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# **A time for reflection**

**Happy New Year! Now we are back from UK, here is our February Prayer letter. A prayer update is also out with more detailed news. What has the Lord in store for us all in 2010?**

New Diocese? Last year the Province agreed to start the process of making the three Northern Mission Areas, Garissa, Lodwar and Marsabit, into Missionary Dioceses. Each has its own unique challenges. Garissa, very close to Somalia, has few local Christians. In Lodwar Bishop Clely has lost his few clergy and evangelists and himself been chased away at gun point. With little money, no experience and strong ethnic pressures he faced a losing battle and has had to return to his home in Kisii, Western Kenya. Please pray for him, his family and the Christians of that huge and remote area, and their need for new church leadership, whether back in their original Diocese or elsewhere. And then Marsabit! As you know, I believe our current situation is unsustainable as no one knows where we belong or takes any responsibility for us, so it is my prayer that we move down the path of becoming a Diocese. It brings clarity, but will be tough financially. To discuss all three areas there was a

preliminary meeting in January, and the next is on May 19th. The Provincial Standing Committee will make final decisions in September.

What should a Bishop be doing? When I was consecrated Bishop in March '08, Bishop Peter of Bath and Wells put me forward for a training course in UK, but sadly we had already returned to Kenya by the time the course started. Since then no training has been on offer - so it has been a steep learning process on the job! I wonder what you all think a Bishop is supposed to do? Here are some thoughts I wrote down during a time of reflection:

- Leadership and Vision
- Plan to extend the kingdom of God through mission and discipleship
- Empower, train and resource clergy and evangelists
- Be a pastor to the clergy



*Back in UK in the snow – WHITE!*

- Keep the bigger picture before people so they don't get restricted to local vision
- Hold people together, be a unifier
- Be a Bible based teacher
- Foster independence and sustainability within the Diocese/Area
- Search for funds and support to supplement local funding
- Carry out special duties, such as Ordinations, Confirmations, Consecrating churches



*Marsabit before the rain – BROWN!*



*Marsabit after the rain – GREEN!*

- Ensure proper structures for decision making are in place, with full accountability

- WORSHIP THE LORD AND GIVE HIM THEGLORY!

I then reflected on how many of these I was doing, and what my priorities should be for 2010, and beyond.

Over the past two years I believe we have done or made a start on all of these, and what follows is in the pipeline for 2010:

- Empowering and training clergy and evangelists using a course for new evangelists in February, and a School of Biblical Training, possibly with some leadership training, for our clergy in May.

- Sadly the appointment of a Mission Secretary to coordinate Mission has had to be put on hold after one of our senior clergy resigned to go on study leave.

- I shall carry out ministry reviews with all our clergy during the year.

- Our October Harambees have given us financial stability for two years and the ongoing Tear Fund training course of biblical community empowerment continues to foster independence and sustainability

- The Archbishop has agreed to visit Marsabit in July to experience one of his Mission Areas first hand and take the ordination. Pray for him as he has to deal with some of the issues raised by the actions of the Province in creating us as an unfunded Mission Area in the first place. He is a good man, but, as a national figure in a troubled land, he has so many pressures, not least the struggle to agree a new Kenyan Constitution to end dictatorship, impunity and ethnically driven electoral violence.

- I am arranging to meet with Bishop Daniel of Kirinyaga (who has experience of the Marsabit area) to go through these reflections with me and comment or advise.

Sue hopes to go to Rwanda in April for the Provincial Mothers Union retreat. With a two day bus journey to get there, it will be a good chance to get to know some more of the Bishops' wives and Diocesan MU workers! She continues to visit the hospital twice a week when we are in Marsabit, taking tea and food for patients and relatives. The new vicar in Marsabit, Rev. Matayo, is thinking it would be good for the MU to accompany her. Maybe long term the MU will own this type of activity.

We are praising the Lord for the rain which came to most of Northern Kenya, bringing hope, and making Marsabit green.

We have harvested maize, beans and greens, butterflies are everywhere and our water tank is full - though we haven't splashed out in a shower yet! However many people are still hungry and some crops were affected by army worm, but the real losers are those who lost all or most of their livestock. It will take time to recover from the famine. We pray for good rains in April, and for the Lord to pour out his blessings on us all.

2010 Church Visits: we are coming to UK in September/October to travel around visiting our supporting churches and others who have joined with us to pray for and support the work of the church in Northern Kenya. Crosslinks are already making contact with you to arrange visits. Weekends we will be church based, but for those of you not at full supporting churches I pray we can meet up midweek. Do contact us beforehand, preferably by email. We will let you know when the Church visiting programme is finalised, so you know which part of the country we are in!

Thank you all for your prayers and support

Rob and Sue martin

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