

February 25, 2009

Jambo and Greetings from Tanzania,

Today, as planned (which is frankly kind of a surprise in Africa), we met with Alois the construction foreman and Lucas the general contractor to discuss estimates to complete some of the key components of the project.

Alois, who speaks no English, provided us with a stack of hand written lists of items, from sinks to nails, floor tiles to door handles, in all listing hundreds of items needed to complete the guesthouse kitchen, dining room and remaining ground floor spaces. Much to our surprise, the handwritten scribble was in English...sort of. Aside from the kitchen, the finishing of the guesthouse ground floor will likely have to be deferred in order that the funds we have available are directed toward the immediate priority of gaining governmental approval to open the classrooms.

Our conversations and site walk-thru with Lucas were very productive. We discussed several alternatives to expedite the opening of the school. Lucas helped us brainstorm some ways to further reduce construction costs by re-routing and shortening the required access road and re-using a small existing structure on the site to build a rudimentary kitchen facility exclusively for the school for a total estimated cost of less than \$1,000. We have setup a meeting tomorrow with the Regional Education Ministry Officer to discuss if such alternatives would be satisfactory and to his liking. If not, Nathan will attempt to either threaten or bribe him...depending on how mean he looks. Stan will keep bail money handy and the car running.

The Bishop recently assigned an additional priest, Fr. Patrick, to help Fr. Kawishe in the running of the Mailisita parish. Today was our first day to spend time with Fr. Patrick and get to know him better. Nathan vaguely recognized Father Patrick, but could not place him. In later conversations it came out that Fr. Patrick used to have a laptop, but that it was lost in a fire at his former parish. We inquired if that was the fire at Kibosho a year or so back. He said "yes", and was surprised we would know such a detail. Nathan then realized that it was Fr. Patrick who had greeted us and given us a tour of his church in Kibosho two summers ago and had told us back then of the fire that had destroyed the priests' residence. It then struck Fr. Patrick that he too remembered meeting us and that we had been accompanied by our mutual friend, Dr. Allan Minja, of the Kibosho hospital. Small world.

We spent some time today making arrangements for this summer's travelers. Unfortunately, the priest retreat center we have always used will not be available this coming July (it's filled with priests on retreat that month...imagine that). We stopped in at one of the larger local guesthouses to check availability and were surprised they were already heavily booked for July, but still believed they'll have just enough capacity to accommodate our travelers. We both thought it was a bit nicer of a facility, but also a bit

more expensive. We took pictures of rooms and facilities to share with prospective travelers for their approval.

We capped off the day further discussing school registration requirements with Lucas as he has experience with building schools in the past. We were unable to take the children's pictures for the watoto club today due to timing and have moved that task to Thursday.

Tomorrow, the architect, Mike Masha, arrives from Dar es Salam (Tanzania's largest city) to meet with us and review various design and construction alternatives. Secondly, as mentioned earlier, we also have arranged to meet with the Regional Education Ministry Officer – who we just learned happens to be an old friend of Fr. Patrick's! Perhaps Nathan won't have to go to jail after all.

Kwaheri na mpaka kesho,

Stan & Nathan