

Seventy Randy Vick's Return to Africa May-June 2010

Chapter 8 - Kanyosha

A much more interesting ride down the mountain in the taxi, as I can see a lot more and I have the opportunity to take a lot of pictures. Everytime I point my camera at something, the driver obligingly slows down. We make several stops along the way as the driver is negotiating and sometimes buying fresh produce to take home or to take back to the city to sell, I'm not sure. We stop at one produce stand that is manned by a dozen farmers who all have thier particular item or items of produce very expertly displayed on flat hand weaved round trays. The produce on display in the stands themselves would make the Produce Manager at your local supermarket proud. They have tapped into the small waterfalls that descend the mountainside and little pipes extend out over their produce, constantly bathing their products in cold water. It makes me want to buy some myself, and Bro. Elie comes away with some great looking carrots, egg plants and potatoes.

Shortly after that stop, it starts to rain, which curtails my photo ops, but I get a couple shots of the now mist encased mountain tops and it reminds me of Gorillas In The Mist, right next door in Rwanda.

All too soon we're coming back into the city as the temperature rises and the landscape levels out. The taxi drops us at the internet cafe where I check my email and we have very good hamburgers with french fries and ketchup. What a treat!

We walk the few blocks to the Kenya Airways office to retrieve my suitcase and surprise, surprise, its no where to be found and no one can seem to figure out who it was that actually had it. Before leaving I make it known that I'm not happy wearing the same clothes for the last three days now and I suggest rather strongly that they find my suitcase that they've now lost twice. I'm assured the manager will call Bro. Elie as soon as it is found. Bro. Otis and I take a taxi to Kanyosha and walk the last few blocks to Bro. Elie's house, where I'll be spending the night, while Bro. Elie is off to the hospital to visit his wife.

When Bro. Elie returns to his house from visiting Sr. Deborah he tells me excitedly that about 2 hours after the administration she felt something move in her breast and she said something changed. The pain was gone and later when the doctor examined her he was amazed at signs of healing. When he examined her the following day he said she could be released on Friday. She and Bro. Elie are thrilled at this turn of events.

Late that evening, about 9 PM, I'm still full from my earlier hamburger and fries, but we have dinner of dried fish, rice, chick peas and fresh tangerines for dessert. A cup of hot tea makes the sweat pop on this hot night, but I really like this Burundian tea and besides, its a cultural thing here.

This morning, Thursday, will be spent right here in Bro. Elie's house in Kanyosha with his own study group and we'll be here tomorrow, too. I fear I'm being too repetitive as I relate the same story over and over about our study groups, but the discussions are deep and inspiring, and I'm always reminded that its not me providing the answers to their questions. Its very obvious to me that the words coming out of my mouth and the thoughts that come to my mind are not my own, but the promptings of the Holy Spirit. These discussions are always well received in spite of the fact that much of it is very strange compared to what they have been taught in the past. Sadly, many pastors in Africa have become pastors simply as a way to make a living and they care very little for the doctrine they teach or present and those are not my words, but the words of my African brothers and sisters.

These sessions always go on for hours, such as today, it was supposed to be a 2 hour session and we went for more than 3 hours and they really didn't want to stop but many of them had other plans for the rest of the day and the ladies of the house had prepared dinner and were tired of keeping it warm.

Bro. Elie tries at various times this morning to contact the manager at Kenya Airways but to no avail. After a very late lunch we catch a minibus taxi back to Kenya Airways where we sit for 20 minutes before someone behind the counter offers to help and then he states rather nonchallantly that they have been trying to reach me all morning to get directions to deliver my suitcase which he says is presently in the back room. Finally reunited with my suitcase and clean clothes, I am relieved and more than a little surprised to see that everything is still there. Being in the same clothes for four days now, I'm not in the best of moods and Kenya Airways is not my favorite airline, so I decide to ask for an upgrade to business class for the return flight to Nairobi. Fearfully, the agent tells me I would have to speak to the Country Manager about that and I tell him I would be very happy to speak with the Country Manager. He reluctantly escorts me to an office in another part of the building. Mr. Ndomo is very pleasant when I request an upgrade to business class for the two hour flight back to Nairobi on Monday in compensation for my inconvenience and the expense of phone calls and taxis. He explains that he cannot reserve a seat for me, but will make an entry in the computer system instructing the ticket agent at the airport to upgrade me to business class if there is a seat available. We'll see how far that goes. Turns out to be a good thing that I made this request because as he's entering his little note in my flight itinerary he discovers that I've been bumped from the flight. Doesn't know how that could have happened! Says it was computer generated. Hmmmmm. So he rebooks me on my original flight after I show him my e-ticket and my receipt for payment. At least that will save one big hassle at the airport on Monday morning and I will hopefully arrive in Nairobi as scheduled, as my Kenyan brethren will be there to meet me at the airport.

Bro. Elie goes back to the hospital to visit his wife who will come home on Friday, but instead brings her home tonight as the doctor has given her an even earlier release. She is so happy to be home. My bedroom is right next to theirs and the wall doesn't go all the way to the tin roof, so I can hear them clearly in their room although I have no idea what they're saying. But, her three young children are in the bedroom with her and the soft mother tones of her talk with her children is unmistakable and the children are so happy to have her home. I tell Sr. Deborah that the laughter and the tone of the children makes it obvious that the mother is back in the home. She is so thankful for her blessing of healing that she can't stop talking about it.

Dinner tonight is a special treat with the fresh produce Bro. Elie bought up on the mountain, including charcoal roasted potatoes.

We have thunder boomers all night and I keep waiting for the downpour that will finally cool off my room. The rain starts and stops and spits and sputters all night as the lightning flashes and the thunder rolls in a terrible tease. Finally, around 3 AM the rain comes and brings very welcome cool temperatures and the sound of the rain on the tin roof above my head carries me off to sleep.

This morning our study group is much larger than yesterday and we have some Swahili speakers in the group so we'll have translations of English, Kurundi and Swahili today. Our scheduled two hour session starts at 10 AM and concludes at 2:30 PM without a break. They fire one question after another, and it's everything from baptism, to marriage, to women wearing pants in church, as that's a big cultural and biblical issue in Africa. This is the first session that we haven't discussed the law of stewardship and when class is over and I realize we did not discuss it, I'm disappointed because they are always thrilled to learn the true law of tithing and stewardship. It really seems to have the effect of freeing them from an unjust law that has made them feel inadequate and disobedient regarding their ability to pay tithing. I am still amazed and exhausted when our session ends. We have another late lunch with only the poor cooks complaining, although they were happy to take turns sitting in on the class. Bro. Elie's mother in law has made french fries for me and we even have ketchup. I made the mistake of mentioning during one of my conversations with Bro. Elie that Americans

don't eat much rice, but potatoes are one of the staples of our diet. He picked right up on that and we've had potatoes at every meal since then. That along with dried fish, (I saw a few dozen minnows drying in the sun today in the backyard, so I'm wondering when they'll be on the menu.), beans, spaghetti noodles, rice, cole slaw/saur kraut, tomatoes and onions and its all good.

I'm back at the hotel tonight for several reasons. I realized that Bro. Elie had given me the good mattress from their bed to sleep on the floor in my room, and with Sr. Deborah being home, I figure she needs that good mattress and she doesn't need an American house guest when she's still recovering from surgery. Plus I need electricity to recharge my laptop and camera batteries.

Tomorrow morning we'll hit the internet cafe before heading out of town to Magara which is out in the plains somewhere. Then Sunday back into the mountains, but in a different area to Nyabiraba. Bro. Otis tells me we'll have to take some dirt roads to get to Nyabiraba. Always an adventure.