

Bible Study and Grocery Bags

June 10, 2009

We are swimming along. Four guys (preacher students from Zim) are leaving us this weekend after a six week stint with Dave -- and my cooking. They have been real troopers, and even submitted to some really tough exams too! I'm so proud of them. And personally, their gratitude and helpfulness around the house is wonderful icing on the cake. Dave and I :-) will take a break from the classes and then he will be off to Mozambique in July and return for another session of study with the previous three fellows and then the present group will join them to finish up the last section of history/geography of the Old Testament. Did that make sense? Ha!

Three of the six beds (picture below) are in our guest house. The other three are in the house - and they make their own beds. Their wives should be soooo proud of them!

In this picture (below) Lorrain is preparing "vhusa" (stiff commmeal mush) for the men (and I won't tell you how many loaves of bread we have gone through! or meat, or fruit and vegetables...) It is interesting and a challenge to foot the entire initiative, for there is no money in Zimbabwe. And what we have is through the grace of good and loving Christians in America. We sincerely thank you for that.

It's been raining steadily for the last three days. If you can picture a COLD rainy day for three days, AND a house full of guys for the last six weeks -- well, I put on my "pretty-please" face and got Dave to take me out -- to the grocery store. As we drove around the traffic circle, we saw garden "boys" and maids walking from all round the town to their bus stops and sporting black dustbin bags for raincoats. It was then that I spied a man walking along with a box over his head. We broke out laughing when Dave commented, "He's working on his computer."

Why laughing? Several years ago, back when laptop screens were dim in sunlight, Dave got the bright idea to pull a box over his head while I drove down the road. It worked -- but so did it attract amazed looks from passing motorists. In fact, it was like double-takes, slowing up to see if the guy really did have a box on his head. Me? I looked straight ahead and never acknowledged that I even knew the guy beside me. Dave thought that worked fine, so on the next trip, Dave thought to cut the box down to fit better -- and if he didn't look like he was viewing a peep-show! I tossed that box.

Several days ago, I was at the till in the grocery store. One woman was sacking my groceries and the cashier was ringing them up (do tills even ring now?). There was one last bag and I thought to help. But I noticed a can of bug spray was inside and removed it, saying, "I'm sorry this is not mine." I saw another item that wasn't mine also -- and only then realized that it wasn't even my bag! Embarrassed I looked at the cashier who was simply staring at me in amazement, and then at the other customer -- who immediately said, "You need to wake up!" I said, "No, I need to go back to bed!", apologized and left the store.

But think -- this is a great (great?) illustration of presupposing truth, failing to get all the facts: whether in the act of gossip, or Bible study, or with relationships in our home. We are all guilty of assuming too much, either accidentally, without thought -- or in anger. Jumping too soon into a conversation can be embarrassing, but hurting others because of wrong assumptions -- and even carrying "baggage" into our Bible studies can be devastating!

So lets all take a closer look at our grocery bags.

Love to each one of you,
Joanne