

“My tongue will be the pen of a ready writer” - Thoughts of Tanzania

Heather Kemball, October 2012

The smell of Africa

Rich, warm, toasted earth – vibrant and fruitful and alive. Overpowering.

The countryside

Beauty that is at times breath-taking. Flat Rift valley rimmed with ancient mountains, stunning flowers – especially the jacarandas. Seeing wildlife on their home ground – elegant giraffe and majestic eagles. At times it seemed like a glimpse into Eden.

The people

Joyful, generous, welcoming, young and captivating. One of many paradoxes – they have so little of what the west has decided is important – especially in Kibaya – but they seemed to have an abundance of things we, for all our material security, have lost and for which our spirits yearn. These are things of joy, community and friendship – they remind me of the opening verses of Isaiah 55 “ Why spend your money on what is not bread and your labour on what does not satisfy?”

What were we doing there?

As Alison had expressed in her preparation booklet, there was the feeling that we really had little we could presume to offer to a world so different from our own. But God had given us tools we could humbly offer and share. We took our education and our understanding of how to make disciples in small groups and we shared with people who were hungry and thirsty to learn and, please God, will go back and put that knowledge to work for the furtherance of his kingdom. Here in Britain the same knowledge all too often lies unwanted and unused.

The church

Vibrant, joyful, young – the first time they sang in worship I just wanted to sit down and cry because it touched a place deep within me which hadn't been touched in quite a while.

The difference between the African church & the Western Church

The difference for me is embodied in Bishop Stanley. He is an excellent leader who is humble and fully understands where the strength and power to do his work comes from. “I am so weak”, he said, “I have to be fully dependent on the Holy Spirit”. In contrast is a South Korean's assessment visiting a US Church “It is truly amazing what you have accomplished, and all without the help of the Holy Spirit”. Links to the question “If the Holy Spirit were to be removed entirely from the Church of England, what percentage of activity would continue precisely as before?” God forbid that the church in Tanzania should trade what they have for the “riches” of our western church.

What was my part in the trip?

I have been witness to the deep work of the Holy Spirit in two dioceses and it has been wonderful to behold. In Kiteto God reaches deep among his people and restores what was broken and reconciles what was estranged. The outpouring of joy and unity finds perfect expression in quiet worship which is surely a foretaste of heaven. In DMK God reaches deep into the soil of the past and grasps the rotten roots of corruption which had spread and entwined and entangled many people and places. He cleanses the soil and pours in his work of grace. The foul smell of what was rotten is replaced with the aroma of Christ and again joy overflows.

God invited me to experience, to look, to see him at work.

Ronnie Wilson's song expresses it far more completely than I can:-

I HEAR THE SOUND OF RUSTLING in the leaves of the trees,
The Spirit of the Lord has come down on the earth.
The church that seemed in slumber has now risen from its knees,
And dry bones are responding with the fruits of new birth.
Oh, this is now a time for declaration,
The word will go to all men everywhere;
The church is here for healing of the nations,
Behold the day of Jesus drawing near.

*My tongue will be the pen of a ready writer,
And what the Father gives to me I'll sing;
I only want to be His breath,
I only want to glorify the King.*

And all around the world the body waits expectantly,
The promise of the Father is now ready to fall.
The watchmen on the tower all exhort us to prepare,
And the church responds-a people who will answer the call.
And this is not a phase which is passing;
It's the start of an age that is to come.
And where is the wise man and the scoffer?
Before the face of Jesus they are dumb.

A body now prepared by God and ready for war,
The prompting of the Spirit is our word of command.
We rise, a mighty army, at the bidding of the Lord,
The devils see and fear, for their time is at hand.
And children of the Lord hear our commission
That we should love and serve our God as one.
The Spirit won't be hindered by division
In the perfect work that Jesus has begun.

Ronnie Wilson
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Summary of the trip:-

Hebrews 10 v 31 "It is a (fearful) awesome thing to fall into
the hands of the living God."

Heather

