

GP Vision Trip Journal

Mon Jan 4

Depart SFO at 3:45 pm, fly for 15 hours to Dubai, trip was uneventful as I watch *The Informant, Surrogates, District 9, Public Enemies* and *Moon*, I try to stay up as long as possible in order to sleep a full night in Dubai.

Tue Jan 5

Arrive in Dubai about 7:30 pm, we hire a driver to give us a 90 minute night driving tour of Dubai, see the tallest building in the world which was opened the day before our arrival and drive out to the palm islands which I got a photo of the next morning flying out, we see many of the amazing buildings and a mega mall on just about every other corner, we spend the night in Dubai. While an oasis for our workers to occasionally come out for rest, everyone says that Dubai has become a city without culture that does not fit the Muslim world. I would agree with that.

Wed Jan 6 (Christmas Eve in Et)

Depart Dubai, fly for 3 hours watching *The Hurt Locker* and arrive in AA with an Iranian diplomat sitting between John & myself, we are met by Dg & Valerie about 11:00 am feeling reasonably rested, we head for the N compound, unload luggage and Lenora while Dg takes John and I to the guest house, we then head to Jm & Jn's for a brief orientation, this is Dg & Ld's boss who took over for Kn & Bt, since Et operates on a different calendar, it is a different year and also Christmas Eve so we head out to pass out Christmas cards with the Christmas story and DVD copies of the Jesus film on the street before dinner, I begin a conversation a young man as he shows interest in the Christmas story, we talk and walk for a couple of blocks, before we depart I give him a copy of the DVD and ask him to watch it and then share it with his friends, we head to an Etn restaurant and eat dinner followed by a floor show of music and dances from a variety of regions around Et, including Somalia, we head to the guest house after a long day.

Thu Jan 7 (Etn Christmas)

Sleep in and head to Jm & Jn's to meet the Texas Go Team for their debriefing before they fly home this evening, we pray for the homes we will visit in the afternoon, we head to Tsai's house, this is a friend that Dg & Ld met at her automotive supply shop near their language school, we are joined with the Anna's parents (M & G, workers in Ym, on vacation in AA) for lunch, I don't feel like eating but will be polite, we have traditional Etn meal, it is apparent that I am getting sick as I break out in a cold sweat and start feeling nauseous but Tsai's father is engaged with Matthias regarding his faith, he brings out his Amharic Book and we ask him to read the Christmas story in his language, after quite a time to simply find the story in Luke 2 in his Book, he finally reads, the oldest of his two sons is asked to read, both of their boys sing us a song, we then sing 2-3 Christmas carols in everyone's language, we finally have to go and this is my cue to let Dg know I am now officially sick, they take me back to the guest house and drop me off, I spend the rest of the evening quite sick and hoping that this does not last, it does from about 2 pm until well after midnight.

Fri Jan 8

I am feeling much better the next morning (nothing in my system) and we head out early, pick up JL (long-time worker in Et), we stop for breakfast and receive an introduction to the Orthodox Church, we learn that the Orthodox Church is just as big an obstacle to people getting to Jesus as Islam is (much like cultural Catholicism in Latin America), we leave the restaurant for our trip up Entoto mountain to an O Church and museum, however we discover a flat tire on the truck and spend about 45 minutes changing it due to a jack problem, while waiting on the tire change, a couple that John met in the passport control line at the airport upon arrival walk by, we greet them and find out that they are heading up the mountain to the same place, so we invite them to join us, we tour the museum and then walk around the church, on the back side of the church is the original palace where the Emperors of Et lived back in the 1800's, it was quite interesting with a magnificent view of AA down the mountain, back in town we drop off our young friends (both here for a 4 month stint with different NGO's - not sure if they were a couple or not, but it appears they are), we have lunch and drop John off at his home, we head to Af & Mf's for some orientation about our trip to DD to meet more of the S team, we head back to Jm & Jn's since this is the night Dg & Ld's group meets for house ch, we arrive and eat dinner prior to their worship time, we head back to the guest house after another long day.

