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WITTEVEEN NEWS

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Dear Ministry Partners,

On May 1st 2008, I arrived in Kenya to take up my new position as Country Consultant for Kenya. In this role I have had the privilege of seeing what God has been doing in Kenya.

As many of you know this has been a challenging year for Kenyans. Few inside or outside Kenya expected January's national crisis. Its ripples are still being felt. 1,000's of displaced families have still not been able to return to their homes, and in some areas, such as North Western Kenya, families are still living in extreme hardship. Many communities, especially in Western Kenya, have experienced a deep break down of trust between neighbors as the result of the post election violence. Lost harvests and sky rocketing global food prices have driven up the price of food. The global spike in fuel prices has driven inflation up even further. The upshot, the average Kenyan is struggling.

Yet in the short time I have been here I have observed that Kenyans are resilient people, and they are finding ways with God's help to move forward.

One of those communities where I have witnessed God's people working together to overcome adversity and bring hope to their community was in the village of Ulungu, in Eastern Kenya. Ulungu is a dry and dusty place desperately thirsty for clean water. Under the leadership of a committed pastor, community members from different churches banded together to solve their shortage of clean water. When I arrived they showed me their water

tower built with the help of the Red Cross and their extensive water delivery system. They had kiosks set up through out the community to provide clean water at an affordable price. I was struck by their thorough knowledge of their water distribution system and their ownership of taking care of it. I was also struck by the generosity of the community. They not only had a vision of providing clear water for their village, but also to surrounding villages as well. I saw very clearly that this is a community that cares.



While they are poor, they support the orphans and give dignity to those suffering from HIV/Aids. It didn't surprise me at all when the pastor who hosted us said that his church grew so much that they have to now build a new and bigger church building. As I listened to the members of the village water committee they expressed great gratitude to CRWRC, and their special friends from Classis Quinte who have walked with them to realize their dreams for their community.

When I left Ulungu that day I was reminded that poor communities, whether in North America or in Africa, have greater potential for transformation when their resources are fully tapped and our resources are focused and supplemental.

Another community I visited, where God clearly was at work is a coastal village just north of Mombassa. A group of 11 youth came together to restore mangrove forests along a stretch of shoreline. These forests provide habitat for fish that are an important source of food and income. Restoring the forest is a challenge because mangrove trees are also a source of fuel. The youth started

(Continued on page 2)



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a "Save the Mangrove" to raise awareness of the impact of Mangrove cutting on the environment. The youth group with the support of local forestry officials and a small grant from Pwani CCS, one of CRWRC Kenya long time partners, started an environmentally friendly fish/prawns farming project. The group learned how to set up the project from a local fisherman who was willing to share his secrets of effective fish farming. This group of dedicated young adults, some with families to support, dug three large ponds among the mangrove trees, and stocked them with fish. In time they plan to build more ponds. I have no doubt they will do it. Once they start making a profit they will pay a fee to the government for the use of the land.

After talking with these environmentally conscious social entrepreneurs, I realize how bold vision, sharing knowledge, learning the business, sweat equity, community ownership and environmental stewardship, timely capital investment combine to facilitate community transformation. No church groups have been involved in this project yet, but I told the youth group that as they share their story people from other places would be inspired to invest their gifts. They gave me permission to share their story.

Items of Thanksgiving

1. We found a comfortable place to live and a school for Mariah
2. My family joined me in July.
3. We are settling into a new church.
4. We have learned to drive on the left hand side of the road.

Things to Pray for

1. For our continued transition in a new place and culture.
2. For new friends.