

JOURNEY FROM ELDORET

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*It is the Lord that protects and He did protect us:
Unless the Lord guards a city those who guard, guard it in
vain.*

On December 25, 2007, we traveled as a family to our home at Ganjala in Busia, Kenya, to join our extended family for Christmas. After many years of not meeting all together, it was a great moment. We had a feast: stewed turkey, chapattis, rice, green vegetables, nyama choma and ugali. It was a relaxing Christmas holiday. It is good to note that our family is a mixture of tribes across Kenya (Samia, Kikuyu, Luo, Banyore, Bukusu, and Marama just to name a few) and we call ourselves a Kenyan family. Our children love it that way.

On December 27, we went to the polls and voted with lots of happiness. Every member of the family was hopeful for their candidate to win. Because of my position in the community, I was privileged to oversee election procedures in our zone. Throughout the country, three-fourths of the people who voted were between the ages of 18 and 30. Their slogan was "Vote for Change." Things went on very well.

After voting, we left for our home in Eldoret, where we sat glued to our television set awaiting the results. The tallying of votes continued throughout the night and we stayed up all night wanting to know who won. The winner was to supposed be announced on the 29th, but this did not happen.

Rumours started going around that grave irregularities were happening. We saw people gathering in groups on the following day, the 30th. Eldoret became violent; police were chasing people out of town. The electoral chairman kept asking, via TV and radio, where the officers from 48 constituencies were: they had not shown up with the election results even though some of them were very close to the tallying station. The lack of transparency resulted in a deep distrust of the process.

The electoral commission had promised to announce the results before 12 noon on the 31st but this was delayed until 6 p.m. At about 5.30, two girls, friends of my daughter, arrived in our

home worried because they had seen a lot of road blocks manned by armed boys with arrows. One of them witnessed the killing of a Kikuyu lady. She stayed with us overnight, going through some tremors. She went straight to bed and slept.

At 6:20 p.m., just twenty minutes after receiving the poll results, we saw houses burning in our village. I counted 15 houses burning late in the evening. The torching continued the whole night—we were surrounded by burning houses. I stayed on watch that night outside, waiting to see whether our house was the next one to be burned so that I could alert my children, along with the four families that had come to seek refuge in our home. I didn't realize until the morning, visiting neighbors whose homes had been burned down, that



We passed through 300 such road blocks, with the roads full of stones.

they were burning houses that were owned by people from the Kikuyu community. My wife is Kikuyu, so we were also a target. Our family, along with the families seeking shelter in our home, prayed constantly, trusting God that no one would figure out that we were hiding Kikuyus in our home. We trusted God to keep our home safe. And indeed He did.

Walking in our neighborhood, I saw that boys and even some young girls were among the warriors that were involved in the torching of houses. They were all armed with panga (machetes), arrows, spears, and a few guns. They harassed me, telling me to identify myself and show them where I lived. A neighbor, from the Kalanjin tribe, told them I was



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“okay,” that they should not bother with me. Five of the young boys grabbed my right hand and spat saliva on my hand. I did not know what this meant: later I was told that spitting on my right hand was a sign of asking for forgiveness, an apology for harassing me.

Only thirty minutes after the election results announcement, the president was sworn in to office. I knew that there would be intertribal clashes: within a very short time the whole country was going through riots and burning of houses and vehicles.

Three days later, while the burning of houses and rioting continued, I made a decision to leave for our home in Ganjala Busia, where we had spent our Christmas. Coming out of the house was not easy: I had to figure out how to move our children, along with other children and four other Kikuyu families hidden with us, to safety. We joined hands together before leaving the house and prayed for God to provide a way for us to get out without anyone being hurt. After our prayer, suddenly the parents of the children that had been left with us came to retrieve their children. We watched as the 12 children that had been staying with us in the house for four days walked with their families through the forest to a safe place.

My brother-in-law was not ready to travel out of Eldoret, for he felt it was “death smelling before him and his wife” if he tried to leave the house. I managed to convince him to sit in the car I was driving. With a full car we reached town in over an hour—a distance that usually takes 15 minutes. I had to talk my way through constant roadblocks. This was a very tough journey to make since some of the boys knew my brother-in-law was Kikuyu: they could easily spot him out. But the Lord saw us through to town. The remaining journey to Busia was the hardest. It usually takes two hours but this time it stretched to seven hours. Speaking my tribal language to the groups reassured them that I was not a Kikuyu. This is how we managed to pass through about 300 road blocks manned by young boys armed with arrows, seeking to kill any Kikuyu.

In the middle of our journey we met a group that demanded our identification before we could be allowed to proceed. I knew this was a hard time for us and more so for the Kikuyu families I had in the car. I thank God for His wisdom He provided to me at that time: I came out of the car and complained to the crowd about the harassment. This attracted most of them to me and they forgot about asking the people in the car about their identification. After arguing with them on the road, they noticed that my wife was a Kikuyu and I was a Samia. They asked my wife if she was a Kikuyu and she replied, “Yes! But this is my husband who is Samia.” I told them yes this is my wife and we are traveling with our

children to Samia. They calmed down and two of them volunteered to drive us through a safe route. This was the Lord’s providence: little did they know that some of the families they were driving to safety were Kikuyus! Our children and the Kikuyu families were in prayer and uttered no word until we reached home.

After reaching our home in Busia we knelt down and thanked God for keeping us safe in His hands. Unless the Lord guards a city those who guard it guard it in vain:

It is the Lord that made it possible to pass through more than 300 road blocks.

It is God that saved the families I was with.

Our home in Ganjala is safe.

Our house in Eldoret is safe: no one has torched it.

Our daughter Julian is safe and back in school.

Pray for our country Kenya.

Pray for the many children displaced.

Pray for those whose homes have been destroyed.

Let us pray for the Kenyan issue to be resolved. It might take a long time to be resolved: 6 out of the 8 provinces are not supporting the president, who has imposed himself on the people through the use of force. Unless Kenya returns to the polls for a re-election, there will be repeated riots in most of the towns in Kenya. The economy of the country will drop drastically. Pressure has to be put on the President Kibaki to talk with Raila Odinga so that they can return to the polls.

Davis, Beth, and the children

PRAISES TO GOD:

A) THANK GOD FOR THE MISSION COMMITTEES THAT KEEP ON PRAYING FOR OUR FAMILY AND WORK IN THE REGION.

B) THANK GOD FOR OUR DAUGHTER HELEN PASSING HER EXAMS AND NOW LOOKING FOR A BOARDING SCHOOL FOR HER IN UGANDA

C) THANKS FOR THE STAFF IN THE REGION: FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND YET THEY ARE TAKING ON MORE THAN THEY CAN DUE TO SHORTAGE OF STAFF.

D) THANKS TO GOD THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FILL THE TWO PROGRAM CONSULTANT POSITIONS FOR UGANDA.

PRAY FOR:

PEACE TO RETURN TO KENYA AND THE CONTINUED PROTECTION OF THE CRWRC STAFF IN KENYA