

# AFRICAN ANECDOTES

## THE WILD COAST



It is amazing and wonderful to think that, after 40 years of marriage, our idea of fun was to go away alone together. We decided on the remote area of the Eastern Cape, formerly known as Transkei, and a hotel

nestled in an isolated bay where there were no shops and few houses. I thought it was “just next door,” but it ended up being a gruelling 8-hour drive on a two-lane winding road with lots of semis. As we entered Transkei, it seemed like another country to South Africa. Round huts dotted the rolling hills. Everything just looked so tranquil and bright (no pollution). It reminded me of Zimbabwe – Zimbabwe as it could have been had it not gone backwards. Grass roofs had been replaced by zinc. Many huts had electricity. And each *khaya* (homestead) had its own colourful identification. However, as we approached the last town before our turn-off to the bay, we noticed thick black smoke spiralling into the air – a sure sign of tyres burning. A destructive protest was in action, blocking the highway, necessitating a detour. These protests, always destructive, sometimes violent, are an everyday occurrence in South Africa – yes, even in this remote town of about 1000 inhabitants. I do not know what their complaint was that day: it could have been anything from lack of basic municipal services (water, sanitation) to wanting a new school principal or free university education. Yes, we were still in South Africa after all!



However, our hotel was everything we had hoped it would be: peaceful, relaxing, safe to walk for miles enjoying the untouched natural beauty of beaches, cliffs, coastal shrub, lagoons and dunes. We saw about 1 person per mile, usually a fisherman. Surprisingly we discovered that cattle *love* to stand on the beach and chew the cud. (Not many fences in rural Africa.) Maybe they also are soothed by the sound of the waves! It is to us such a privilege and blessing to still be making such memories together after 40 years! 😊

## ZIMBABWE

It had been nine months since our last trip to Zimbabwe – long enough to be freshly impressed by its vivid colours – not just from lack of pollution, but I think also because of the dryness of the air. The sky was a deep crystal blue, the late rains lent emerald beauty to the short grass, the long tawny grasses shimmered in the sun, and the trees were a kaleidoscope of greens, golds and russets. In the villages there is seldom motorized traffic. The only sounds were the sounds of nature, interspersed now and then with the tinkling of a cow or goat bell, the creak of a donkey cart, the whistling of the cattle herders, or the happy sounds of children playing.



It's a country that seems idyllic, but underneath everything is struggle and hard work to get basic necessities we take for granted. It's winter now, and water has become scarce. Eventually the river will dry up altogether and they will dig deeper into the riverbed.

Education is something else that is difficult to obtain. Many older women are illiterate, or nearly so, and most of them just sort of give up trying to learn. Therefore, I was thrilled to see these grandmothers studying the song sheet for the books of the New Testament (in Zulu). The children of Zimbabwe are being raised by their grandmothers; their mothers are mostly working in South Africa. It would surely be a blessing if these women had enough Bible knowledge to teach their grandchildren!





The brethren have such humble hearts, accepting correction and instruction in righteousness most graciously. The morning after Les preached on marriage – and husbands helping wives, I saw the preacher helping his wife wash the dishes.



It is always amazing to me how *watermelons* will grow with minimal rainfall. Note this assortment of melons and squash. The bright yellow, oblong ones they call cucumber. They cook watermelon with corn to make a special dish which they say is delicious. Hopefully one day I will try it. On this trip we were given a gift. We have eaten all kinds of game, but this was the first time for guinea fowl. I expected it

to taste “gamey,” but it was just like chicken, only a little tougher. The giver asked me if I wanted it live, dressed, or cooked! You can guess which one I chose!

Sharon, my interpreter in Tsholotsho, is a widow with a six-year-old son. She has kept her faith from childhood without wavering, even though she faced many challenges, even before she was widowed, and is one of the few ladies who actually spends quite a bit of time in the word of God. Like most Zimbabweans, Sharon has no permanent employment, which is why she was free to go to Tsholotsho to interpret for me. “So how do you live?” “By the grace of God.” We ALL live each day by the grace of God, but I suspect few of us are as much aware of that fact as Sharon is! Yes, we go to Zimbabwe to teach, but we also go to *learn*, and that’s why I love being with these women – women whose faith teaches, humbles and encourages me. I pray that God will grant us more opportunities to be with them.

May the God of all grace be with all of you, dear friends.  
With love, Linda

