



01-18-13 Kenya Wings Ministry Arrives Safely in Nairobi

WOW - what a time we've had already. It was a scheduled 36 hour travel time from Albuquerque to Nairobi. All the flights were on time and we arrived here as scheduled. We flew Albuquerque to Atlanta (3 hours), Atlanta to Amsterdam (8 hours), and then Amsterdam non-stop to Nairobi (8 hours.) We got our visas immediately after landing, retrieved our bags (all at 50#) and went outside the terminal and were immediately greeted by John, our driver. We had so many bags that we also hired a taxi to get everything to Amy Nelson's home, our fellow team member, who lives in Nairobi with her husband John and daughter Callan. Andrew is with the U.S. Embassy here in Nairobi.

John took us on the new "northern loop" outside Nairobi, to avoid the 8:00 am rush hour downtown traffic. We drove about an hour from the airport to the U.S. Embassy compound where we are staying in the Nelson's beautiful home.

I've never been inside the compound of an embassy and it is lovely. There were security guards at several check points, but everyone was friendly and welcoming. The entire compound is lovely, beautifully landscaped, and looks like it could be a private country club in San Diego.

The Nelson's home is quite "American". The kitchen is lovely and modern, as are the bathrooms, bedrooms, and living room. The weather is similar to San Diego so it is mid-70's, gorgeous clear skies, and beautiful tropical flowers everywhere. I will write more about the landscape, homes, etc., in another email.

We arrived, started organizing our gifts and supplies, took showers, and then headed off to The Nest, a home for children of prisoners. I will need to write more in detail about that too, but it was such a lovely place and I only wish we had similar homes/orphanages/compounds in America. There are currently 68 children in the home from toddlers to 17. We first received a tour of The Nest, while the children were napping, and then the children were awakened and invited outside for us to meet them and host a Wings Party.

The children surprised us and started singing to us! They sang in English, and had such fun with all the songs they sang joyously for us. Next we taught them how we sing "Praise Ye the Lord" by standing and sitting down. They caught on right away and laughed and laughed, and had such a good time. Then we moved out from the shade (it was a little warm) to an open area where we bounced balls on tarps. Again, they had so much fun, as did the staff. Next we dramatized Noah and the Ark. The staff were the "rainbow" (they picked colorful clothing of different colors that were out drying off the fence), Moses, the director of the home was Noah, and "Noah's children" were picked and other children picked out what animals they wanted to be. Most children picked what I would think of as "African animals" (elephants, zebras, lions, etc.) but one little boy wanted to be a dog. (It was so cute watching them choose what animals they wanted to be.) Mama Tanzi, one of the lovely staff members, and one of the older children were the "turtles".

The rest of the children were the "wind" and the "rain". They enjoyed using their fingers like rain and clapping their legs like thunder.

Now we were ready for the Bible story of Noah and the Ark. Noah built the ark, (pretended to pound the ark together, when in actuality the staff put their arms around each other.) Next Noah and "his family" boarded the ark. Then the animals came on the ark, two by two, until the ark was holding all the animals but for the very slow turtles. The rain started to fall, the thunder even was loud, and the turtles still weren't on the ark! But just in time, the turtles got on the ark, the rain came down for 40 days, the ark swayed, along with Noah and his family. Finally the rain stopped, the doves flew out to find a leave, and the Noah new the rain was finally over. Then everyone was reminded that God promised that he would always send a reminder of His love and He would never forsake us.

Everyone enjoyed the participation and laughter filled the whole area.

Next, we made butterflies out of old recycled newspaper. We had brought new crayons and markers to leave with The Nest, but we used newspaper they had there and tied the two pieces of the decorated newspaper together that was folded like an accordion with long grass! It worked! (We had forgotten to bring our pipe cleaners, but actually it was even better using the grass as the staff were impressed that everyone could have so much fun with old newspaper and grass! Then we told the children that the butterfly was the symbol of resurrection, and that they were as unique and special to God as each of the butterflies they each had made.

We distributed a few gifts we had brought for them, including some darling dresses that Amy's aunt from the U.S. had made to give to little children. We closed in a circle, as we always do at a Wings Party, in prayer. Then the children started singing to us again, thanking us, singing a beautiful version of "Jesus Loves You" where they extended their arms kind of pointing to each of us as they sang, and absolutely filled our hearts with joy. They were the most joyous, loving children, and it all came from the amazing, dedicated staff who lived with them, ate with them, and also taughter them in their school. It was amazing!

So what a first day in Africa! If we are greeted even half as warmly everywhere else we go, I will be amazed. We couldn't have had a warmer, more beautiful introduction to the people of Kenyan than through the children and staff at The Nest.

We'll try to keep you updated about each day, and I'll try to download some photos as we go. I bet I took about 300 pictures just today. Amazing. We can feel God's pressence and His love. Please keep praying for us.

I'll let others use the computer now and call home using Skype. Technology is amazing. Amy is fixing dinner for us and then we all will be happy to go to bed I know.