His Vets

October 2019

Tossing my carry-ons in the back seat, I climbed into Oulu’s colorful airport taxi in Abuja, Nigeria, early in the morning. The adventure had begun. It would have been only 2 hours by direct flight; but we stopped at Lome, Togo, about mid-day and changed planes. Then we flew to Doula, Cameroon, in the setting sun and arrived finally in N’Djamena, Chad, after dark.

And that day was not over. Jeremy’s “dependable taxi driver friend” had not arrived. By God’s grace, my cell phone worked; the taxi would arrive soon. I stood where I could be found, my backpack between my knees under the benevolent gaze of Chad’s President on a 30-foot billboard behind me. A street hawker (one of a swarm) exchanged money for me. Still no taxi.

Gradually, everyone left. It was almost midnight. Airport guards studied this red-headed loiterer with growing suspicion. Chuckling, I knew I was in God’s hands, come what may; He would work it out.

Jeremy called back. I was to walk out of the airport. “Where a tall hedge divides the road, you’ll find a police check-point. They won’t let my taxi friend pass.” Sounded like excuses; what about all these other taxis? I chuckled again.

But after sitting in planes and airports all day it felt great to shoulder my backpack and walk. Nope, no checkpoint. No taxi. So I kept walking, away from the well-lit airport into growing darkness. My hotel was that way, to the right, not far. I’d checked a map before I came.

Eventually, I reached a large round-about. On the near side was a floodlit compound wall with razor wire on the top and guards at the gate; probably someone important lived there. Our dependable taxi would know where to find me now.

When he finally arrived, he seemed defensive. I laughed and shook his hand, but I don’t speak much French, and he spoke very little English, and then only after he calmed down. My hotel was only minutes away, to the right.

The next morning Andrew came. Talk about like-minded!! As we talked, it was actually quite disconcerting. He was SO like I had been at age 29! Committed and passionate to follow Jesus, come what may, to stay single for God’s glory and Kingdom. We talked about how the Lord uses both single and married folk—each one He sends. We talked about Scripture and unreached people groups and church planting and community development.

He was born in Senegal to church-planting parents, so he knows French and he’s comfortable going native. He lives with a Chadian family in the poor part of town—no electricity, and water is shared from a community standpipe when it was working. He’s learning Chadian Arabic.

He was assembling a team, defining some checkpoint team values and vision, and he wanted a vet to join them to reach nomads. Excited. Passionate. Kindred spirit. Love this guy!
We visited two Ethiopian evangelist couples working at a hospital on the outskirts of N’djamena. One of them, Buzunih and his wife Buzunish are from the Me’en people, in western Ethiopia.

When we were in Ethiopia, the Me’en had been unreached. No believers. Our mission sent a team by helicopter to survey how we could bring them the Gospel. They landed, gathered some people, gave greetings, talked about opening a health clinic, doing water development.

Finally, an old man interrupted, “This is good. But when are you going to tell us the truth about Jesus Christ?” Astounding. Nobody had mentioned Jesus yet. The elder explained he’d had a dream that white people would come from the sky and tell them the truth about Jesus Christ. “Don’t leave until you tell us this Good News!” he insisted.

From those roots, the Me’en church blossomed. Buzunih became a believer as a teenager at the health clinic. Now, he and his family are international missionaries in Chad, supported by Me’en churches back home. Never thought we’d see it in our lifetime! Praise God.

During my visit to Chad, five different missions said they needed a vet to join their teams.

I had dinner with one couple and their three children. She is the vet but full-time mom; he is a physician’s assistant. They live in a remote village where they led a Muslim named M to Christ. M’s family threatened him; then last month he disappeared. We all prayed. It turns out that M’s family hired two thugs, instructing them to either convince him to return to Islam or kill him. They starved and beat him, but M would not give up his faith in Jesus; so they dumped him out in the desert to die. The mission team got word that they were next, and had to evacuate quickly at night. It had been raining. At one point, they were stuck in 3 feet of mud, but the Lord helped them escape.

In God’s providence, some people stumbled upon M before he died. He was rescued but not released. He managed to send out a message, “Do not try to get me released. I must testify to my family and the village leaders. They need to hear about Jesus. That’s why I’m in chains!”

Please pray for this dear family and for M—that their faith may stay strong, and the hearts of those who persecute them be turned to the truth.

In His hands, Fred and Vicki

Fred and Vicki Van Gorkom
19303 Fremont Ave N
Seattle, WA 98133
fvangorkom@cvmusa.org
vvangorkom@cvmusa.org

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