

106 Churchill Ave E
Gunhill, Harare, Zimbabwe
Telephone 701 966
10 September 1982

Dear Bishop Hansen, Pleasant View 1st Ward, BYU Chem Department, Megadiamond, Children, Relatives, etc:

Greetings!

A while ago I told you about our morning walk and closed by saying that maybe sometime I would tell you about breakfast. A number of you have written and asked, "How come you haven't yet told us about breakfast?" So, I will tell you. I am usually in the bathroom when Ida-Rose hollers that breakfast is ready.

At 106 Church Avenue, the master bedroom and adjoining ensuite bathroom are located at the west end of the north wing of the house. The bedroom door opens to a 40 foot long hallway which runs south to the living room and kitchen. That is why Ida-Rose has to holler. By the way, ensuite bathrooms (toilet, tub and sink) are unusual in Zimbabwe and South Africa. The toilet is usually in a separate room all by itself. However, this room is usually near the bathroom. In these countries, if you need to go, you had better not say "May I use your bathroom?" They will think it rather odd that you want to take a bath at their house. What you do is come right out with it and say "May I use your toilet?"

In our kitchen Ida-Rose presides over a double stainless steel sink equipped with independent hot and cold water valves which lead to a single swivel faucet. The hot water pressure here is much lower than the cold water pressure. Consequently it takes a lot longer to fill a pan with hot water than it does with cold. However, the hot water here is much hotter than at home in Prove so you use less of it. The reason the hot water pressure is so low is that it is delivered through the pipes by gravity feed. The water is heated electrically. There is no natural gas in this country. The hot water heater is much different than in the U.S.A. and it has a different name. It is called a geyser (pronounced geezer). We have three bathrooms in our house and two geysers. I discovered the geysers one day when the hot water went out in one of the bathrooms. I spent more than an hour looking for the hot water heater before discovering these two strange things in the attic which have floats in them like the tank of a flush toilet. The pitch of the roof is so low and the roof trusses so full of support members, that I couldn't gain sufficient access to the geysers to ascertain the problem.

I decided to call the ABC Plumbers in the Highland Shopping Center. They arrived promptly; i.e., one white, three blacks, and a small truck. They put a ladder against the house, climbed on the roof and began pulling off roof tiles. I soon realized that this is the standard way of gaining access to a geyser. The float in the non-functioning geyser was stuck closed. They fixed it, replaced the tiles, left, and later sent a bill for \$25.00. Incidentally, one Zimbabwe dollar costs us about \$1.40 in U.S. money. Like many third world countries, they cheat the tourist and other foreigners by the imposition of an artificially high exchange rate.

As Ida-Rose is presiding at the sink, she has a commanding view of a number of things through a large picture window. Barred transom windows are located on each side of the picture window. One of them is open this morning and a light, southwesterly breeze is fluttering the towering Australian Eucalyptus on her left. The breeze shifts slightly and the frangipane from the jasmine growing on the corner part of the thatched motor car shelter just across the terrace is blown through the open window. Ida-Rose was just opening her mouth to holler again, in more threatening tones, "Tracy! Get in here! Your breakfast is getting cold!" But as she opened her mouth, she also inhaled, and for a time succumbed to frangipane intoxication and thought she was in heaven. This gave me a chance to pull a towel across my face, get a shirt on my back, and pull on a pair of pants. I buttoned up during the trek down the hall and slid onto the bench on my side of the kitchen alcove where we eat. Ida-Rose was already sitting on her side.

I said, "Ida-Rose, please ask the blessing" and bowed my head. I didn't hear anything so I looked up. She was making pointing motions towards her mouth with her index finger and her jaws were going up and down so I said the blessing. When I finished, she asked me to open the milk bottle. I told her my spoon was dirty and there wasn't any sugar on the table.

Opening milk bottles here is very interesting. You do it with your elbow! As you well know, there are not too many things that we use our elbows for. I have a great respect and admiration for the British planners, designers, and engineers who built this country. Salisbury is a beautiful city! So are its buildings, parks, roads, industries, street lighting, railways, power stations, dams, commercial farms--they are superb! But beyond all this, just imagine the genius of the person who invented a new use for elbows.

Let's see what uses I can think of. It seems to me that babies use elbows a lot in crawling. I have seen them used in basketball. In fact, a lifelong friend of mine, Lane Compton, had a tooth knocked out by someone's elbow at basketball practice in the Ogden 18th Ward when we were kids. But that's not a good use. Another non-good use is leaning on the table with them at meals. A pretty good use is nudging your neighbor at church when you want to whisper something to him. I really can't think of any other uses. This makes the British milk bottle opening idea all the more significant.

