

My Trip to Kenya

Blog of Matushka Marina Holland

Part 14, Sunday, February 3, 2019

We went to Liturgy this morning, and it was quite an experience. I missed Liturgy last week because I wasn't feeling well. The liturgy here is a mixture of the very familiar, with some new mixed in. The entire congregation joined in very heartily during various songs, and they sing beautifully. Reader Paul chanted and sang so well. I will be surprised if he does not have a future in the clergy or perhaps a choir leader.

After Liturgy we had lunch at the house, and then FS and I travelled by mutatu (van) and motorcycle with Ann to visit her and her family at her home two towns over. Her home is an immaculate perhaps 8x10 room in a row of rooms in a concrete building. Each room has a door that opens out onto the side street, similar to storage units back in America. Her tiny home is divided by a curtain hanging down from the ceiling, dividing the room into the sitting room in front of the curtain and the bedroom behind it. The one twin bed is immediately behind the couch, separated by that lace curtain. There is a thick sheet of plastic across the floor, as a rug. The home is lit by a single bulb hanging from the ceiling. She has everything she needs there: the couch, a coffee table, a small plastic chair for her son to sit on while he does his homework at the little table, a cabinet to store items, and the bed. Her walls are decorated with posters and more curtains, and an alphabet chart for her son. Ann's mother's home is just down the row; it has a propane cookstove which they share. She is appropriately very proud of her home! She served us delicious African tea with cream and sugar, and some biscuits. There must have been 20-30 people that came by to meet us. They were all eager to meet wa-zung-gu (plural of white man), shake our hands, ask us questions about America. They absolutely refused to believe that everything is not perfect in America! They all wanted us to sponsor them to go to America. There were a dozen or so children who stayed once they came, eager to talk about the superhero movies they had all seen: Fantastic Four, Avengers, Black Panther, Wonder Woman, Superman, etc! It costs 5 cents for them to spend the day at the theater watching these shows all day long, when there is no school. When I queried them about what they wanted to be, two kids wanted to be a doctor, one a judge, and the other ten or so a pilot. Ann said they figure by being a pilot they will be able to fly to America; that's how they will get there.

Ann brought us on a tour of her little town. Sundays are market days, and vendors come in from the country and spread their sheet or blanket with their fruits and vegetables from their home gardens, or with the collection of no-longer-needed shoes or purses or clothing they have accumulated. Each stall we stopped by, each shop we looked into, drew in more people, and the crowd which followed us just grew. It was an amazing, if uncomfortable situation. They are enthralled by wa-zung-gu, by I know that we are no different than they are. We just tried to be friendly and warm and kind. It made me ache in my heart.

FM picked us up from Ann's when he was done running his errands. We went home; I packed, for tomorrow we will head down to Nairobi. We gathered around the table again for dinner...the end of my last full day here...

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