



No offense to you Steve ...  
Steve Vinton, August 21, 2007

We have in the past few days received so many letters which have encouraged us, a few I'll save for a while, one that I think I'll save for a long time. The letter came from Tanzania.

Everyone is missing you guys. And no offense to you Steve, but people are especially missing your dear wife! I can't walk through the village without being assaulted with questions. Is she back yet? How much longer? I recently had someone who was present in one of your first community meetings here in Igoda tell me, "When Mr. Vinton told us that his wife was a really good woman, we thought he was just saying it. But now we see, she truly is a really good woman!"

That letter took me back to remembering those very first open air meetings back in January and February of 2005 when I had gone ahead of Susan and the boys and Godfrey and Emmanueli and I first launched the work there in Igoda. I spoke with a boldness during the day at each of those meetings -- telling them that I believed with all my heart that we could build a school for their children -- and I felt my whole being totally convinced that it was God Himself who had caused it to happen that I had come to that particular village at that particular time. But at night, in the cold and the dark, sleeping in that house in the village that they had given to us, I found I would often succumb to my timidity of wondering if it really was possible to build four classrooms in a year from scratch and get a school open. Not to mention a house for my family. It is of course easy for me to look back and and say to myself "oh ye of little faith" but as a husband and a father I found myself in the stillness of the night shivering and feeling my faith wavered. And all I could say was, Lord help me in my unbelief, because there was I remember absolutely

nothing else to say. Seeing them build six classrooms in only 70 days and then seeing Godfrey and Emmanueli very lovingly mobilize the students to build a wonderful house for us in a little over a month might make it all look like it was easy but I still even now cannot get over the wonder of the miracle of it all, so unexpected, so really impossible, it'll be something that I'll tell my grandkids one day and it'll be lucky I'll have Josh and Jonathan around to vouch for me that it really did happen this way.

And I do remember at every meeting telling them about how wonderful Susan was -- telling them how I had hunted on three continents for a good wife -- and how I found my wife right here on the continent of Africa! I wanted them to know that she was a Peace Corps volunteer teaching in a little village in Congo when I first met her, I wanted them to know that she was absolutely beautiful (I loved hearing them roar their approval), but I really wanted to get silent when the roars stopped and say but as beautiful as she is on the outside, just you wait, she's even tons more beautiful on the inside. Her students have learned that when she's with them in the classroom. But it is her wanderings through the village, taking care of the sick and the widows and the orphans that has resulted in all of the people in the village knowing what kind of person Susan is. It is great being the husband of the lady everyone just calls "Mama" now.

The whole rest of life before we went to Igoda in 2005 seems like such a blur now, the memories of it all getting fainter and fainter, the whole thing seeming to be just preparation for these incredible moments. How different

everything would be right now if Jonathan had to have another heart surgery. How good it is to know that only a few days remain until we all get to get on that airplane – as a family – and head back home. To the house that Godfrey

and Emmanueli and our students built for us. To our little corner of the world where everyone is waiting for us. There really is something wonderful about going home.