Sat Jan 9

We head out early to drive to W to visit a goat project, this is a three-hour drive south of AA, we arrive about 11:00 am and are introduced to the team, BW & CW who head the project were ISC'ers of mine from 1995, I sent them to Madagascar with 3 year old son and 6 year old daughter, the kids are now 18 and 21, I remembered B from their conference days and both said they could not forget the stern warnings I gave to all the singles about staying that way and to the couples with children to only bring back the number they take to the field, we laughed out loud, we met the H family, a new couple who have joined the W team, and their two Journeymen (one finishing his term and one who just arrived) we had a picnic lunch with lots of opportunity to learn about their goat project, when we arrived they were finishing bagging alfalfa as a new experiment in feeding the goats, we also saw them start an new experiment in growing garlic, we were able to ask for prayer requests and pray for this team before we headed out (their big request was the 38 new believers awaiting baptism on Feb 14 - they will do it in another location for safety and security reasons for these new believers), as we started back down the rough road to the paved highway, C took us to a couple of homes that had received goats from their project, to date 96 women had received goats, these are normally women who are single parents or need special help in some way, they partner with the government who make the selection of the recipients, as we entered the two traditional Etn mud hut homes, we were introduced to the harsh reality of living in a one room house that includes quarters for the cows & goats as well as the place where they do all their cooking (quite smoky inside) and sleeping areas all on dirt floors, we were certainly not in Kansas any more, as we headed out on the rest of the rough road ride we prayed for these homes and all the children of this village, one thing that struck me was the fact that this was maybe the first place in all of my

world travels that people-and especially the children-were not begging, we drove the three hours back to AA, upon arrival we stopped for dinner and John tried to download email with no luck, we were dropped off at the guest house after another really long day.

Sun Jan 10

We are picked up to head to the N house in order to attend the O Church near their house since it is within walking distance. We are told that the priests speak in a language that is not understood by the people, but they come anyway. They also do not come inside the church, but get as close or far away as they feel they are in relationship to God. This is likely the reason that some of our folks back home in Marin don't come at all some weeks (an attempt at a joke). They described the experience as a come and go affair, so we stayed about 45 minutes or so before we left. Dg shared with me that the service that morning was in Amharic, the language they are learning, and that it included a portion on Adam & Eve and the Christmas story. Remember, this is the first Sunday after Christmas for them according to the Etn calendar. When we got back to the house, Dg made pancakes and we had breakfast. We then headed over to Af & Mf's for their house ch. This is not the one that Dg & Ld normally attend, but we joined them since we would be able to meet more of the S team. After a time of worship that included some singing, prayer and discussion after a video segment from the Visual Book from Acts, we had lunch with the group. We headed back to the guesthouse so that John the Illusionist could prepare for the show that night. It was our first afternoon with nothing major planned, so I took a nap. That turned into a mistake since I would not sleep much that night. We had no idea how many to expect, but there were close to 50 people in attendance. John did a fantastic job and kids of all ages enjoyed it. As I mentioned earlier, my nap fouled up my sleep that night and I did not rest very well.

Mon Jan 11

We were picked up at 5:30 am to head to the airport for our flight to DD. Ld was accompanying our team and Dg & Af were planning to drive up the next day. The airline would not accept our tickets since I did not bring the credit card that the tickets were purchased with. I was sent to the excess baggage window where I purchased three more tickets. Although not a happy camper, I maintained my cool while explaining that we were going to make the 7 am flight. It was 6:55. We were then escorted to the gate bypassing passport control to get us on the flight. They said it was cutting it too close to check our bags, so we carried everything on. Fortunately, we were all traveling light since we would only be away from AA for five days. Upon checking in at the gate, we learned that there was trouble with our plane and they were getting another. After a brief wait, we were bussed out to the new plane and we were off to DD. This is an important railroad town for shipments coming in and out of Djibouti. This would also be our chance to be around a larger percent of our people group. D met us at the airport, the S team leader in DD. The guys checked in at AV, a guesthouse/resort run by S & K (Swiss husband & S wife). S is the musicologist who wrote and recorded the ethnic S G music. I had the opportunity to visit them in their home when we came on Jericho back in 2006. After a brief orientation with D, we headed to the location of the NGO to experience one of their medical clinics. They can handle about 50-60 people a day. People arrive

