

FATHER DONALD MACLEOD



is a White Fathers' Vocations Director writes to tell us about 'a short tour of vocations promotion in Tanzania' which he made at the earlier this year.

work, there was an excellent opportunity for everyone to take a dip in the sea and for some, it was a new experience to be battling with the tide above and the jagged stones below.

As a newcomer to this work, I was interested to discover what usually happens in workshops, but also to meet the young Tanzanians of the late 90's, ready to carry the beacon of faith into the next millennium. The Gospel message is renewed in every generation and each one has to find a way of expressing the Faith in a way that will be understandable to others, in the current circumstances of their lives.

What I discovered is that wherever we went, everyone in school appeared to be busy; time-tables are full and there is always something else to do. Some students are boarders and there are domestic tasks to be accomplished, as well as exam preparation! In spite of this, we were received with great courtesy by the school administration and particularly by the students themselves, many of whom rearranged their schedules to be with us for the day.

After Tanga, we drove on to Morogoro, staying at the Society of the Precious Blood Seminary. Then on to Tosamaganga, a historical colonial site and the heart of Uhehe. There, we met the students of the Secondary School, and at 7.30 pm we were able to make our presentation. The next day we had the opportunity to meet interested students individually and we then concluded with Evening Mass, well-prepared and arranged by the students and the Youth Chaplain.

On the Saturday, we proceeded to Iringa. It is like the city in Matthew chapter 5, built on a hill that cannot be hidden! We were welcomed by Bishop Tarcissius Ngalalekumtwa, (who stayed at our house in Woodville Gardens, in 1989. At the time, he was Co-Adjutor Bishop of Sumbawanga). He gave us a tour of the

On Friday, 26th. February, Fr. Rudi Wigger and myself set off for Tanga, in the north-east of the country, to begin a large sweep of secondary schools, making visits to the members of youth groups in these schools and organising workshops on topics of interest to all. We took in towns on our south-westerly way: Morogoro, Tosamaganga, Iringa, Mafinga, Malangali and Songea. In Tanga, we were accommodated by the Rosminian community, whose house is situated on the shores of the Indian Ocean. *

The student participants on the Vocations Workshop came from three local secondary schools. They were ferried by car to and from their residences, at the beginning and end of each day's session. At the conclusion of the day's

Above: Fr. Donald

** The places mentioned in this article are shown in blue letters on the map on the next page*



Diocesan offices and presented us with a history of the first 100 years of Iringa Diocese: 1898-1998: founded by Missionaries and maintained by them, until there were sufficient numbers of Tanzanian vocations to continue the work the first Fathers, Brothers and Sisters had begun.

At the school, in a morning session, we were able to address members of the Young Christian Students (YCS). There were many interesting questions and comments from the energetic assembly of youthful men and women. Topics ranged from success in studies to the standard required for entry to major seminary or the Sister's training, as well as issues of celibacy, marriage and priestly ministry. For example, some thought, mistakenly, that Brothers, because they are not priests, could be married! It was a very well-organised session. The next day, Sunday, we celebrated Mass for the school.

It is worth mentioning here, how well we were received by all the parish clergy we met, who were helpful and positive about vocations to missionary and religious life, although they sometimes have their own shortage of vocations.

On Monday the 8th. of March, after early Mass, we set off for Songea. The road was good and the rains had arrived, as opposed to the more dry parts of the country we had already passed through. There we had noticed the fields prepared, but not then planted, whereas further south the vegetation was already lush and green.

On arrival in Songea, we were soon able to establish contact at the Secondary School and arranged for an evening meeting. When we arrived there, we found

the YCS and other youngsters together in prayer. Life in school is not so simple at times and prayer is the oil in the lamp of faith. So this was a very good example of how to sustain faith and vocation as well as to maintain good conduct in an environment where it is not always easy.

On departure from Songea, we began the trip home, and spent some time at a school newly equipped for A-Level standards. There was a great deal of activity all around the grounds that day and teams of youngsters were to be seen carrying garden tools, hose-pipes, sports gear and the like, to various parts of the extensive grounds. We were able to meet those who were keen to know more about their faith and especially those who were interested in our Society.

In conclusion, I was greatly impressed to see leadership qualities in young people today in Tanzania. It needs to be fostered and sustained, by young people themselves, conscious of res-

ponding to a divine invitation and a human need. Basically, it is Christ's call to live fearlessly the Gospel values in our time and circumstances, passing on a message of truth and goodness to others.

The young people I met are, in many respects, the intellectual elite of the country, as well as the leaders of tomorrow in many spheres of public life, including the practice and announcing of the Faith. They are privileged to have such opportunities to study and prepare for a good life in society. Many of them are generous enough to offer themselves also to the service of the Church and of the White Fathers.

Our objective in travelling 3,500 kilometres in 18 days was precisely to give them the opportunity to define their abilities and to begin to make the choices necessary. In this way, we build up the Kingdom and increase a little more the prospects for a greater, more peaceful and caring world.

One result of the efforts of previous years in this Vocations apostolate is that we have ten Tanzanian candidates due to begin their studies in our seminaries in Arusha, (Tanzania) and Jinja, (Uganda), for the academic year 1999-2000.

TANZANIA - SOME FACTS AND FIGURES



Population (1997)	31.3m.	Child malnutrition (of children under 5)	28%
Average annual growth, 1991-97		Access to safe water (of population)	49%
Population (%)	2.9	Illiteracy (of population age 15+)	32%
Labor force (%)	2.9	Gross primary enrollment (of school-age)	70%
Most recent estimate (latest year available, 1991-97)		Poverty (of population below national poverty line)	51%
Urban population (of total population)	24%	GNP per capita (Atlas method)	US\$210
Life expectancy at birth (years)	51	GNP	US\$6.6bn.
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	82		

EXTERNAL DEBT AND RESOURCE FLOWS

(in US\$ millions)	1976	1986	1996	1997
Total debt outstanding and disbursed	1,380	4,609	7,412	-
IBRD	90	291	56	34
IDA	109	670	2,242	2,306
Total debt service	41	156	258	-
IBRD	7	47	33	24
IDA	2	8	31	32
Composition of net resource flows				
Official grants	119	483	441	-
Official creditors	128	168	81	-
Private creditors	28	69	-7	-
Foreign direct investment	0	-8	150	-
World Bank program				
Commitments	89	185	173	150
Disbursements	39	92	134	183
Principal repayments	2	29	40	36
Net flows	38	63	94	147
Interest payments	7	26	23	20
Net transfers	31	38	71	127
Total debt service/exports (US\$ billions)	6.4	36.7	22.1	-



Tanzania and some of the places which Fr. Donald visited on his trip

The IBRD is the 'International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the IDA is the 'International Development Association'. Both are part of the 'World Bank Group'.

Source: 'Tanzania at a glance', the World Bank, 01/10/98

