

Postcard from Tanzania

April 28—New Training Center

Hello all, from Tanzania,



The Harvey's have begun construction of the Training Center (TC). This TC will provide badly needed space for classes that now cannot be held. It will provide space for translation checks that are now taking place in crowded hallways and any other space the translators can grab. The TC will actually become an extension of the existing Translation Office (TO), using one external wall of the TO as a wall of the new TC. A tree growing on the space had to be cut down and the roots dug up. That huge tree is now being cut into planks, by hand, to be used as rafters in the new TC. As we've said before, in most places in Africa, manual labor is far cheaper than machines—even if you could purchase the needed machines and then find parts to keep them maintained (which is a very big, unlikely IF). The jobs the Harvey's and others like them provide here, creates employment for people who badly need it, and at the same time, gets the construction and other work done at money saving rates. It is truly a win-win situation.

To cut this tree into planks there is a hole dug in the ground – approximately 10 feet long by 5 feet deep by 3-4 feet wide. The log is placed over the hole, and one man goes into the hole, another man stands on the log a huge saw. With a man on each end of the saw, one pulls and the other pushed, they make the cut. As the cut grows longer, a wedge is hammered inside the cut, to keep the saw from binding. It's amazing to watch them. The fellow in the hole gets covered in sawdust—wearing no safety goggles! (OSHA would have a cow). They start at sunrise and work until it gets too hot. Of course there are numerous rest breaks. For such labor, each man receives the equivalent of \$2.25 US for each plank they cut, which is well above minimum wage and considered a very fair wage. The large planks will then be ripped into rafters by Brad's table saw.



The outside walls of the building are to be made of blocks, which are formed by hand here on the work site. The blocks are made of a barely wet cement/sand mix. The mold is filled with the mixture and compressed by a tamping device. A lever is pushed and the finished block (still damp) rises from the machine. The block is carried to a spot in the yard where it will dry. I asked Brad if the rains made the block making difficult, and he said that the rains are actually better for block making – the longer it takes the blocks to dry, the stronger they are.

While this sawing and block making is going on, the footer trench for the foundation is also being dug—over 7 feet deep at some places. At the deepest part, all you could see of the workman is the head of the pick rising and falling just above ground level as he swings away at the dirt. Then from behind the pick, you would see a shovel sized pile of dirt fly out of the hole into the pile running along the edge of the trench.

With all of this activity going on, the monkeys are chattering, the birds chirping, the dog barking and the kitten wailing in the tree, it's really hard to maintain focus on figures and accounts. I'd rather be out where the action is!

Love to you all, June/Mom/Grandmom

