

My Trip to Kenya
Blog of Matushka Marina Holland
Part 6
Saturday, January 26, 2019

We slept in this morning till around 8:15. The family was up and busy, making me feel ashamed at my laziness. Breakfast was ready, and we ate well, as we always do! Afterward I asked to wash the dishes; Papathiya was very pleased, for her helper Ann was running late, and there were to be several baptisms at the church later at 11:00. How to wash dishes in a Kenyan home:

1. Put water on to boil.
2. Move the small kitchen table outside. This is to hold dirty dishes.
3. Carry the dirty dishes outside and put them on the raised edge to the patio and on the table.
4. Bring the hot water out to that raised patio, along with another bowl of water, for rinsing.
5. Carry out the two dish drains, a rag, a scrubber, and a bar of soap.
6. Bend over the hot water, wet your rag and rub the bar of soap on it, and wash dishes thoroughly.
7. Rinse in the other bowl of water.
8. Place in one of the dish drains.
9. Leave out in the sun, for sunlight disinfects the dishes.
10. Carry everything back in.
11. Later that day, bring the dishes back in, in time to start cooking again.

Repeat three times a day. There *is* a kitchen sink with cold running water, but it is a very small sink.

Papathiya ended up staying home from the baptisms, because Ann, the “house helper”, would not be coming. She was helping a sick neighbor. So Christine and Panteleimon and I walked to the church. FM and FS had gone earlier to get everything ready. When we arrived I learned that I would be the godmother of two of the *thirteen* kids to be baptized! The kids were all around 10 years old to 21. If they told FM they wanted to be baptized, they had to have permission from the foster parents with whom they lived. While things were still being prepared, some of the kids invited me to play ball with them. They had a soccer ball, pouched out on one side, and with a torn covering. So the four of us simply tossed the ball back and forth, and they laughed and had such a simple wonderful time. Then I taught them to play Hot Potato, and more kids joined, until we had about 15. Finally, everything was ready, and we did a baptism service, in Swahili and English, for 13 kids! It was quite amazing!





When we got back to the house, I asked to be excused from lunch (at about 2:30 pm, no kids complaining about being hungry, when can they eat?) to take a nap, for I was very tired. I slept about two hours, and when I got up, Moses, the children's 27 year old cousin, had come from Nairobi to visit. He and I talked at length; he wanted to know if America really is the land of opportunity, as he always hears it is. I really enjoyed talking with him. Papathiya had asked earlier if I could show her how I make prosphora (altar bread for church), for hers doesn't turn out consistently. So Christine came out to tell me it was time. We had just gotten that started when another visitor came. Papathiya had met her yesterday, on that public van, on her way to the tailor. The lady asked her, "Is there something wrong with my eyes? Did I see you standing out there with a *white* lady, waiting for the van, and you two hugging each other??" Papathiya smiled and said yes and explained. Well, this lady turned out to be one of many who find a corner of the market to make a living. They sell whatever item they settle on, going from town to town, lugging their bags. They keep track of previous customers, and come back to see them whenever they go through the town again. This lady's market corner was bed and table linens. So she opened her huge bag, which she had lugged up the hill on foot, and pulled out sheets and bedspreads and mattress pads and tablecloths. Papathiya went through the items. She and the lady haggled a bit, and she set some aside to ask FM about later. The lady left those items there, having received no money at all from this total stranger, having written nothing down. She said she'd be back in a few days to see what Papathiya decided. Then Papathiya could pay for her selections. And if she didn't have the whole amount just yet, that was ok; she could pay half, and the travelling merchant would come again the next time she came through the town to get the other half! "Oh, yes, this happens all the time! This is how we do business here, for the shops are small and do not carry too many things." I expressed my amazement, and said never, ever in America could such a business model

work. Papathiya said, "Oh, yes, see, if you trust me, then I trust you, and I want to keep your trust. This is how it works."

Soon after this business lady left, two other visitors arrived unannounced: two of the older boys from the orphanage. Papathiya got bowls of left-over rice and some hot tea for them, and we talked. FM had told me the story of one of the boys. He said about 7 years ago (I estimate the boy would have been about 8 years old at the time), the boy approached FM asking for money or food. FM had seen him many times and wondered about him. He asked the boy if he was homeless. "Yes," the boy answered. So FM said, "If I told you I could bring you to a place to live, and have meals, and receive an education, would you want to go there?" The boy said, "Yes!" and went to the orphanage and school with FM. He has been there since, and has developed into a fine young man, obviously quite intelligent, serving in the altar, singing and chanting the services very well. Glory to God!

We finally sat down to dinner around 9pm. The kids fell asleep on the couches after they ate, and the adults talked some more about the differences between the US and Canada, and about the value of morality in the stability of a society.

We headed back to our room around 10:30...and here I am, at 3am, unable to sleep, typing on my computer...!

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