and get a number, but they often see more because of the passion they have for the people. They worked with 80 patients that day. I was able to meet M for the first time. I will talk more about him later. For lunch we went to D & H's where their house helper had fixed a traditional Amharic (Etn) meal. This was basically what I had gotten sick on AA. I only ate a small portion since my stomach was still recovering from a few days ago. After lunch, the two journey girls took the team to one of the local markets. The ladies were looking for fabric to make dresses. John & I strolled up and down the isles. I was beginning to not feel so well. I found the ladies and followed along after them for a while. However, they ended up beside a lady mixing spices and I got extremely nauseated by one of them. I told Ld that I would get a Bejaj (a three-wheeled taxi) and head back to the guesthouse. I was told to not pay over 5 birr for the ride. I asked and the driver said ten. I said five. He said eight. I said six. He said no. I began to walk away and he said six it would be. The way I was feeling, I would have paid 100. The six birr came to about 48 cents. I thought I was going to get sick on the ride back, but I made it and walked the two blocks to the guesthouse. I didn't quite make it and a few residents of DD received a new definition of ugly American when they saw me throw up just outside the gate to our guesthouse. A lady entered just ahead of me and she must have said something to the guard at the door. He was also the handy man around the compound. He came out with a bucket of water and washed off the driveway and escorted me to a sink to clean up until my room was ready. Siggy arrived and showed me to my room and prayed with me before he left. He prayed that this illness be gone and moments after he left the room, I went in and began the "being gone" part of the answered prayer. After three bouts in the bathroom, I was able to rest and begin the recovery process. Again, by morning of the next day, I would be feeling better with nothing in my system. I also made the determination that I had seem my last injeera, the Etn sponge bread eaten with all meals. Lenora thinks that I may be the first person in recorded history to be allergic to teff, the grain with which they make injeera. Since I am four for four with Etn injeera, it makes sense to me and won't risk it again. We are told that the Etn restaurants in the US cannot always get teff, so they make it often times with wheat since I have not been sick in the US Etn restaurants.

Tue Jan 12

As promised, I woke the next morning feeling much better and hungry. The helper who had cleaned up after me the afternoon before was out watering plants. When he saw me on my porch reading my Book, he came over and asked if I was feeling better and if I slept well. I said yes without either one of us understanding much of the other one's language. John & I walked up to a neighboring hotel for some breakfast. We had to wait until they found a waiter who could speak a little English. After some scrambled eggs and bread we walked on down to the NGO office where the people were already gathering for the weekly feeding program they do in this location. For about \$20 US dollars, they fix a bean soup that has a variety of other local vegetables that feeds about 120 people. One of their helpers did all of the preparation. They mix the soup with rice that is prepared in a pot nearly as big as a Jacuzzi to give it a thicker consistency. When we arrived, we helped hand out plastic bags to each person. A plate of the food is then distributed into each bag. We also handed out an orange to each person. Some of the people stay right there and eat,

while others take the meal home to feed others in their family. The USAID program still provides food for Et, but the bulgur wheat that they showed us would likely not be used for feeding farm animals in America. While the wheat is still distributed, by far the most nutritious meal they receive is the bean soup and rice. It smelled wonderful. After everyone had been served and left, we went back to the guesthouse. S took a vanload into H to see their ministry to orphans and poverty children from our S people group. They have four houses with about 6-8 children in each with a set of house parents in each. They house them and run an after school program that teaches them the Book. After having all the children desiring to play soccer on local teams, they created their own teams to keep the kids together. They have become quite good and are the envy of the teams in the city. After visiting one of the homes, we stopped for lunch and then spent about an hour in the old city of H. The old part is a walled city with 99 mosques inside the walls. During Emperor HS rule, he ordered that there be one O Church inside the walls. It now stands in the town center. Before leaving H, we drove out to a hill overlooking the city and had a chance to pray over the city before heading back to DD. Upon arrival back, we were dropped off at L & L's for dinner. The whole team came over and Dg & Af arrived from AA. We had dinner and fellowship with the whole group. Before we departed, L asked L to share a story about a couple of ladies they had been working with and how one of the Journey girls had shared the good news with them. We ended the evening and we headed back to our respective guesthouses. I got ready for bed and laid down. That did not last long. I would be up all night long.

