

The Origins of Hope For Tanzania

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In 1998 Martin and Philippa Grosvenor went on holiday to Tanzania. A teacher from Philippa's school had visited Tanzania staying with a Tanzanian couple, Felix and Naomi Masenge. Before we went we cheekily wrote a letter asking if we stay with them for a few days between trips. Felix is a radiographer whilst Naomi is a headteacher at the largest primary school in Arusha (3000 pupils). Unknown to us at that time, Felix and Naomi were building a house for their retirement. But moved by the increasing helplessness of their own people, they converted their dream home into a school which was started in 2000. The school specifically targets children who have become orphans through AIDS and those children whose parents cannot afford the fees. The Masenges still have no home to move into once Naomi retires - that's sacrifice!

We wrote regular letters to them and were asked if we could sponsor some children, which we did. In 2006, I re-discovered my Christian faith after 20 years of self-centredness. In my letters I wrote about my new found faith and found out that they also were followers of Jesus. We have continued to write and encourage each other over the years. God started to show me that he had wonderful things for me provided that I did what he asked me to do. And so over the last 3 years he has been re-directing my ambitions, my use of time, my money and other areas. And the wonderful things have come.

In 2006 we decided to return to Tanzania with our two girls for a "working" visit. We hoped to raise £1500 from a sponsored canoe trip, but in the end the total reached £5000. The money was used to buy a school minibus to pick-up the children from their villages. We stayed with Felix and Naomi and spent most of our time helping at the school, meeting lots of new people and learning about the needs of Tanzania. Soon after returning God clearly spoke to us about widening the work to bring it to the notice of others. It seemed right to set up a charity which we did in 2008. The charity, Hope for Tanzania, is based on Christian principles and seeks to discharge some of the responsibility that we have to help needy people in the world - those who have spiritual needs (Matthew 28 v 19-20) and those who have material needs (Matthew 25 v 31-46).

We have recruited a team of dedicated and gifted Trustees, have had many offers of generous support from friends and are now rolling out a child sponsorship scheme and organising a group visit to Tanzania in the summer. All of this is giving us great opportunities to share God's love with others.

This is a story not of human goodness, but of how God can change people from being self-centred and indifferent to people who care for the poor and are prepared to do something about it. The motivation that we have comes from the extraordinary love that Jesus showed to us when he died on the cross, and then rose again. We have many stories of answered prayer, of our faith in God being increased, of God equipping us to do things beyond our human abilities. Our motto this year is "When man works, man works. When man prays, God works".