



Newsletter: November 2009 Douglas McFalls

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**6:10 p.m. Wednesday, October 14. The rains have just started.** The first rain since February is now pouring down on roads inches deep in dust, on homes and shops powdered brown and on tall trees whose lustrous green was faded with dirt. Streams are emerging everywhere. The tin drums of rooftops have begun their stormy rhythm. Are we dancing? Are we rejoicing? Well, in a way, perhaps the drought has ended, or at least enough rain has come to encourage some new grasses to grow. Water tanks will fill again, and maybe there will be milk again too. But we are also trembling inside for the days ahead. Will this be the end for the few cows, sheep and goats that remain? Too weak to stand up on their own, will the heavy rains, and the chill that comes from a soggy coat cause them to shiver to their death? That is what is expected.

How sad that something so needed for growth and life, can also be a messenger of death. Which way does one pray – for rain, or none? We must pray for rain, but how much? When? Where? But here it is. Now we will see what will happen.

**9:00 p.m. After the storm I walked back home.** The rains lasted just 15 minutes. That is encouraging to me, but what do I know? I hoped that the animals would not be too chilled, and was glad they would not spend the night in the rain and mud. But speaking to my friend Tumaina, he says it is sure that many of the cows, now sick and hungry will die with the rains. The Maasai mentality is “get it over with”, the strongest animals will survive and we will begin again with those. In the weeks ahead I will surely learn just how many cows, goats and sheep families have lost. Only a few of the Maasai elders here can remember a drought as devastating as this.

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Here in Rombo, I am partnering with the Pillar of Maasai Development (PMD) team. PMD was established in 2006 by Tipape, and five of his Rombo friends to confront their concerns for the wellbeing of their community. Tipape is in charge of education, Tumaina economic development and agriculture, Osmond the environment, Evelyn women’s issues and Eric health. It is with PMD that I (ADEA) am working, and this is fantastic. They are passionate and determined, but their experiences, resources and idea banks are limited due to their life circumstances. My work (as ADEA) is to encourage, challenge, brainstorm, finance (as I am able), seek funding, network, pray and persevere with them. They have identified their needs; I am helping to address them and supporting them in the process. Creative problem solving! One of my favorite pastimes.

This is an interesting, and probably a very opportune, time for our efforts. With so much hardship, and rebuilding of lives, people are open to new ideas, new technologies, new opportunities and new disciplines - more than they would have been in more prosperous times.

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**November 2, The rains continue to come – somewhat.** Not steady rain, and the crops are still thirsty, but there is rain. The dust no longer blankets the road, trees and houses (inside and out). But rain does not mean the end of the hardship. Cows, goats and sheep, sick from the damp, weak from no food, continue to die - in the past two days my friend Amadeus lost 8 of his remaining 15 cows. In February he had 30. It takes weeks for the grass to grow enough for cattle, and months for a harvest. The Maasai here are very strong, but there are stories of men giving up and turning to local brew to disguise their despair leaving wives and children without a home leader and left to fend for themselves. They are no longer functioning as a family unit. That is why ADEA & PMD have launched the two emergency programs I wrote about previously: school meals to make sure the children are receiving proper nutrition and beaded ornaments for the women to make money to pay for food and school fees. Many thanks for all of you who have already supported these projects!



## **Maasai Boma School** **Emergency Food Program**

**On Thursday, November 5 we launched our first school meal program.** It is an exciting program because not only is it providing these children with a carefully planned diet to boost their nutritional and caloric intake in these hungry times, but also because parent involvement is required. We are treating this as an opportunity for community education. We have worked with people experienced in nutrition to form the menus. Little is understood about food nutrition among the Maasai. Their traditional diet of milk, meat and blood provided a vitamin and caloric rich meal. But since that diet is no longer possible, they've adopted local foods: mostly white corn meal, white rice and Irish potatoes for starch and cabbage, greens and beans for flavor. We will be introducing them to brown rice, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and carrots, bell peppers and porridge enhanced with ground peanuts and whole wheat. The day begins with a piece of fruit.

Teaching will be conducted with parents and children about nutrition and how different foods offer different nutrients, and why variety is important. With the parents doing the cooking, we expect that what they learn will affect what they buy at the market, plant in their fields and cook in their home.

For more details visit:

<http://adeafrica.org/UrgentRequest-Food2009.pdf>



**So many thanks to all of you who have supported this project!!**

**If we fail to thank you directly, please know we have meant to!**

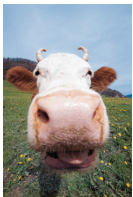
## HOLIDAY MARKET Maasai ORNAMENT SALES

Many of you know about this project too. This project allows women here to use a craft they love to care for their family's needs. In these tough times these women are seeking day labor jobs in other people's fields, or collecting wood to sell to charcoal producers (sometimes being forced to cut down trees which are already scarce). Beadwork can be done at home, allowing these mothers not to neglect their home responsibilities. They can also work in community doing something they enjoy and at which they are excellent. Most of these women have children in our schools; this work will ensure funds for school fees as well.

