



We are sitting in a concrete house far from the known civilized world after over 7 grueling hours on the road. The most remote place I've ever been, for sure! We drove through creek beds, broken down ex-bridges, dirt and rock roads, ravines, and finally made our own 'path' through the bush.

The only people who know where this place is, are: God, anthropologists (more about that later), missionaries, illiterate tribal people, and Bill Gates.

You laugh at Bill Gates, but it is true. The current road to Lake Eyasi, horrible as that road may be, is a result of Bill Gates. The Tanzania transportation department decided a road was needed from Karatu to the city of Mwanzaa in Western Tanzania. The least expensive and most obvious path was through the Serengeti National Park. A Chinese company was contracted to build the road. When Bill Gates got wind of it, he made it perfectly clear that the big money (billions!) he is pouring into wildlife conservation in East Africa would be withheld unless the road bypassed the Serengeti. Hence, we can assume Bill Gates knows of this place.

Thank God for a Land Cruiser with air conditioning. Gil and Dolfi Maunda, the missionaries who serve here, bought it in April 2013. Due to the horrid roads, the tires are already worn out! In fact on the trip from the bush where Gil and Dolfi live, called Gidamilanda, near Lake Eyasi, back into Karatu, one tire blew out completely. (Check locations on Google earth.)



Potty break for Ruth and Dolfi

Lake Eyasi is a large saltlake bed that is nearly dried up. The air is extremely dry and



although it is early spring it is already hot. The dust blows constantly. You breathe in a virtual haboob much of the time. Our sinuses are raw and I already have the 'Africa cough' that I typically bring home to the USA with me. Last time it took three months to cough and hack it out.

Gil and Dolfi are an unusual couple with quite a story. Dolfi was an American computer programmer whom God called

specifically to the Datooga tribe over 10 years ago. A young convert – the town drunk -- got saved and fell in love with Jesus. He participated in Bible study and began preaching among his Datooga people with passion. Eventually they fell in love and married. Dolfi is perhaps the only



mzungu married to a Datooga! Gil is a wonderful Godly man with a big heart and bigger smile. They are passionate about winning this virtually unreachable illiterate tribe to Christ. God allowed us to work with them in order to make the Bible, music, stories, and testimonies available on solar powered MegaVoice players in the Datooga language.

In the late afternoon, when we arrived in Gidamilanda, we unloaded the vehicle - which was loaded to the max with vegetables, fruits, meats, dried fish, tea, corn, rice, nuts, TP, soap, luggage and more. (Notice I did not use the F-word.) Virtually nothing except milk,

eggs, chicken and goat, is available in the bush. The nearest small kiosk/shop is hours away. Tomorrow thirteen Datooga believers arrive for the recording project. They will sleep in a small house down the path from the missionary house. Meals will be cooked on an open wood fire and the women have already carried in loads of sticks on their heads. Meals will consist of rice, beans, corn, yams, ugali, and a gunny sack of sundried minnows (daga). Carbs anyone?? So how is everyone so very thin?

Dolfi suddenly remembered in all the confusion, a prayer meeting at the church on Friday night. We quickly left and walked to church. When we got back to the house, we began cooking our first (and only!) meal of the day, which we finally ate about 8:00 pm. Fortunately, Gill and Dolfi have a propane tank or cooking would have taken forever! Dolfi says it is the only propane tank within 70 miles. We ate rice covered with a sour milk and vegetable sauce full of hot peppers. It was delicious!

I am trying hard to appear brave. This evening Dolfi warned me about the frequent uninvited guests – black mambas, cobras, bats, puff adders, green boom slings, lizards, scorpions, centipedes, spiders and more. For example, “Always check your towel before you wrap it around you because there could be scorpions on it.” “Shake your clothes and shoes before you put them on.” This did not bring me much solace!! Am I supposed to SLEEP in this place??? Lord, help me!!!

I am not a very good bush woman. To be perfectly honest, I am a horrible bush woman. In our bedroom (dorm style) I saw an enormous spider on the wall. Tried to kill it. It escaped. I became paranoid about sleeping, but too humiliated to scream, run, or cry. I am pitiful. Does the Scripture regarding God not giving us a spirit of fear apply to this?

Three large German shepherd-Rottweiler dogs patrol the fenced area throughout the night. The dogs are expected to keep prowlers outside the boma. This includes, hyenas, lions, snakes... Two very unusual African snake-killer cats patrol inside the house to alert inhabitants when a snake comes in. Tonight my bedtime prayer mostly involved praying for these animals to stay awake and do their job!!



The squatty potty toilet is down a briar-lined path 100 feet toward the back of the boma. At night you can pee (only) in an inside ‘mock’ toilet, to avoid possible snakes on the path. Having body elimination activities restricted is interesting. When you know there is no convenient place to go, you have to go!

All in all...I am ever more grateful for creature comforts we enjoy on a daily basis. A toilet, shower, air conditioning, electricity, washer & dryer, running water, hot water, refrigerator, fresh vegetables, ice, real coffee, ceiling fans, and more!!!