

My Trip to Kenya

Blog of Matushka Marina Holland

Part 13, Saturday, February 2, 2019

We enjoyed the birthday cake for FM's birthday very much last evening! Papathiya and Christine made it using a recipe I gave them, for they'd never made a birthday cake before. They'd tried once before, making it up, but it didn't turn out well, they said. This one turned out very well! We put in 1/3 less sugar than the recipe called for, and we made up for insufficient milk by adding water, and it turned out delicious! Even without an electric mixer!



FM invited FS and me to go along on an excursion with the orphanage boys up into one of the mountains. Much to his disappointment, Blessing wasn't to be able to go. He was to stay and help his mother with household duties. He tried valiantly to not show his disappointment. At first I readily accepted the invitation, but the more I thought about it, the more I wondered if my lungs would be able to handle the altitude. I ended up deciding it'd be better to not go. So in the end, Blessing would be able to go after all.

Papathiya and I had planned for the last several that on Saturday we would take Christine to the salon for her every-two-week hair washing and braiding. After breakfast Papathiya came to me with some shillings and said, "When you take Christine to the salon, could you also stop at the shop and pick up some maize?" Papathiya wasn't going with us?? I fought down some panic. I knew nothing about Kenyan money and the value of a bob or a shilling! And we were to hire a van to take us home? "Christine," she assured me, "will help with negotiating the money and the shopping and the van." So we all left together, without Papathiya and Ann, who stayed home to take care of chores.

We stopped briefly at the orphanage, and then headed to "Shalom Academy". This is the property the orphanage has bought for the future dormitory and school. It is such a wonderful property! The drive there is over a pretty rough road. But it was worth it when we got there. There is a beautiful view of the mountains, and there are classrooms already there. These classrooms are also considered temporary buildings, but they are much more sound than the buildings on their current rental property. The walls are more solid. The windows have shutters. The floor is concrete. There are three outhouses, and a "bore hole" or well, which is currently capped. They are awaiting permission from the government to complete the well with a pump. Once the well is complete, they will begin the dormitory, using funds this blog is meant to help raise! They hope to also have a large garden and a playground.



With the completion of the new dormitory, the school will advertise to families of means in the cities. The fees those students will bring will help the school to become increasingly self-sufficient. In time the current temporary classrooms will be replaced by permanent structures.

Another possible source of income will be water from their well. We saw at least 40 people walking, or riding bikes, or pushing wheelbarrows, *several kilometers* to get water from the river. And the “river” was a stream, no more than 5 feet wide, and perhaps 1 ½-2 feet deep. And then they walked or rode or pushed their wheelbarrows with their ten-gallon barrels of river water back home, up the hill. With the well on the new school property, the school can provide a valuable service to the community and earn some money.

We left the Shalom Academy property and headed back into town. FM dropped Christine and me off at the salon. We were there for 2 ½ hours while Christine’s braids were undone, her hair washed and combed and then braided.



While we were there a salesman came through selling small hand-held grater/slicers. One of the stylists bought one. A half hour later, a woman came through selling samosas. I bought two for Christine and me. They were delicious!

There were 4 stylists working at the shop and they had several kids there between them. The kids wandered in and out of the shop, playing with a bottle cap they found on the ground, or picking each other up just for the fun of it, or watching, watching what was going on around them. It was difficult to tell which child belonged to which mother, because they all were tender with all of them. Of course, over the time we were there, the ladies and I chatted together. They understood that after Christine’s hair was done, we were to go to a shop to get the maize and carrots. They became concerned that I, a mu-zung-gu (white person) would be taken advantage of, and they would overcharge me. So one of the ladies went to the shop for me and bought the maize and carrots, with money that I gave her. Not only that: they were concerned that I would be overcharged when we went to hire a van, so Mary, one of the ladies, was sent to go with us to get the van. She knew how much it should cost; I gave her that amount, and *she* was the one who interacted with the drivers. As soon as they saw Mary and Christine and this white woman enter their parking lot, they thronged us, offering to drive us to Nairobi or this city or that city. Mary said no, we were just going a couple of kilometers. Thank God she was there! There is no telling what city we would have ended up in! Also, there is no telling what price I would have been charged. I could tell the negotiations were not going well, so I said to Mary, “It is ok, I know the way home. We can walk.”

“You know the way? You are willing to walk?” she asked.

“Yes,” I answered. She said something to the drivers and walked away. Christine and I followed, and she asked me if I would be willing to ride on a motorbike. “Sure,” I answered, belying the trepidation I felt at that thought! She scanned the motorbikes and found a driver who had not been thronging us. She gave him the normal fare, we climbed on the motorbike, and off we went! He drove us straight up to the gate to the house. I said, “Asante’ sana,” which I learned means “thank you very much”. I would like to go back to the salon and to that driver and give them an American dollar bill, to symbolize to them how much I appreciate them.

I thought when FM and the others dropped Christine and me off at the salon that they were picking up the orphanage boys with the bus and going on their mountain excursion. But they were already home when Christine and I arrived; they had not gone up the mountain. Papathiya said they decided to go after it had cooled off a bit. The temperature was 81F. This turned out to be a good thing, for the water tank had run dry. The electricity man had never come to hook up the new water pump installed by the water guys. So FM worked to hook up the water pump, then they left to go up the mountain. Papathiya and I made the prosthora bread for church. Ann picked the kernels of maize off the ears. Christine and I went to get the milk since Blessings was not here to get it. And now we are just waiting for the others to come home so we can have dinner.

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