to be able to talk to friends and family once again, too.

Our days of safari were filled with moments off grace. We saw two mother lions and two cubs lying in the grass with bloated bellies from eating their fill of a nearby wildebeest. A third lioness was lying near the carcass to protect it from the hyenas who were circling in the distance waiting for their turn. The mother lions turned over onto their backs to stretch to find a more comfortable position to digest. You could almost hear them saying, "AAAAH!" Later that same day, we saw eight lionesses in a pack walking down the road in search of a good place to hunt, or so we thought. They were tailed by 6-8 Land Cruisers with people and cameras poking out of every opening. It was like the papa razzi chasing the stars. And the lionesses just kept moving on. I'm not sure their life is unchanged by the presence of people.

Hippos, wildebeest, zebras giraffes--many with young. A male lion and one of his females lying together by the river. A herd of elephants of all ages taking dust baths, by the side of the road and eating, or should I say knocking over and then taking a few bites of nearby trees, leaving behind what looks like a war zone of toppled trees. One big

elephant decided to charge the Land Cruiser, but came to a screeching halt when Exaud, our guide, started the engine. Later that day, we found the herd hanging out at the water hole and spraying themselves off as they drank. Then once they left the stream, they covered themselves with dust and dirt again--maybe it's like talcum powder?!

A cheetah poking it's head out of the grass, a leopard trying to hide by the road, very shy. No black rhino, but many, many other animals and birds (I can't remember the bird names) warthogs-so ugly they're cute, varieties of gazelles, jackals hunting small prey, water buffalo with dramatic hairdos. Both the Ngorongoro Crater and the Serengetti teeming with life in some areas and vast expanses of open space in others. The land is as enticing as the animals, vast grassy plains or sacred rocky outcroppings or the green by lakes and rivers.

It was mating season, so we saw the courtship dance of the ostrich and the more direct approach of lion and giraffe. We missed seeing the big migration of 1.5 million wildebeests by a week or so, but we saw large numbers of both wildebeests and zebras on the move to find their morning drinks. Both crossed the road right in front of us. I hope the good photographers in the group will send me pictures to share with you all. The giraffes tended to be in ones, twos or threes, and often in the distance, but on the last morning (Sunday) on the way to the air strip, we saw a large herd of giraffe feeding near the road, so we stopped and communed with them for a while. That's what I enjoyed most, communing with the animals, the people and the landscape, trying to imagine what life is like for them and what my place is and what we in the West have to learn. Or not even thinking, just being in the various places. Behind

the noise of the animal life and the trucks turning on and off is a deep, deep silence--no background buzz of planes, engines or technology or the busy-ness of life. I would like to tap into that silence on a regular basis.

I'm glad I have the rest of my sabbatical to ponder and process. This is my last email to the parish. I look forward to being back at Christ Church on Advent I and to sharing my slides and tales at the supper on December 7th (if that is still on the schedule) and for weeks and months beyond. I look forward to hearing what you have been up to and seeing your slides as well. In the meantime, if we run into each other around town, don't turn the other way and neither will I. I will be glad to say hi and chat for a minute. I know Ted and Bill Underhill are your priests for this time and I won't usurp their role. And neither will I pretend I'm not glad to see my neighbors about their daily rounds.

Thanks again for your support and prayers. Please don't stop now! I feel very grateful to have this time. And I hope you are finding the meaning of sabbatical for yourselves. Thank you.

Peace,

Mally

A Prayer for Africa:

O Lord, Creator of the entire world,
O Loving God,
This prayer is for Africa.

Bless the plains, rivers, trees
And all the African lands.
Bless the birds, fish and animals
That bring beauty and abundance to Africa.

Bless O Lord,
Your children in Africa.
Dry their tears,
Bring hope into their hearts,
Health and safety to their lives,
Food and water for their nourishment.
Bring peace to their countries
And still the guns of war.

Bless us, O Lord,
And heal your continent of Africa.
Renew the land, renew the spirit
Of all those who are wounded in any way.
May justice roll down like water
On the parched ground of your beloved
Africa. Amen.

Taken from the website of the Center of Global Concern.

