



On January 30th yet another school was born!
Steve Vinton, February 2, 2008

Godfrey got home late last night and Susan made wonderful hot chocolate for the occasion and we stayed up later than we should have and listened to story after exciting story of his nearly weeklong trip down south in the Ruvuma region. Godfrey is a great story-teller and he knows how to weave events and the people involved in them into pure entertainment, each detail leading up to the wonderful news that on January 30 yet another school was born, this time in the village of Ulolela way down to the south near the Malawian border. Mtazamo Secondary School with its 99 students became our tenth school here in Tanzania!

I must admit that I'm sorry that Godfrey only had a few moments this morning to announce to our students that we now had ten schools here in Tanzania and that within the next three months he hopes that number will climb to perhaps as many as thirteen as the people of Mtambula, Mpepo and Kimala push towards the goal of getting schools open quickly in their villages. Since he didn't have time to tell "the rest of the story," I've got to figure out how I can work it into chapel so that my students can know about it. You see out of all of the people who were at the school that day in Ulolela, there was one man Godfrey said who not only didn't come from Ulolela, he didn't come from any of the villages in that area, in fact he came from far away over the hills but he had come to bring his son to enroll him in school.

The man listened to the speeches, he listened to the plans, he listened to the history, he sat there listening to people, one after another, talk about this and that and everything as the village moved towards a consensus of the plans for the coming months. And then he stood up before the gathering and said I have nothing to

add to what has been said except to say that I see that these classrooms have no cement floors and I understand from what every has said that sand is a problem here. So I want to say that I have a tractor, but I have no diesel, but if diesel can be found for my tractor, I will give it to the school to use to haul sand so that we can put in the floors here at the school.

Godfrey was as stunned as everyone else. Who would have imagined that the quiet man in the back who had come from so far not only owned a tractor but would be willing to give it for the school to use? Who would have known that the man was not only rich, he was also generous!

And so, Godfrey said, I stood up and thanked him and pulled out 10,000 shillings (about \$10) out of my pocket and placed it on the table and said that my money would buy 6 liters (about a gallon and a half) of diesel. And then it was like a floodgate -- within a half hour there was 87,000 shillings in cash on the table and promises of hundreds of thousands of shillings more over the next several weeks, a whole list of names of people willing to volunteer their time to dig the sand and load and unload the tractor, and people started offering their trees to be sawed into lumber and pledging their time to do this job and that job, and when it was all over, Mtazamo Secondary School hadn't just been born, Mtazamo Secondary School had a future! And a bright one at that.

Godfrey finished telling all of his stories, Susan headed for bed and I walked Godfrey out the front door and we started on the path to his house together. A good host after all never abandons his visitor at his front door but instead walks him at least part way home. And there in the dark, Godfrey said, you know

Mzee, with those two new schools Malindindo and Mtazamo, it's another 246 students, and more will be coming every day, and I don't know the exact numbers, but I'm sure already at least a hundred of them are girls. He didn't have to say anything. I knew that he was referring to our promise in all of the villages that if people sent their daughters we would find good people to help make sure that there was scholarship money to help them come to school. And me, who had listened for an hour as Godfrey told the wonderful stories of his trip, got to share a little good news of my own, very good news indeed. It was little more than two hours earlier that I got an email from a

very good friend of mine who told me that he and his wife were sending money, a lot of money in fact, enough money it turns out to send not just those 100 girls to school, but almost 150! Godfrey and I laughed and then we cried a little and then he gave me a slap on the back and a big hug good night and walked off into the dark.

This job God has given us to do is wonderful indeed.

Now I have to figure out by next Thursday's chapel how exactly to help my students understand that!