Wed Jan 13

The next morning, I told Af & John that I was still sick again. I described my symptoms to Af and he diagnosed me with giardia on the spot. He said that he would take the information back to Dr. S who would confirm and determine what to do next. By 10 am, Af returned to confirm that I indeed did have giardia and he gave me enough medicine for the next three days. He said that this stuff was fast acting and I should feel results by the afternoon or evening at the latest. Two hours later, by noon, the pain was gone and I was able to rest for the first time in the past couple of days. After traveling the world for fifteen years with the company and hardly ever getting sick, I was truly catching up with being sick during my two trips to Et and my injury on the way to Northern Ireland. I regret missing the activities of this day, but I am glad to hopefully turning the corner on this and feeling better. S arrived while I was sitting outside and writing my journal. He suggested a non-alcoholic malt drink saying it would be good for my stomach. It tasted like a cross between root beer and real beer (not that I would know what real beer tastes like, of course). Let me add an additional word about Dr. S. I remember helping with the paperwork process for her about 10-12 years ago. She was the first international worker from Mx. While she did not come to our conference, they asked me to process her paper work since the Mx Convention had never done this before. She was seconded to work with our company in Y. She has since moved to DD and serves as the physician for all of their medical clinics. She is known as the Mx Lottie Moon. It was a real joy to finally meet her in person. Also a word about L & L, they are career ISC'ers with the company due to a history of divorce. They were previously in Y and our three workers at the hospital were killed in L's office. He had been gone from the hospital about 45

minutes and it was clear that this has left a lasting impression on his life and his passion for sharing the good news. He is helping rewrite the Camel Method (ask me about it) for cultural relevance in the Horn. I had not seen them since they attended conference. L has become an important person in M's life. M leads a small house church for our S people group. He is originally from Mog and has lost four brothers in the war. At one point in his life, he was set on returning to seek the revenge of his brothers and kill the men responsible. However, since coming to faith, he has determined that he wants to return to look those responsible in the eye and say that he forgives them. He has a truly extraordinary testimony.

Thu Jan 14

John and I ventured to our little restaurant around the corner from where we are staying to eat breakfast. We had to be back around 8:30 to be picked up by Af. He left earlier to accompany Dg on the submission of his first project proposal here in DD. They picked us up and we headed to another medical clinic; this time in a predominantly S and O area. We were told that this clinic had reports of corruption since the local officials give out the 50 numbers for the number of people who can be seen on a given clinic day. When we arrived, the 50 were already inside the gate; waiting for their turn to see the doctor. The crowd outside the gate was agitated that they were not able to get in. 3-4 people entered the compound with our group and they had to be escorted back to the gate. We were called on to help close the gate, which was a short-lived struggle. We had witnessed the clinic on Monday when we arrived, but today we were asked to help. I was stationed at the door to the pharmacy room as the receptionist. I took the medical record card from each person and got them ready to receive their instructions regarding their medications. With the hustle and flow, I was soon asked to read the card for the prescriptions needed and pull them if I could find them on the table. After 10-15 patients, I got the hang of it. I listened to very detailed instruction on how to take the medicine, how often to take it, and how to administer it to their children. One little girl who had not been able to walk when she first came in December due to some serious problems with her feet, walked in for a check-up and to receive some additional medicine. We saw some incredibly old people who had so many health issues, the medical staff could hardly know where to begin. There were some that were quite simple. However, most of what we saw could have been prevented with proper sanitation, clean water and a healthy diet. This was a very sobering experience for me. We were told that the clinic should last until about 2 pm, but we were finished by 12:30 and all of the regulars commented on how well the clinic ran that day. I was emotionally exhausted when we were done. We headed back into town and had lunch. Instead of going back to rest, we went with Af to buy some beans, rice and peanuts for a visit to a S family he had met a few months back outside of town. He had been traveling with a Journeyman photographer who wanted to stop and take pictures of a grouping of S houses (trust me, these are not houses like you have ever seen). Af said that you don't just start taking pictures, so he went out and met the man who lived there. I would say in the 5-6 S huts, there was likely some combination of 2-3 families. It was hard to tell who was who. Af said that every time he is in DD, he drives out to continue developing the relationship with this family and usually tries to bring them something. He said that the small amount of food we brought would

feed this family for 2-3 weeks. As we were introduced and greeting the children, we discovered that the man's wife was experiencing a toothache. Lenora took a look and she discovered severe infection with teeth rotting to the bone. She took all of the ibuprofen she had in her purse and gave them to the mother with instruction to take them over the next couple of days. However, she knew that this would hardly dent the pain and do nothing with the infection. So we headed back into town, tracked down some real medicine and returned to their home. After this double trip to see Af's S friends, we headed to D & H's for dinner with the team, to debrief the week, have a time to pray and for this group to experience a little of John the Illusionist. We all made comments regarding our time in DD. I commented that as important it was for the work that was being done by these front line workers, the ch would only be established as it is spread from S to S. Everyone understands that and it is why it is important for us to pray for M, Dc, other unnamed believers and the S seekers who are near to the faith that work with the various teams. This would be our last night in DD.

