

WELCOME TO THE 82ND DISTRICT CONFERENCE AND ASSEMBLY

My Friends,

It has been a wonderful year of service for Rtn Dorcas and I. We have seen clubs with many members, and we have seen clubs with few members. We have seen clubs that are running many projects, and we have seen clubs that are simply social clubs. We have seen clubs that have contributed greatly to TRF funds, and we have seen those that have contributed nothing. We have seen aging clubs, and we have seen youthful clubs. And always, the fire of Rotary has been there – sometimes as blazing flames, sometimes as the glow of burning charcoal waiting for more fuel, sometimes as a candle sheltered from the wind by the protective hands of a single or a few Rotarians – but always there!

We have driven on dusty roads to visit the outposts of Rotary service, and we have received rides on charter aeroplanes. We have stayed in upmarket suites, and we have stayed in very humble hotels. We have enjoyed hot showers and baths, and we have learned that a half-litre bottle of water is sufficient for a shower and a drink. And always, the welcome and friendship of Rotarians have made us feel at home and happy.

The Fire of Service is spreading - From Addis Ababa through the grandeur of the Nile gorge to Debre Markos, Bahir Dar, and fabled Lalibela; From Nairobi to Naivasha, Nyahururu and Maralal; From the mountains of Eldoret, down to Nakuru, Vihiga, Kisumu and Homa Bay, Up to Muranga, Thika and the chilly mornings of Meru; and then down to the plains and near semi-desert conditions as we head into Machakos.

The Forest of Friendship is growing - Along the beautiful coast of Mombasa to Diani on one side, and Kilifi in the other direction; From Arusha to Moshi through Mombo to Tanga; From Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Iringa and Dodoma; From Masaka, Kalisizo and Kyotera in Uganda through to Karagwe, Bukoba and Mwanza in Tanzania.

The Wind of Goodwill is blowing - From Kampala to Mukono, Kayunga, Jinja, Kamuli, Mbale and Tororo; From Mbarara to Rwampara, Bushenyi, Ibanda, Kabale; From Mityana to Mubende, Kibale, Kabarole and Fort Portal; And North to Masindi, Lira, Gulu, Arua.

Faces, sometimes names, and many scenes come to mind: Ben Adam with the Little Sisters of St Francis, tortured by his mother; Didas Byaruhanga, using only his feet and mouth to draw geometric figure in Kasese; Abebech Gobena, and the orphans in Addis Ababa; Safe Home in Naivasha with those beautiful abused toddlers and children; Rotaractors with handicapped children at the Mother Theresa Centre in Addis Ababa; the girls with the wonderful singing voices – one in Kibera, and one in Jinja; Sanitation at a school in Mathare; The Cula Home; The Don Bosco boys demonstrating karate. And many, many more....

The visit by RI President Bill and Lorna must be the event of this Rotary year. We have seen many of them, but Bill and Lorna really touched our hearts. They inspired us to greater service.

Thank you Friends for permitting us to be your friends, to share your homes, to see and be inspired by the service you are giving to our communities.

Welcome ! Let us Celebrate Rotary in the Greatest District I know!