

WALKING THROUGH KENYA WITH PASTOR CHUCHU

Liz Johnson

When David Chuchu goes “walking” into his day, his transport may be by plane, car, van/bus, motorcycle, bicycle—peddling himself or riding a bicycle taxi, by donkey cart, or on foot. For two weeks in May I followed him.

Traveling deeply rutted main highways, puddle-filled dirt roads, and across tall grassy expanses, he works in Kisumu as founding Director of Diakonia Compassionate Ministries (DCM), managing DCM farm’s poultry operations and vegetable/fruit production and harvest. He and his team provide and coordinate relief aid to Kenyan victims of winds, floods and disease. He visits Deaconess Elizabeth Ayalo, and the elderly she cares for in mud houses high in the Kenyan hills. At Oskalon Lutheran Church, a Maasai ELCK (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya) congregation perched at the edge of Maasai Mara National Game Preserve, he listens well into the night to the concerns of Maasai women trying to fund and build a girl’s school to educate and protect their vulnerable young girls.

As David walks through his days, he “shoos” away goats, donkeys, cats, dogs, cows, chickens, and flying, biting insects but in the Mara, his little blue jeep makes way for an elephant, Zebra herd, giraffe family, a lazy lioness, gazelles, one cape buffalo waiting for the rains, monkeys, baboons and birds. At the Mara River hippos and crocodiles seem unconcerned as armed border guards keep watch. In May, I followed him.

In May, ELCK Bishop Obare, Grace and Gargan, school children orphaned by AIDS, beginning a new term thanks to funds provided by foster parents in Portland, and Sarah and her grandson, Thom, living in their mud house built by Portland sponsors helped me know the dignity and joy of the Kenyan people. Sheltered from the hot sun, we worshipped together under a tent-roof in St. John’s village, in the Chuchu’s Kisumu sanctuary, and beneath a huge shade tree at Maasai Mara.

Never far from David, Mary Chuchu, Heikki, Eeva, Rushell and Asline greet him when he comes home well after dark, electric lights shining through barred windows of their little compound. Mary has carried water home for cooking and baths. May’s rain and thunder begin their nightly ritual. The family sits to share a prayer, a meal and events of the day. For two weeks in May, they welcomed me home, too.

Want to help? It’s needed! Call Liz Johnson 503.246-5359