Fri Jan 15

We were up a couple of cracks before dawn to make the 10-hour drive back to AA. It was good to get well up into the mountains before the villages woke up and the road became lined with the hustle and bustle of daily life and to also get ahead of the many trucks that transport goods to and from AA. The trip was uneventful for the most part as we caught sight of a few baboons to go along with all the donkeys and camels. We arrived back at the guesthouse in AA about 4:30 and were told that they would pick us up for dinner about 6:30. Everyone was tired. When we went to dinner, we went to one of Dg & Ld's favorite places. We all ordered Mexican food and the guacamole was as good as anywhere. They even had ice made with filtered water so we had our first coke with ice on the trip. After dinner we returned to the guesthouse to turn in.

Sat Jan 16

John & I walked down the street to meet with Dg and be introduced to SlT. This is Dg's friend with which he has had some very open and engaging conversations about faith. We walked across the street from SlT's small grocery store to have coffee. SlT has traveled to the USA and still has family in the Seattle area. With all of his travels across America, he was interested to learn the places we had lived. He introduced us the owner of the restaurant and to a young lady that had ordered her coffee. SlT told us that in Etn culture, no one drinks coffee alone. He asked her to join us and made the introductions. It was clear that SlT was well connected and knows virtually everyone. Jobda was from DD and taught economics in one of the local high schools. Later, I asked Dg about the relationship and he said that Sultan had many many friends of all ages and genders. The conversation on this day did not venture over in the faith area. We did not expect that it would. But Dg had shared some of SlT's major questions and both John and I had shared thoughts and materials for him to share. I was able to call home for the first time and speak to Janet for a few minutes before we headed to the Etn Airlines office. We bumped into Dr. S from DD. She is in town working on her work permit and visa and she was going to a travel agent to get a ticket to go back to DD. We gave her a ride and thought we would check to see if the travel agent could help with the refund we needed from our fiasco

at the airport on Monday. She did get an answer for us, but it was not the one we wanted. I would have to wait until we get back to the USA to work on the refund. We made a stop for lunch and then stopped at the Post Office area to do some shopping. We dropped Ld, Lenora and John off while Dg and I ran some errands he needed to do. We got back with enough time to wait on the shopping crew for a couple of more hours. Afterwards, we headed back to the N compound. A man they met at their language school who was selling his paintings was coming over to show some of his paintings to the guests from America. That was us. I bought one that I will likely put in my office at the seminary titled, The Exodus. It is his depiction of the great journey that Etns experienced several years ago during the famine and drought. Some thought it was a little creepy, but I liked it since I'm a little creepy. We found out after he left that his wife has AIDS and they suspect that he might also. John walked back to the guesthouse to find his watch, I helped Dg change the oil in his Toyota while Ld and Lenora made dinner. Lenora had brought the sauces to make stir-fry. It was very good. After dinner, we played a new domino game that Lenora brought called Mexican Train. It was a fun game and we learned a whole new side to our Lead P. You will have to inquire to learn more. It was getting quite late, so Dg drove us back to the guesthouse and we turned in.

Sun Jan 17

We were picked up about 9:30 and headed to the International Evangelical Ch of AA. This is where Dg & Ld worship when they are in town. We attended Sunday School and worship. They have a beautiful sanctuary. I would guess that they had 300-400 people in service. The pastor is formerly with our company and has returned to pastor here. They had been 14 years in Et. It was a great service. We then headed to Desta Mender for lunch. This is a fistula hospital compound that treats women with a specific women's issue that was made famous by Oprah even though it had operated for a few decades in anonymity. After the attention on Oprah's show, they have received enough money to open five other locations. They have a café and sell crafts made by the women of the compound. After lunch, we headed to the Funk compound to talk about plans for the next prayer summit coming in September. After the meeting, we stopped by and picked up a couple of pizzas for dinner and we were dropped off at the guesthouse. There will be a little time tonight to catch up on some work since we have been going from sun up to sun down each day. We are truly tired and I think everyone wants to go home since Brice didn't get to come, but we have a couple of more days. John walked back over to the N house to call home. He got in touch with Brice. He said he had felt better the past two days. It is apparent that his not coming was a good decision. Lights out for the evening.

