

FEATURES

Sad tale of three bachelor brothers rescued from filth

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IT was a home or paradise for three bachelor brothers who for three decades, shared a ravaged sort of a cage - a one room house that let in rain, sunshine and wind at Mwasiti hamlet, Mkalama village in Hai District.

Mr Renold Barnaba Lyamuya (51), Mr Bernamus Barnaba Lyamuya (50) and Mr Miglan Barnaba Lyamuya (49) are happy to get a free modern three-room house and are due to get beds and mattresses, things they have never used since 1984.

The trio were identified by Kikafu Chini Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) Pastor, Reverend Nelson Mtui while on tour of duty.

He was saddened by the filth and marginalisation the three brothers suffered. Rev Mtui says he thought of how he could help them, knowing personally he could not do much.

He shared the matter with Tanzania Media Women Research Foundation (Tawref) to see if they could come to rescue of them. Happily, the organisation that has been for long teamed up with a United Kingdom based charity, Vine Trust to construct houses for the marginalised, particularly children, youth and women in Tanzania, decided to fish the trio out of the filth.

It was their luck, because out of houses constructed so far, it is only one (Lyamuyas') that is not donated to children or women. Unlike the other three UK bachelor brothers, Jerry, Julian and Viv who had been travelling all over the world looking for a party in paradise, Lyamuya brothers are stuck in their district, Mr Bernamus is almost home-bound due to his poor vision while Mr Miglan wonders in nearby fields looking as a casual worker.

While Lyamuya brothers struggle to get a meal per day, their UK counterparts were travelling from one country to another for merry, as once Jerry left from London to Athens, Greece, then took a flight to Cairo, Egypt, to Qatar where his eldest brother Julian was, after that flew to Karachi, Pakistan, Burma, Bangladesh and Thailand to join their brother Viv, had also been travelling in South- East Asia.

Back to Mkalama village tale; it is difficult to trace Mr Renold's whereabouts, as the duo say he always leaves early in the morning to Kikavu looking for any job, as he is the main bread earner for the family, but it occurs that some day they go without a meal.

The most affected by the situation is Bernamus, who, on account of his poor vision, spends days and night in the hut or just



Miglan and Bernamus Lyamuya (centre) sip cold drinks soon after receiving a new house from TAWREF. Left is the NGO's Executive Director, Ms Dafrosa Itemba and another official, Ms Lui Mvangafu. (File photo)

around it, in the semi-arid area and says it is common for him not to have anything to eat until the elder brother returns and shares whatever he brings with him.

Where do they hail from and why are they wondering in the wilderness? Mr Bernamus says they are Chaggas from Marangu where they used to live until 1984 when their father, Mr Barnaba Lyamuya posted them to the place to take care of his paddy fields he had secured.

“Our father sent us here to look after his paddy fields in 1984, since then we stayed here until now. We no longer grow paddy due to the weather. We are here to stay because daddy gave this property to us. It has been difficult here because we have no regular income.

“The real problem I believe someone stole my star and is using it for his life so that he prospers while I lead a miserable life here,” says Mr Bernamus. When asked why they could not use manure from the neighbours’ farmhouses, he claimed that manure is not good for plants. “Artificial fertiliser is good.

That is why the government recommends it,” says Bernamus. He cites marginalisation by the society and misuse of their resources by neighbours as another impediment to development. “We could have built ourselves a house. We had collected some stones but people just came and collected them.

Some have even cut down our trees. Pastor Mtui who was transferred to Kikafu Chini Parish in 2013, decided to visit the faithful at their residences. It is on such visits, he came across the ravaged hut and the brothers. That was one step towards fishing them out of the asphyxia hut, that is thought to have contributed to their bad shape.

Rev Mtei says he spent some time with Mr Bernamus, as two other were out, and gathered a lot. The pastor says he found out they were some in his ELCT folk but were not making it to the services at Kikafu Chini Parish. He convinced Mr Bernamus, and later his brothers to back actively in prayers and they heeded his call.

Due to poor vision, Pastor Mtui conducts services for Mr Bernamus at home, but the other two attend at Kikafu Chini Parish. He encouraged them to carry on with prayers and work while himself was looking for a best way to help them.

In order to save their lives, Rev Mtui mobilised them to build a small mud house, as the old one was almost on its feet, and Mr Miglan answered the call by collecting wood and some ropes to tie sticks to the columns, as they had no nails nor hammer. They finally applied mud on the frame and put on a polythene on top as a cover against rain or sunshine.

The one room house is to be used as a kitchen, after the trio get the new modern one. When the house was, at last, handed over to them, neighbours joined them, with Hai District Executive Director (DED), Mr Melckizedek Humbe sending his representative, Mr Lucas Msele to officially hand over the facility to the trio.

Mr Bernamus now says he thinks they can change things over, and now even thinks of a marriage, saying nothing is impossible. Mr Miglan just laughs when asked about his plans for bringing in a wife. “Really the first house was awful, it was dilapidated at every corner, it went down and we tried to hold it back and carry on living in it, serving also our store, where we kept all our belongings. Not it is going to be a kitchen.

I can change everything here now, I can even marry,” says Mr Bernamus with shaggy hair and unwashed clothes. Mr Israel Mallya is the person who entered contract with TAWREF and Vines Trust to build the house and completed the assignment well. He says, however, upon his arrival at the site, was uncertain if the work could be done, given the surroundings, but was encouraged by Pastor Mtei.

The place has no washroom, hence when European volunteers made it to the place, as they use to do with all other houses - building the house at its initial stages, had to go for calls of nature at neighbours’ houses. Mr Mallya said the three brothers could be making use of their ‘large’ field as far as that is concerned.

TAWREF Executive Director, Ms Dafrosa Itemba says the benefactor wants the Tanzanian Government to build a Ventilated Improved Pit latrine (VIP) for every house they build, and if they do that, Vines Trust are ready to construct even a 100 houses in the country.

She says the house cost 7,581,500/- and thanks neighbours for compassion they later came to show to the trio. she says TAWREF have written to Hai DED so that they construct a toilet for Lyamuya brothers, something that is a huge challenge

for them.

Mkalama Village Chairman, Mr Joseph Richard says he was impressed upon the family being identified and promises to be close to them and offer any help needed that is within their reach. He says they are out to furnish the house with mattresses, so that each gets his own.

He is joined by Rev Mtui, who says he would mobilise the faithful at his parish so as to contribute money and other things such as bed sheets, blankets and even clothes to the trio, so that they start life anew. Mr Msele, on behalf of Hai DED says the two organisations have done a good job, saying a lot of NGOs promise to help people but end up doing nothing, their application letters remain at DED's office.

Upon seeing the place where the brothers slept, Mr Msele could not believe, coming out on pensive mood, saying it was a huge challenge that Lyamuyas struggled with for so many years. He says it is unimaginable the way the three sleep in the tiny mud house, urging anybody with problems not to keep it for themselves, but share with relatives, friends and neighbours as they could sort out the matter.

"On behalf of the DED I thank TAWREF for undertaking this project and completing it, you have done a superb job. Such accommodation in that room was really a challenge, the family is living in abject poverty," he says.

The trio who were sleeping on cement bags, and could not even fully stretch their legs due to the compactness of the room, now can inhale fresh air and stretch themselves the way they want, in whatever direction, be it east, west, south or north in the larger and smarter rooms.

Mr Bernamus thanks every stakeholder who contributed to their current status, saying an end to sufferings they encounter is on sight. So there we were three bachelor brothers from the UK looking for a party in paradise, and here are three bachelor brothers who have finally got a quality house, a paradise on earth, so to say.

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