I'll explain how it works. First of all if you can remember the old glass milk bottles that the milk man used to deliver to your door, the bottle here is similar. However it is smaller than a quart. It is 600 milliliters which is a little more than a pint. The bottle is sealed by a thin aluminum disk that is tightly crimped over the top. The top is the same shape as a soda pop bottle but is larger in diameter. We broke our fingernails trying to pull off those crimped-on disks at first. Then we tried getting them off with a knife. This was possible, but time consuming and frustrating. But we got by, though the milk was spilled in the struggle to get the cap off. Then some months later, a Rhodesian (whites, or Europeans--they don't like to be called Zimbabweans) was at our house and laughed when I tried to open the milk bottle. She said, "let me show you how," and placed her elbow in the center of the aluminum cap and pushed down. What a revelation! This pulled the crimped part over the lip all the way around the edges. The cap could now be lifted off with your fingers. And it could be replaced. She showed me that if you tried to push the center of the cap in with your thumb, the aluminum would tear and your thumb would go into the milk. The area of the thumb is too small, but the elbow is just right.

This morning we are eating whole kernel cooked wheat, our favorite cereal. Sister Lorna Wood, the former mission president's wife gave us about 20 pounds from her food storage to bring up here. By the way, Lowell D. Wood was released as president of the South African Johannesburg Mission 1 June 1982 and was replaced by George Phillip Margetts whose wife's name is Janice Hickman Margetts. Pres. Margetts is a Salt Lake City businessman who manufactures advertising sign rotators and sells them all over the world.

Cream, though not cheese nor butter, is available here and we put it on our wheat together with a little sugar. Mmm, mmm, good! Also, it keeps you regular. We are about out of wheat now. None is available here so we have been looking for a substitute. Occasionally we have been able to find a rolled wheat called Brekawheat. It's quite good but is not very clean. We say the name is not quite right. It should be Breakyourteethwheat. We are also using a pablum-like cold cereal called Pronutra. The side panel on the box tells how nutritious it is but it's rather unpalatable. Willards foods, a local concern, makes corn flakes. They taste somewhat like cardboard. Many of the flakes are burned black and small

rocks also contaminate the product. There are no other types of prepared cereal. We have occasionally found rolled oats, and they are good.

The principal food raised in Zimbabwe is a white corn (maize). It is milled to a fine powder and cooked in a pot with a little water to produce a stiff mush called Sadza (pronounced sudza). The fine powder is called mealie meal. Sadza is eaten with the fingers, usually out of a common bowl. One rolls the sadza between the palms of the hands to make a "stick" of sadza. The stick is like soft putty and is poked into a bowl of cooked vegetables which usually contains a little meat and spices. The vegetables and meat adhere to the stick of sadza which is then eaten--who needs a fork? We have eaten such a meal on two occasions with an african family in Mufakose. It tasted fine but we worried about the sanitation and condition of the meat. I have never seen a refrigerator in an african township household. They consider TV's and stereos more important and always have them.

Right now there is a bread shortage in Zimbabwe. The country is about out of wheat and has no foreign currency to buy more. Early morning bread lines at markets are very long. The last time I was able to get bread, all the loaves had been cut in two and they would only sell half a loaf. We also have a cooking oil shortage. Sliced bread is not available and the loaves are bare (not packaged). Since I'm rather finicky when it comes to sanitation, I prefer my bread toasted. Flour has now disappeared from the stores but Ida-Rose managed to get about 15 pounds before it did. So she is baking bread. She has also been teaching our black Relief Society sisters how to make bread on top of their stoves since they do not have ovens.

I like toast for breakfast and usually have 2 slices with lucious strawberry jam which Ida-Rose has been making. We don't know where the current crop of strawberries comes from but they are the largest that we have ever seen.

Some mornings we have bacon and eggs. Eggs are brown, uncandled, and expensive. Bacon is better than at home.

Guave juice and orange juice can be obtained for 25¢ and 30¢ respectively per 600 ml bottle (identical to the milk bottle) from the milkman. They are delicious and we almost always drink a 50-50 guave-orange mix at breakfast. Of course, the elbow is also used to open the juice bottles. Oranges, grown in the beautiful Mazoe Valley are often in season and we use lots of them.

Well, Ida-Rose always finishes eating before I do (not because she's fast--I'm slow). So she has already removed all the dishes from the table except the few I am' trying to hang on to. But she is hovering over me ready to snatch every dish, glass, knife, bottle of jam, etc. that she thinks I no longer need. Incidentally, store bought jam here is of very poor quality. You just can't imagine how much I appreciate the homemade jams she has made.

Oh, oh, she got my knife and the butter. "Ida-Rose, bring those back, I still have another piece of toast."

Very soon, Ida-Rose and I will have been married for 41 years. She is the virtuous woman whose price is far above rubies, and I found her (Proverbs 31:10---). The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her--She will do him and her children good all the days of her life--She seeketh wool and polyester and worketh willingly with her hands--She teacheth others in foreign lands to make bread and to use the needles and, yea, even to quilt: and to lift themselves up, even from the very dust of the earty--For forty and one years, she riseth early and prepareth a hot, nutritious, delicious breakfast for her husband and her children. Even in the land of Zimbabwe she did girdeth her loins with strength and continueth this practice. For this, strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come, for her children shall arise up and call her blessed: her husband, also, and he praiseth her, and loveth her--Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise here in the gates.

Love,

Tracy

(Editor's note: I wonder what Daddy is taking for pain?)