



I, like you, just got Susan's email in my in-box
Steve Vinton, May 5, 2007

I, like you, just got Susan's email in my in-box. I love Susan tremendously and I guess she'd look beautiful to me no matter what she were wearing or where she was. But right now all I can see in my mind is how beautiful she must have looked on that hillside at the grave site when she was asked to stand up and speak. She told me a bit more of the story of that afternoon, and I've decided that I'd really like to share her words with you all.

Steve, there wasn't a preacher or even a tiny hint of any evidence of anything Christian on that hillside where everyone was gathered and I was so taken aback that they would ask me to speak and I hadn't prepared myself to say anything. So I just spoke from my heart and said that "God doesn't want so many people in this village to be widowed and orphaned and for people to die at such a young age. Testi wasn't the first and he won't be the last. Do you know the enemy? Do you know that to do?" I spent two, three hours there visiting and then as we left we past by a wedding and had even more food! Saw so many of "my friends." Steve I fear that everyone here has AIDS. It's everywhere. I was especially delighted to see Mika as a chunky three year old. Then I passed by to see a sick baby and brought him home with me. Looks like typhoid, but I'll get him to the hospital to get tested -- along with mom -- as dad died a year ago from what almost certainly was AIDS. It is very nice to have Patrick close by to consult. It was a busy day. I was running late so Emmanueli took me in the car to the end of Egereke village for the funeral or I would have never made it in time on foot, and then I walked back with my friends. You know, I love it here dear. I have friends Steve. Met Sanga along the path as he was returning to Mkonge. He is such a dear man. We talked about my two favorite subjects - God and HIV. I think he will talk to all of his little brothers. One of them died two weeks ago. Two weeks more and you are home. Come home safely. The boys and I miss you. Everyone does. Love you, Susan"

I've gotten lots of news from Tanzania since I arrived here in America on April 14th. The number of kids in our schools keeps rising and we're now at 1561 – and nearly 800 of them are girls! One of our favorite volunteers from Mzumbe University -- a delightful young woman named Upendo -- returned for a visit to see our students and help out during her vacation. Godfrey and Emmanueli stared down the inspector who wanted to close one of our schools and cleverly invited to drive him the 40 miles to the village to stand before the students and shut the school down himself. What I wouldn't have done to have been there and watched that inspector stand before 310 students and lose his nerve and instead proclaim that he would be the great defender of their school. What I wouldn't have done to have been able to have been there and seen

Godfrey open our new school in his home village of Nankanga. What I wouldn't have done to have been in Tanzania and to have seen Godfrey's mother travel across the country with him and see with her own eyes all of the schools that her son has helped get built. What I wouldn't have done to have been there when Emmanueli got to hold the town meeting in his home village, with his grandfather there to see the day that his grandson opened the school in their village.

But more than all that, what I would have done to have been in the crowd there on that hillside in Egereke and to have seen Susan stand up amongst all of those hundreds of people weeping over Testi's grave and to speak to them. I can only see it in my mind. Even in my mind though it's a beautiful sight.

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