

Brief Update on Activities in Tanzania

On July 16 I returned to Tanzania. It was a great blessing for me that Mirjam was able to join me on the trip and help me and the staff during the first two weeks as we adjusted to life without Tabitha.



One of the first things we did was hold a memorial gathering with our staff.

We invited them over for a meal in our living room, where we had plenty of time to remember her and talk together.

After that, we got down to work. There was a lot to catch up on after five months of absence.

The goal has been to delegate as many of the tasks Tabitha previously handled as possible to our staff at the office in Arusha. They're ready to take on greater responsibility and are wholeheartedly embracing these tasks—such as managing three orphanages and assessing people who come asking for help. Things are gradually falling into place. However, they fall short when it comes to bookkeeping and communication with those who support our work in Denmark and, more broadly, outside of Tanzania.



I am very pleased that Susanne Lundgaard, who has been editing our newsletter since 2002, has offered to follow in Tabitha's footsteps and help gather material and write the newsletters in close collaboration with me. In fact, she has already been doing this since we returned to Denmark this past winter, and it has worked out well. She has a good rapport with the staff here at the office, and I, of course, make sure to proofread everything to ensure that all information is accurate.

As for our local accounting, we've had to hire outside assistance. We already have an accountant on retainer. He and his firm have agreed to take over the work that Tabitha previously handled (unfortunately, this new arrangement means we'll have an additional expense in our

mission work). Very few people probably know that Tabitha was very skilled at this part of the work. She worked as the treasurer for the independent school in Karstoft before we left for Tanzania, and in that capacity, she took a number of courses. She had a knack for working with numbers and actually really enjoyed keeping the books.

When we talk about accounting AND communication, we come to the task that took up a significant part of Tabitha's daily life: the sponsored children. It is a great joy to me that Jens Alsing has taken on this work. I have asked Jens to introduce himself in this letter:

"My name is Jens. I'm 29 years old and originally from Funen, Denmark. I'm engaged to the lovely Sarah Bjerre.

I just graduated from Acts Academy Bible School in Kolding, where I learned a lot about missions, a cause close to my heart.

I had the great pleasure of working a little with Tabitha on the practical aspects of sponsoring children before she went home to be with Jesus. Her wish was to teach me how the system worked with the sponsored children so that I could help her. During that short time, I discovered just how dedicated she was in her approach to her sponsored children, and it was incredibly inspiring.

I'll try to carry that forward as best I can, now that Torkild has decided to continue the work in Tanzania with the sponsored children. Starting in early August, I've also begun training as a missionary candidate at Betania Church Center, where I'll receive guidance and become involved in missionary work. Sarah and I both have a passion for missions and are asking God to show us the path we should take. Who knows what the future holds—in any case, we're looking forward to seeing what God has planned for us.

We're excited!

Warm regards, Jens Alsing"



Tabitha and Jens in the living room in Karstoft, hard at work sharing knowledge about the work with sponsored children

Jens arrived in Arusha on August 18 along with Mirjam. He will be here until September 2. It will be two busy weeks during which he will work with our staff at the office to get the entire sponsorship program up and running smoothly. As before, the staff here in Arusha will handle the day-to-day work with the sponsored children. Jens is stepping in for Tabitha and will serve as the liaison between them and the sponsors in Denmark.



Jens and Torkild with our office staff, Haika, George, and Charles

If you sponsor a child, you can expect to receive an email from jens@mbu.betania.dk over the next few weeks.

We've received countless invitations from churches that want us to come and hold children's campaigns in their areas. But it's really important to get the framework here in Arusha properly in place before we head out on another campaign. So the first one won't take place until the end of September.

Over the next few weeks, I'll be working with the families who, over the past few months, have been interviewed and assessed as eligible for assistance. I'll be going out to see the situation with my own eyes and determine whether we should step in and provide support. At the same time, I'll also be busy helping Jens get off to a good start and supporting Mirjam in her work out here.

I have to say that returning to Tanzania was the right decision. I feel like I'm in the right place. Here, I can make a difference. But I still miss Tabitha very much. Thank you for your prayers and support.

With much love,
Torkild