



Newsletter: November 2008 Douglas McFalls

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November 2008 NEWSLETTER

SUBJECT: THE MAASAI BOMA SCHOOL



Hello everyone! It's been a while since you have had news about the Maasai Boma Schools (MBS) that several of you have graciously been a part in developing. So here's the update:



The picture above is **OUR ESUKUTA SCHOOL**. We have just added another classroom onto the left side of the building thanks to a contribution from the Precious Few Project in Australia. It will be filled with 30 new preschoolers in January and the current preschool class of 50 children will move up to the first grade. It is a basic structure with a mud floor (which we hope to cement) but kids (and parents) are learning! At our Lemong'o school (our first) 18 first graders and 30 preschoolers continue meeting in the Catholic church, and next year's incoming class we hope will meet in the Pentecostal church while that community deals with its land issues left over from recent political turbulence. More and more parents are seeking to enroll their children in our schools. MBS have been running for two years now and are growing in popularity and the level of affection and appreciation directed at the schools.

**A GOAL TO GROW:** This appreciation has reached beyond Lemong'o and Esukuta to four other Maasai communities that are requesting Boma schools. They have heard that the children are learning well and they are happy that the Maasai culture is celebrated. The Pillar of Maasai Development (PMD) team, in which Tipape directs the education issues, and I are considering the strategy needed to plant a preschool/Meeting Hall in each of the requesting communities then work closely with them so they will be able to play an active roll in expanding the schools to higher grade levels.



**MOTOR BIKE:** Do you remember our wish for a motorbike? Well, that prayer was answered! In July I encouraged Tipape to get his motorcycle license so that he would be ready and legal for the day God would provide a bike. Well, true to God's marvelous sense of humor, the week that Tipape was finishing his classes, a French brother-in-Christ (Damian) was visiting me in Mtwara for the MaKuYa festival. He decided to cancel his motorbike trip to Ethiopia from Tanzania and return home after many months of travel. Before his departure I encouraged him to visit my Maasai friends in Kenya. "OK, but just for four days". He was truly blessed by the kindness of these Maasai, and departed Rombo three weeks later, sans bike! He left it for Tipape! Now Tipape is able to

work more efficiently, and reach the more isolated communities in need of schools without fear of elephants, lions, and running out of daylight. Interestingly, because of the quality and uniqueness of the bike and "coolness" of the helmet, Tipape's reputation in town has moved up several notches.

**FIRST ANNUAL MAASAI BOMA SCHOOLS CONVENTION!** The A.C.E. (Accelerated Christian Education) curriculum we use is also used by schools throughout the world. In America, South Africa and Scandinavia, students come together from various A.C.E. school for annual conventions to compete in various academic categories. So, on January 31, 2009 we are launching our own convention of Boma Schools (just now we have two, but our dream is seven). The students will come together to be shown and taught traditional Maasai dances and songs. The Moran (warrior) will lead the boys in spear throwing and wrestling. Many other traditional Maasai games will be taught to and played by the girls and boys. Also we'll display our growing collection of Maasai artifacts and elders will tell their stories. Our plan is that this will become an annual event including the hundreds of future students and their families! *My Seattle friend, Pam Hathaway's upcoming visit inspired the convention launching.*

**DROUGHT:** When I was in Rombo, Kenya last week it was partially cloudy. These clouds were welcome friends. Until two week ago this part of Kenya was dusty, hot and dry and suffering terribly from lack of rain. The cows' milk had dried up, forcing women to cut trees to sell for charcoal production so they could get money to buy milk and food. So thin were the animals that many died of cold and fatigue as the first heavy rain fell. Tipape's family lost six sheep this way. But now the fields have come alive with crops and grass, and all the trees branches are trimmed with green. People (and cattle) are happy the rains have come, and we pray they will continue until January's harvest.





**HARSH PERSPECTIVE:** I am now in Morogoro, Tanzania. This is Maasai territory as well. Maasai are herders and they need vast areas of land to maintain their traditionally large herds. I have learned that here, if you have only 50 cows, you are considered a poor Maasai. In Rombo, Kenya, most people have fewer than 15 and some families have none. The establishment of the game parks, the encroachment of other communities on Maasai lands, drought and new diseases have devastated these families. It is important to understand that not all Maasai are suffering in the same way throughout East Africa. The Maasai of Rombo are desperately poor and herding is no longer viable for them – this is why our schools are so crucial to these families’ survival and why they are so eager to enroll their children.



