

Dear Friends,

Praise God for His love and faithful care.

Following the successful Rooted in Jesus Conference last month we are already hearing encouraging reports of groups being set up in the parishes, as well as calls for more training from others wishing to set up groups locally. We are planning a roadshow to engage with the new leaders in the next two months both to encourage those we trained but also to promote continuing roll out across the diocese. I am hearing from the Bishop that the demand for the course in parishes where he is doing pastoral visits is considerable, and we will need to ensure the demand is met appropriately.

Now this has taken place I, Simon, am beginning to look a little more at possible diocesan projects and their expansion. The first aspect of this is that we are looking to use a portion of the diocesan land for coffee growing, and since receiving a locally grown cocoa pod possibly also cacao, alongside a shade crop of bananas as a demonstration farm (both coffee and cacao benefit from growing in dappled rather than full sunshine). The diocesan agriculture advisor and household team are working on this with a view to undertaking this from internal resources, which would be a good model to be laying out. Additionally we are seeing if we can gain some sponsorship to set up a chicken unit as this is also something that provides a good nutrient source of chicken manure alongside the main business. Soil depletion is a serious issue in much of the area, and again this would be a good demonstration. We are also looking to plant trees in another area, and are working on a plan to put together a good ecological mix that will be locally appropriate and productive in the long term.

In the college the ordinands are continuing their studies with diligence and joy. Alongside their formal work some of them are also engaging enthusiastically with work in the gardens after Samson and Melki went on a course entitled "Farming God's Way." (<https://farming-gods-way.org>) This is a well developed method of farming with minimum soil disturbance and a lot of mulching alongside very careful spacing and planting. It has created a lot of interest and we are eagerly awaiting the results in three months time. As the demonstration plot is next to our own patch we are having a lot of support with our digging with advice of how it can be done better!

We did have rather a serious setback this week as one of the new, fireproof ceilings in the men's dormitories collapsed completely. Fortunately it was day time no one was in the room. We are so thankful. Various faults in workmanship have come to light, and I, Sarah, hope that I have learnt the necessity of supervision and close attention. You can imagine that we are eager to save the remaining ceilings. Local engineers have propped up the ceilings, and we have a plan to partition the dormitories into four rooms of three beds each, as well as supporting the ceilings from above which will save the day. Everything waits on the acquisition of funds now. The students rapidly worked together to clear store rooms, and redistribute themselves in safe places to sleep.

What seems like the never ending battle of gaining registration for the college is continuing, but it is going in the right direction. We have received initial feedback from the application which is resulting in some further procedural work, but nothing that is impossible - just laborious. We have also been able to build a new store room next to the kitchen which has been refurbished. We live in hope that we will be able to receive a new intake of students in May. We hope this will take the college up to its full capacity of three year groups which will assist its financial viability. In the meantime students are having to register via agreements with other institutions which is rather a costly nuisance, so we hope the registration can be

resolved as soon as possible. We are thrilled to have been helped by a donor to acquire a generator recently as a secondary power source- one of the recommendations from the National Council.

We are grateful to be keeping in good health. Sarah has enjoyed meeting friends from the UK whilst she was in Kampala recently, and Simon is looking forward to the CMS Africa Conference in Kenya in a couple of weeks time. Please pray for safe travelling in all our work. We hear of too many road casualties. There is a good reason all journeys begin and end with prayers!

We pray you will continue to have a blessed Lent and God may keep you through the wilderness of this world's temptations as we look forward to Passiontide and Easter.

With much love and every blessing,

Sarah and Simon

