



Boniface & Hamisi Project

Kenya, Africa

Progress Report on the Boniface and Hamisi Project **February 14, 2001**

It's been two months since the last report; sorry it's been so long. We haven't forgotten the Boniface and Hamisi project, nor your generosity in establishing it.

We are now in regular communication with Andrew, the oldest brother of the Kitsao family, and the family is now starting to put together proposals for the use of the funds that have now been collected. My father is now putting together an update on contributions to the fund, but tells me that the total is now more than \$7000. Thank you everyone.

Last month Andrew e-mailed us with an update of the situation with his father. Tests to completely identify Kitsao's medical situation are still continuing, because there is some cause for doctors to believe that there is a problem with one of his kidneys. I had earlier told Andrew to let us know at any point if the family needed funds to continue with necessary tests or treatment for his father, and in early February he did e-mail us, saying that because of lack of funds, the family was at a roadblock and could not proceed with any further tests or treatment for the father. We therefore told him we would be sending \$1000 to be applied to his father's medical needs, and requested that he account for all expenditures of funds against the \$1000.

His answer, which we received on February 8, was: "Regarding my father's case, I promise to keep you updated on his condition and all the expenditure involved in improving it. To me, accounting well for the money donated towards this purpose would be my only way of saying 'thank you' to my father's benefactors' kindness and great sacrifice that they have made." He hasn't received the money yet, which we are sending by electronic bank transfer directly to his bank account in Kenya, but he has promised to keep us informed. We have also sent an extra \$100 to cover Andrew's e-mail costs, as well as \$320 the Ottawa Citizen paid to us on his behalf for the story he wrote, which they published last September.

Magic, the cow we purchased with your funds for Hamisi, continues to do well and Hamisi has completed a seminar on cow management which we arranged for him to

take. In other bovine news, Andrew's own cow, Emma, gave birth to a female calf, named Hope, and both mother and calf are doing well. "They are quite a lovely pair to watch," reports Andrew, "especially when feeding." The birth of Hope has doubled Andrew's milk cow herd, which is good news for his hard-working family.

I don't think I've ever mentioned Andrew's exceptional wife, who is universally known as "Darma's Mother", or "Mamma Darma", in the fashion of their tribe (Darma being her firstborn child, a lovely young girl we best remember helping shell roasted cashew nuts for us beside a campfire on the beach).

"Mamma Darma" is a most enterprising and intelligent woman in her early thirties, who, apart from raising four young children and growing and grinding her own maize for the family's staple food, operates several businesses: she has a fruit and vegetable stand at the local market; she travels by bus to neighbouring villages selling fruits and second-hand clothes; and she runs a small fast-food kiosk outside a hotel, employing two local ladies cooking and selling maize porridge to hotel workers for their lunch. Now, while Andrew is away at his regular job (he is able to come home to see his family only every week or two) she'll be taking care of the growing dairy farm business as well. This is a very hard working family, but everyone, of course, pitches in.

On February 8 Boniface began attending his new high school. We haven't heard any reports back on his experiences there, but thanks to you we did send him well equipped with uniform, supplies, mosquito net and a full set of extra study books.

Another of Boniface and Andrew's brothers, Mark, is only three months away from finishing the hairdressing course your generosity permitted him to take. Mark has submitted for our consideration a very ambitious proposal to fund the establishment of the "Magic Hair Salon", following his graduation. We're not sure whether this fits within the parameters of the Kitsao Family Scholarship Fund which all of you so generously established, and have sent back to him and Andrew questions about whether this is the best way of making sure the entire family best benefits from the fund. We have also asked for a projected profit and loss statement and asked some questions about whether the planned salon could be started on a more modest scale (it seemed he was planning to provide for four customers at once, since his proposal was for four sets of hairdryers, chairs, etc.).

Certainly at first glance, Herbert's and my reaction was that our first priority for the fund should be education. On the other hand, making best use of Mark's education, which your money has provided, and possibly providing new jobs for other family members at the same time, may be a wise investment. We are extremely fond of Mark, a bright and good humoured young man with whom we spent a great deal of time and whom we regard only half jokingly as our fifth son (his younger brother, Boniface, being the fourth.) If any of you have comments to make on whether we ought to be considering such a project as part of the fund, we would appreciate hearing from you. Also let me know if you are interested in seeing the cost estimates Mark has proposed.

At the same time another brother, Ngumbao, is interested in pursuing a college degree in mass communications, something he has long dreamed of. He is currently investigating the costs and feasibility of doing this. Ngumbao and Mark are the two of the older brothers in this large family whom Andrew succeeded in putting through high school from his own funds (the cost of a year of high school is \$500, compared to a typical monthly wage for an employed man of \$60. Putting two younger brothers through was therefore quite a feat for Andrew, whose own college education was paid for by a scholarship from the YMCA). If it's feasible for us to fund further education for Ngumbao, Andrew will be sending along his proposal. Andrew will also be discussing future plans for higher education with Katana, another of his brothers who is doing very well academically and of whom we are also personally very fond. Katana's away at the same distant school Boniface is attending, so it may be some time before we'll hear more about him. We will be relying very much upon Andrew's recommendations as to which of the various projects will receive priority, since without additional contributions we won't be able to fund them all.

That's all the news for now. Thank you again, and we'll keep you informed when there are further developments. We would, as always, enjoy hearing from you and receiving any comments about the administration or the fund . . . or anything else!

Cheers from Turkey,

Diane and Herbert
S/V Northern Magic