

HOWE THINGS ARE...

August 2003

Hello! How are you?

I've returned to my "pre-Africa" life. I feel relatively normal again (finally). It took awhile -- longer than I thought should've been necessary. Things I thought would be hard to readjust to weren't -- like living someplace without a wall around the compound and without monster padlocks/big iron bars on doors; going to a grocery store: no problem. Things I thought would not be all that difficult an adjustment were a nightmare -- like driving on the right side of the road; filling ice cube trays using tap water.

So happy I'm finished with that readjustment phase.

During that extended period of time I felt like an alien; I had all kinds of time to review various random things. Like:

Stuff you could pray about:

- **Pray** for wisdom at work. It feels like I'm making unwise decisions. The project on my list I put as "to be done last" because I was sure it would be awhile before anyone needed it... Tanzania then tells me they need that thing "as soon as possible".
- The Swiss Wycliffe office email server had this bizarre problem I can't figure out and "helpful" error messages reported by their server are of course in German (the folks there translate them for me so I'm not completely in the dark, but still...). **Pray** the problem gets resolved with minimum hassle.
- **Praise** God that nothing is outside God's control!

how is it possible that the same person (me) who in Uganda took the fact that they don't have nail polish remover as a fun chemistry challenge and attempted (unsuccessfully) to concoct something that might remove the nail polish from my toenails using locally available materials -- same person in Waxhaw gets all bent out of shape when the local grocery store doesn't have

Ben & Jerry's "2Twisted: Everything But The..." ice cream in stock?

* It's an ice cream flavor: my new favorite, followed by "Cherry Garcia" -- which they were also out of.

I also read through old newsletters (reviewing various random things). I wrote interesting letters at the beginning of this whole Wycliffe thing (this is how I refer to my Wycliffe career: "the whole Wycliffe thing"...). The newsletters are the sanitized for-public-consumption version of what I was feeling. Even so, I sounded seriously terrified (because in fact, I was seriously terrified).

Then yesterday, someone asked me what the most memorable thing about my trip to Africa was. This was the moment: I was in Kenya on this hike where you could see over the canopy of the rain forest and I suddenly realized I was in Africa -- the whole other side of the world. People go to Africa all the time and lots of people are missionaries so you might not be understanding that this is significant. It is incredible (far-fetched, unlikely, mind-blowing) that I would be in Africa (trust me in case you're not following how significant) and yet I was. And, right there looking at the place -- looking like something I've seen in a movie --, I know (on some deep, weird, core of my being level) that God can do anything.

"If you take the first step, God will take the second step. Then, by the time you get to the third step, you'll know it was God who took the first step." -anonymous

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