**A CHURCH IN NEED:** *Tipape w/Elder & Pastor in destroyed mud church/nursery school.*

The community of Orarit lost its church and nursery school in a storm last week. They’d approached PMD earlier desiring a Boma School for their community. Now their need has suddenly grown to a protected place to worship as well. Just in discussion, we felt that when an initial classroom is built it could serve as a schoolhouse, community center and temporary church for Orarit. As we begin preparing to establish more schools, if God puts it on your heart, it would cost about \$3500-\$4000 to build a simple building there now. I know that the Maasai believers, who now meet under a tree, would be grateful for a dry place to worship now that the rains have arrived. The nursery school children could also get back to class, and we can begin planning our next preschool. *Let me know if you’d like more information about this or would like to give.*

**PROJECTION! THE POWER OF THE VISUAL:** It is understood by many educators that learning can be enhanced enormously by including visuals. For this reason I purchased a projector for our schools. In our curriculum cities, mountains, oceans, fish, and buildings are referenced. But the vast majority of these Maasai (particularly the children) have never seen such things. The projection of DVDs of all sorts will not only enhance the children's education but also draw parents into the classroom to discover new worlds and ideas. **We want to create a library of all sorts of DVDs.** We would welcome recommendations and contributions of DVDs: Nature and science programs, children's programming for English, math, science, foreign language, even travel shows...anything to open their eyes to worlds they are now beginning to hear about (even movies with English subtitles).



*The kids and a family at Esukuta*

**SUMMARY:** As you can see a great deal has happened, is happening and is yet to be done. But it is very exciting and I feel blessed to be working with such gracious and kind people.

**SPIRITUAL NOTE:**

*"If anything matters then everything matters. Because you are important, everything to do is important. Every time you forgive, the universe changes; every time you reach out and touch a heart or a life, the world changes; with every kindness and service, seen or unseen, my purposes are accomplished and nothing will ever be the same again." – God*

This is one of many powerful and concepts presented by William Young in his book [The Shack](#). I recommend it highly. I also appreciated this one (among many others):

*"My very essence is a verb," she [God] continued, "I am more attuned to verbs than nouns. Verbs such as confession, repenting, living, loving, responding, growing, reaping, changing, sowing, running, dancing, singing, and on and on. Humans, on the other hand, have a knack for taking a verb [and making it a noun] or principle that reeks of rules: something growing and alive dies."*

**PRAYER REQUEST:** It is wonderful all that has been accomplished here in just two years, we are learning from the bottom up, but we have so far to go to meet a need that is enormous. Please pray that we learn more about fund raising strategies, that we get our fliers and programs organized in such a way they are ready for donors, that we can secure enough funds to improve the pay of the teachers and director, consider master plans, and that Tipape will be encouraged and not overwhelmed by the developments, and as well further his studies at Day Star University in the year ahead. *And, as always, please pray for all the families that are just barely getting by.*



**A BOOK TO READ WITH YOUR KIDS:** Countdown, is a cleverly conceived young readers book by Ben Mikaelson. It gives an genuine impression of Maasai life in Kenya (near Narok) – the difference being that in Rombo, the families have already moved away from eating much meat, and are eager for their children to study in the “wood school” because of their desperate situation.

*Merry Christmas - Happy Holidays - Seasons Greetings – Kristmas Njema.  
I send to you, which ever wish brings you the greatest hope and joy for the New Year.*

*Douglas McFalls*



**ARTIFACTS:** We continue to grow our Maasai artifact collection as funds allow. Three recent acquisitions are: 1. A Goat Vertebra Manual Mixer, an Artery Arrow Cow Blood Extraction (with coordinating carrying case), and a Billy Goat Chastity Guard. *(more holiday gift ideas!)*

**Obama in Kenya:** Whatever people at home may feel about the recent election results in the U.S., East Africans are thrilled! Not so much because the man, Obama, won, but because democracy won. You see, most believed that a black man would never be allowed to be elected president of the United States. When Obama was elected, people here were saying, “Wow, democracy in America is real!”. The effects of this election are already far reaching. It has inspired many East Africans to pursue the idea of democracy with a new belief in its potential. Obama will be the new Poster Child of Democracy here in Africa. Already his picture hangs in many shops and in many homes!

*PS: if any of you had tried to send anything to my US post box, and it was returned – sorry. That problem has now been corrected.*