

Sheryl Howe

From: "Sheryl Howe" <sahowe@wbt.org>
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Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2005 1:44 PM
Subject: Week #3: Part A...

Week #3: Part A... possibly there will be a part B later...

I'm quite pleased with how this project has gone thus far.

There is one significant problem remaining. It would be nice to have that resolved at some stage in the next three days.

There is a short term person who arrived Monday. He will be providing computer support for the next six months. It would be nice to get him oriented in the next three days.

Thursday, I'm supposed to meet with the guy who's in charge of the computer system and give him all the information he needs to know and also, he's planning on me giving a short orientation/training for the office staff on Thursday as well. It would be nice to have everything all prepared and ready for Thursday.

I've just returned from a walk to the bottom of the hill and back. Addis is at 2,400 meters (however many feet that is, it's high) --- I'm rather winded after my walk. Yesterday, I walked down to get milk and bread. It's more of a booth than a store and I was reasonably sure that I could communicate the need for milk, but enough not sure that it was a little adventure. It turned out, although the guy and his friend were very amused either by me in general or by how I said milk, I did get milk. Little side note: this packaging milk in bags... who thought of that? It makes no sense. There's a skill involved in cutting the corner off and dumping the contents into another container without dumping milk everywhere. And there's a need for another container. You could just sell the milk in a container that could be used after opening and didn't require special skills to open. I'm just saying...

Buying bread is less of an adventure because the bread booth only has bread and plus, it's visible so I can point to get what I need. Although they laughed at me there too...

Today's walk involved much less of a ruckus than previous walks. No parade of small children following me. Less fits of uncontrolled laughter --- one could develop a complex with people and the pointing and laughing. One of my four Amharic vocabulary words: faranji (foreigner or white person). Hear that a lot. Along with this: "you. you. you". Apparently I'm supposed to respond in some way. However, a tip I now know: better to ignore the "you. you. you" thing. Responding draws way more attention. Ignore everybody. On walk #1, when I did not ignore people, I caused a huge commotion. Walk #2, ignoring people, caused less commotion. I can also use another of my four Amharic vocabulary words: bak-ka. ("it's finished" and/or "stop it"). This is helpful to remove people attached to me or attempting to grab my hand/leg/elbow. Currently as I write this, I can hear small child outside the fence with the "you. you. you" thing. I'm hoping this is not someone who followed me back from walk #3. He's really quite insistant. Consequently, in case you were planning on me returning with photos --- I cause a stir by my prescence, cannot imagine what would happen if I tried taking a picture. Oh, yay, the guard came and caused the child to quit with the "you, you, you" chanting.

Chanting is a whole other topic. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church broadcasts some sort of chanting deal in Ge'ez, the language of the church, like Latin and the Catholic church sort of. I think no one actually speaks Ge'ez as a language of communication; it's just spoken by priests in church. The Ge'ez chanting happens at least twice a day and one of the times is way early in the morning. I learned that not all the chanting is the church in Ge'ez; some chanting is from the mosque. It kinda sounds like they're competing with one another --- dueling chanters. Apparently the Ge'ez chanting lasts for longer because they broadcast the whole mass or sermon or whatever and the mosque just does the call to prayer. Although, I've never paid close enough attention to tell which is longer --- nor do I always hear it --- but then I also missed the other morning, for the Downfall of the Dergue (National Holiday celebrating when the marxist government was overthrown), they shot off cannons early in the morning. My neighbors tell me they were quite loud. Slept through the cannons, mostly ignore the chanting and also I ignore people attempting to get my attention by calling "you, you, you" ... really, I'm in my own little world, oblivious.

Would very much appreciate prayer for solving the one last problem and transferring what I've learned to the two people here who need to know and also, for safe travel Friday - Sunday.

Thanks,
Sheryl