Mon Jan 18

Since this would be his last day with us, Dg picked us up and we headed down to Sl't's for coffee. He was not there yet, so we waited until about 8:20. We decided to walk across to the coffee shop and wait for him. Ld and Lenora arrived a little before 9 am since DJ was meeting us to show us his sports project. DJ arrived and we said an all too brief public good-bye to Dg. As we were leaving, Sl't arrived and he and Dg went back for another cup of coffee before Dg met up with J for their week out with the AF people. J is the project coordinator for whom Dg will take over when they take their turn serving at ILC in RVA, the position Kn & Bt have been in for the past

year. We made introductions with DJ and headed back across town to his home. With his physical trainer and sports medicine background, he is the point person for all sports related projects in the Horn. He is getting ready for ten soccer players from CBU in Riverside coming in May. D & K have four little boys (ages 2-4-6-8) and are expecting number five in September (not sure if they know what causes it). Since this project was a local neighborhood project, this would be a walking tour from their house. A local friend of D's, named Dnk, joined us for the tour. He is a believer and is pegged as one of the workers for the project. D is a soccer guy and since this is the national sport (like it is in many countries of the world), he presented a project proposal to the local government to make significant upgrades to a local field that currently slopes a little too much and is the dumping ground for trash so that every rain washes broken glass across and already too rocky field. At the bottom end of the field is a public shower facility that will be incorporated into the project. D's proposal includes a feeding program that will hopefully feed three days a week. While the original proposal does not include it, he wants to put a fence around it to keep the cars and trucks out and grass the field. We watched some late teen early twenty age guys play in the current dust bowl atmosphere. D feels that the cost for the whole project can begin for \$10,000 and then be maintained annually for \$6,000. This will include the feeding program, maintenance of the field and salaries for those who will keep the field. D feels confident that the local officials will allow him to do just about whatever he wants since it is for the local community. His ultimate plan will include Book study time for all teams using the field. He understands that this will have to be accomplished in an appropriate way for all in the community. Our walking tour included a peek into a local elementary school where Dnk attended. We walked across the scary bridge (our term), which is a footpath over a polluted creek in the area and visited a local neighborhood mill where residents get their grain ground into flour. Since they were grinding teff, they made me stay out since this may be the source of my Etn illnesses. We arrived back at D & K's home and had lunch with them and two of their boys. The two older ones are in school all day. After lunch, D and Dnk drove us back to our side of town. We learned that the Timket celebration that we thought started on Tuesday really begins on Monday late afternoon, continues through the night and finishes by noon on Tuesday. We did not want to get caught in traffic since large portions of Ring Road will be shut down completely. Ld had worked it out for Tsai and her boys to come by the house and escort us to the Timket parade. Timket is the celebration of the baptism of Jesus by the O Church. On this day, the local copy of the Ark of the Covenant (that is housed in the Holy of Holies of each O Church) is brought out and paraded down to a sight near a river. They march down the street from the church with literally hundreds and maybe thousands of people attending the one near them since there are O churches all over the city and country. The processional includes drumming, dancing by young people dressed in same colored church uniforms, all the priests in full regalia. The priests are all walking under ornately decorated umbrellas in a variety of colors. We were stationed in a perfect place and were able to see the processional from a few yards away. Near the back among the priests was a covered object that we presumed was the Ark. However, it was covered, so it remains unseen. No Indiana Jones version here. We joined in the line and Ld

