

Nov 16, 2011 – The back story of “One Day in the Bush”

On the long drive to the Longido training session, my curiosity overcame me. And timid little me (Ha! Ha!) began asking questions. I wanted to know the origin of the Eminyor ‘torn rice bag’ church. The church and Pastor had so touched my heart.

Questions raced through my head. How did Pastor Daniel deal so effectively with a congregation of ex-demoniacs? What was his story? Where had he come from? How did he first meet Jesus? And the sweet gentle presence that surrounded him....?

We were traveling to a training workshop and David (from One Day in the Bush –which I sent earlier) was with us. Thankfully, through David, I caught a glimpse of the back-story.

Even now, if I close my eyes, I can re-play the gentle music of fervent prayer emanating from the ragged rice bag structure. As we peeped in, I could see a lean, hollow eyed man who was praying. Most remarkably, the presence of the Holy Spirit drifted out through the holes in the rice bags and canvas roof. It was a paradox! The appearance was ragged, dirty and poor; but I felt clean, joyful, and I knew we were standing on Holy ground. Then I learned that the praying man was Pastor Daniel.



Daniel came from total paganism. He lived among the principalities and powers of darkness, as the disciple of a local witch doctor. Witchcraft, witch doctors, Lobani (Maasai medicine men), spells, potions, and curses were part of Daniel’s daily life. (Daniel took this name when he became a Christian.) His parents encouraged, even pushed him, to become the next witch doctor, a lucrative position in the village. In African culture finances are shared, and the entire family would gain income from his important position as witch doctor.

As Daniel was studying with the old witch doctor, on more than one occasion the old man went into a trance and said, “I see you are being influenced by another power.” Or, “Another spirit is reaching out for you.” The old man told Daniel that he might not be good at the profession, that there was some other power, some strange force in him.

Then Daniel fell very ill and could not get well. For over two years he went from one witch doctor to another for help. His family paid these men a lot of money and yet nothing happened. Spells, curses, potions, and incantations – nothing helped.

One day, in his pain and illness, Daniel heard a voice inside saying, “Go the church of the people who cry when they pray.” Even ten years ago very few Christians lived among the Maasai and Warusha tribes. So, he was puzzled and began asking, searching for the ‘crying church’. At last someone told him about a Pentecostal church, an Assembly of God church, where the people prayed a LOT and they also frequently cried when praying.

Hope rose within him, but he knew his family would be very angry, so he went secretly to the church. He told the church leaders about his illness, and how a voice within him told him to go the 'crying church'. The Christians prayed for him – with tears! The Lord instantly healed him and he was delivered from the evil spirits. He KNEW Jesus Christ was his Savior and Lord. And he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Daniel was forever changed. No more witch doctor apprenticeship for him! He would tell everyone he knew about this Jesus who healed his body, delivered his spirit, and saved his soul!

His parents were very angry when they discovered what he had done. They were more furious when he left the witch doctor apprenticeship. Now their financial future was ruined. His family disowned him and he left the village in shame.

The old witch doctor advised the parents that Daniel would destroy the family. He recommended that the family deal harshly with him because he had a foreign spirit. His brothers said, "It is better to kill him because he brings strange powers into our family." They gathered spears and swords and attempted to kill him, but Daniel escaped with his life.

When Daniel ran away from his village, he was taken in and mentored by our friend, Pastor Joshua from Oldonyo Sambu. There he grew strong in his faith and knowledge of God's Word. Later he was sent to pastor a church near Ngorongoro.

Some time later, Daniel's father became very ill and was dying. Daniel went to his father's bedside. Before he died he looked at Daniel and said, "Forgive me, please forgive me, my son. I have wrongly persecuted you."



Pastor Joshua asked Daniel to come to Eminyora and pastor the 'torn rice bag' church. It is a mission church that David started by witnessing with the Oral Learners materials in the village. They used MegaVoice players and Scriptpix with small groups, until they had enough converts to start a church. The church is now about 25 people.

Daniel is a small, thin, quiet-spoken man. Full of the Holy Spirit. Often fasting, always praying. Trained from youth with an understanding of the principalities and powers of darkness. He is unafraid and not intimidated by the forces of evil. Bold as a lion, quiet and humble, he lives by the power of God.

When we got home, I thought a lot about the Apostle Paul and Pastor Daniel.

Paul hated and persecuted Christians with a thorough doctrinal/religious rationale. Before his conversion, his life was entwined with false teachings, violent and malicious deeds. Even the followers of Jesus were afraid of Paul. They did not know what he would become once Jesus entered into his world.

God Himself encountered him on the Damascus road. Paul must have had that 'strange other spirit' within him like Pastor Daniel did. Think about it. Worldly wisdom would NEVER choose Paul or a witch doctor's apprentice!!! No, God Himself chose them. God found them, stopped them dead in their tracks, and revealed Himself. And history was forever changed.

Apparently there are times that God chooses a man/woman to serve HIM and nothing can stop God from revealing Himself to that person. Nicky Cruz, Dave Wilkerson, and others are modern examples. God's choice is seldom the obvious!! But still today He captures the heart of Elijahs, Jonahs, Gideons, Pauls, Davids and Pastor Daniels. I'm so glad He does. It's a beautiful thing!



Pastor Daniel, church member, David