**Project summary:** We put together packets of ornaments: 50 or 100 and project information. We then send it off to individuals, groups or families interested in selling them.

For more details visit - <http://adeafrica.org/UrgentRequest-MasaiOrnamentsKit2009.pdf>

In 2010 this project will grow into an ongoing one including a variety of jewelry and designs that can be sold at markets, fairs and possibly home parties. I have worked with US Jewelry Designers to refine these women's product base and business understanding to help them expand their market internationally. This project will take some initial investment. If you'd like to support this effort or can direct us to funders that support **women's issues and economic development** – we will be grateful.



### PROJECT IN THE WORKS: INTRODUCING DAIRY COWS TO ROMBO

The Maasai herds have been decimated in Rombo, with families losing for 50 to 100% of their cows. With land loss due to its confiscation for the Tsavo West and Amboseli Game Parks, and growing populations, free grazing is becoming less and less viable. The introduction of dairy cows will increase a family's milk supply by ten times or more, reduce the strain on the environment, keep cows (and thus milk) near home and the market for family consumption or sale, to name a few of the benefits. But the knowledge to manage this new bread needs to be modeled in Rombo – and thus our proposal for a Dairy Cow Model and Learning Center. Stay tuned for more details.

**A Discovery Hut on Campus!** I believe lack of ideas can stifle the imagination. This "Discovery Hut" will have maps, pictures, educational videos, educational games, models, language tapes, machines, posters, microscopes... anything to open the mind. This hut will be for the students, the parents, as well as the visitors. *As your children grow, or you are cleaning out your closets, if you have any of the things listed above or, mobiles of the galaxy, posters of animals, plants, the human body (educational please), alphabets in other languages, a model of the human eye, or ear, or the brain, etc – think about sending it our way?* On December 1<sup>st</sup> a member of my Seattle church will be coming to Kenya. He'll bring an extra bag for me for these things. Send them to: **University Presbyterian Church – Missions Department – Ken Kierstad – 4540 15<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.E. Seattle, WA 98105 – Note: for ADEA CHALLENGE:** My laptop allows switching between US and European DVD 7 times only. I have heard there is a program to override this. Do you know what it is?

### [ADEAAfrica.org](http://ADEAAfrica.org) – Website - HELP!

I've got a technical challenge. For any of you who have visited my website in the past year (or two) you will notice that it hasn't changed much. The reason for that is my inability to make changes from far away. I have used iWeb to create my website, and when I lived in the states I succeeded to make updates.



But due to some internet challenges here in the bush I have been at the mercy of my wonderful friend, Steve Colberg, who is able to add the link on my Newsletter page and manage other technical things (like adding pay pal). However, I would like to make it more updateable from my end. I can start afresh...but I am not quite sure where to start. Any suggestions? I currently use a MacBook.

**Spiritual note:** Psalm 37 – Has been my meditation for the month.

- ☛ Do not fret because of evil men, or be envious of those who do wrong. For like grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.
- ☛ Trust in the Lord and do good.
- ☛ Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways when they carry out their wicked schemes.
- ☛ Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evil.
- ☛ The wicked draw the sword and bend the bow to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose ways are upright. But their sword will pierce their own hearts, and their bows will be broken.
- ☛ Better is the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked, for the power of the wicked will be broken, but the Lord upholds the righteous.

On and on the chapter speaks of that evil will not stand, but good will (thus, do it!). This chapter has been a great help to me as I learn of the wicked ways of many Kenyans in power, and how the locals suffer. Politicians buy votes with empty promises and cash. They gossip and spread lies to discredit those doing good, but do not support their schemes. Outside groups come to Rombo to “improve” infrastructure, but instead leave conditions worse than before they’d come, but with personal pockets full. Water projects are generously funded, but local implementers use below specified quality fixtures, so that a month after a project’s end, there is no water. Aggression is used to prevent someone from collecting their certificate of victory in local elections, and then it is given it to family members. Even churches vie for power and devotion to their leadership verses the headship of Christ. It is easy to spend much energy brooding over such injustice, and even to envy the sums they secure. Though it is right to love justice, I am learning that focusing on the wrongs around me too much, can prevent me from taking action to do the good works for which I came – work I am hopeful will endure.

Lots more I could share, but I'll leave you with this!

*Douglas*