reminded me that was exactly the type of event that the company cautions our workers to avoid since there is ongoing tension between the O church and the Muslims. Dg and Ld had just arrived in Et a year ago and were introduced to Timket without knowing what it was. She said that our experience was much smaller since it only included the local O church near their house as compared to some that will include several churches and thus group after group of drummers, dancers, priests and Arks. We finally arrived near the tent positioned up the hill from the river. We were on the bottom side (back of the tent), while most of the people were on the upward side toward the street. The speakers were blaring with someone always speaking. Ld thinks that this may be a more progressive church since she could recognize that they were speaking Amharic and not the dead language that none of the people understand. We ventured up the hill on the side of the ceremony to get a better view. There were a group of guys who were obviously crowd control standing around the perimeter of the people, between them and the priests, drummers and dancers. Once we got up within viewing distance, one of the crowd control guys invited us (the foreigners) inside the control ring and we walked up to within a few feet at the edge of the tent. We were standing among the drummers and dancers and right in front of one of the loud speakers, so we could hear very well. One of my eardrums may still be bleeding. It was an overcast afternoon and clouds continued to roll in. We felt a drop of two of rain, but it never did. The wind picked up and some of the multi-colored street banners blew down. John and I reminded each other that our last encounter with the Ark of the Covenant was in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. We were not ready for melting Nazis so all of felt it was time to head back to the N house or prepare to keep our eyes shut. We decided to head back. We fixed leftovers and a few other things for dinner. Before John and I started our walk back to the guesthouse in the dark, John called the Rice's to get an update on Willis. He was able to pray with Linda on the phone. We arrived back at the guesthouse, which is a 15-minute walk from the N house. I have been reading I & II Samuel during the trip and I finished them tonight. It is pretty interesting to read the life and times of King David while navigating herds of goats each day (yes, even here in the city of AA). Again, it has been a long day and time to turn in.

Tue Jan 19

Since we got our fill of Timket yesterday, we decided to get a little later start this morning. John and I walked down to Ring Road to meet Ld and Lenora at 11 am. We were picked up by J & M. They serve as the culture & language coaches for the S team. They have been on the field a little over 4 years with two of those in Db. They simply wanted to have lunch with us since we had not spent much time working with them. We had a good conversation regarding the church being planted among the S of the entire region. They dropped us off at the Jm & Jn compound and Jn took us shopping. We learned that Jm is the real shopper of the family, but Jn wanted to spend some more time with our team, so she said she would take us. Some shops were still closed due to Timket. These would be O church store owners. All of the Muslim stores were open. On our way home, we stopped at Kaldi's Coffee, a Starbucks knockoff. Everyone had ice cream or a shake or a frapoochino (the way they spell it). Their logo even resembles Starbucks at a distance. Af, Mf and the kids joined us and we sat around and talked until it was time to head back to the Lyles for dinner and a

time of debriefing. We prayed together and had dinner. Jm took us back to the guesthouse and we turned in for the night.

Wed Jan 20

Today is our last day in Et and it is truly time to go home. This has been a long trip, a little too long. Making it where we arrive by Etn Christmas and stay until Timket was not necessarily a good idea, but it all worked out. There is still a level of grief over Brice not being able to be with us. Oh, well. We went out for some last minute shopping this morning and then returned home for final packing and then headed to the airport. Saying goodbye to Ld was hard, but necessary. We did not drag it out. We flew the three hours back to Dubai, spent the night, much shorter this time and then we started our 15 hour flight back to SFO. I watched *Into the Storm*, *Fifty Dead Men Walking*, *Run Across the Sahara*, *Terminator Salvation* and *Food Inc.*

Thu Jan 21

As we began our descent into the Bay Area, the pilot announced that due to weather and traffic, we would be delayed about 20 minutes. Sixty minutes later, he announced that we were running out of gas and we were going to search for a gas station at the Oakland International Airport. We landed in Oakland to get fuel and ended up sitting on the runway for four more hours. We finally took off for our 18-minute flight to SFO. We navigated passport control and customs. Eric had waited for us for the past six hours. He is such a trooper. And always remember that Dorothy was right . . . there's no place like home.

Summary

It has been 26 days since our return home. Despite the illnesses, this was a great trip. I can speak more clearly about what is going on among our people group. We were able to experience some of their work firsthand. I am excited to have met some of the S believers and to know that they are meeting together. It is my prayer that a CPM (ask me) will break out among our people. We discovered some potential projects for the Tiburon Classic and subsequent trips. They include: medical clinics and feeding programs, a DD hospital, the soccer field project, and S's ministry in H with orphan and poverty S kids. I think that John will be able to cast the vision with the TBC family in his unique way. While Dg & Ld were truly made for this, it is apparent that we must remember to lift them up each day. This is true for all our international workers.