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# Dude: The Joy of Being a Cultural Ambassador

May 16, 2010

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I have twelve students who require obtaining educational visa's in order to study in the United States. It involves compiling a packet of eleven different documents and then making an appointment at the US Embassy for an interview. The US Embassy interestingly schedules all appointments at 7am. So, you arrive at 7am and stand outside for hours with hundreds of others before they let you in, and then you sit inside for several hours waiting for your student's turn. Often, I am the only American waiting in line, so my advice is eagerly solicited. Yesterday, I had an elderly woman inform me that she was trying to obtain a visa to go to meet her first grandchild.

Elderly Woman: Do you know of this place that they call San Diego?

Me: Yes, I have been there many times.

EW: How does a woman such as me prepare to go to California?

Me: There is only one vital thing you must know.

EW: You must tell me!

Me: Instead of saying hello, you must use the magic Californian word.

EW: Please tell me the word!!

Me: Dude.

EW: Dude?

Me: In California, you greet people by saying Dude instead of Hello.

EW: Dude?

Me: Dude

Somehow this conversation caught on, and many people came over to practice saying the magic word. There was something quite inspiring about hearing dozens of thick Kenyan accents use the word Dude. After four hours, my student was told he would receive his visa next week and we prepared to leave. The elderly woman came up to me quite excited, because she was granted a travel visa. In Kenya, it is a sign of respect to call an older woman Momma.

Me: I am so excited for you, Momma.

EW: Dude.



She is SO ready to go to California. I take my responsibilities as a cultural representative SERIOUSLY.

The next day Nancy and I went into town to do errands and we decided to go to a different place to eat. It was a Lebanese-Sushi restaurant with a big brick oven for baking pizzas. While Indian music played, our Kenyan waiter served our food and said `Bon appétit.'

That was a LOT of multiculturalism for ONE meal. We didn't even need dessert.

There has been so much illness at our campus that many of us have been forced into roles we never expected. I was asked to teach third grade for THE ENTIRE DAY. I have absolutely no educational background, except for a

legendary stint as an eighth grade English teacher which has set a certain standard at RVA which no one has fortunately been able to match.



Third graders have ENERGY. Although Ben and Katie are the two most wonderful children in the world, they manage to exhaust me almost every day. When you add 14 more children, it was like nothing I have ever experienced before.

This is not what you would expect a holy missionary to say, but by the end of the day, for the first time in my life, I wanted a cigarette.

Matthew is going to attend the University of Richmond in the fall. He was accepted to every college he applied, and how he came to Richmond is a story of how His plans are so much greater than ours. I won the Yale University Counseling Award a few years ago so I am supposed to know what I am doing, and our mission allows us one trip with our kids to go to colleges, so Matthew and I visited thirty colleges last year. There were many he got excited about, but we never went to Richmond, and it wasn't on his radar.

I went back to the states in October to speak at a college conference, and I had a free day. Lots of colleges were offering tours, and I picked the University of Richmond just because I didn't know much about it. It was a spectacular campus, and I suggested Matthew apply. At that point, we didn't know that JT's fiancée would get a full scholarship to the University of Virginia. Richmond was just an impressive school.

Richmond gave him a financial package that will enable him to avoid a lot of debt. The biggest reason I feared going to the mission field was that I thought I would betray my own children because I wouldn't be able to save much for their college. Matthew has been here since 2nd grade, and while we have saved every month, we don't make much and we didn't save much.

But He has provided. In fact, Richmond gives five full scholarships to international students, and an African student at RVA got one of them. She is an amazing kid, and it will be so great for Matthew that Charissa will be there. RVA students got great packages to Yale, Princeton and MIT this year; He has provided.



As we get ready to leave to go back to the states, we are trying hard to finish three more computer centers. Donations have gone down considerably during this terrible economy, but we need some help to finish them up. We will have 20 computer teachers, and they don't get paid much (\$100-180 a month) but with 20 it adds up. I hate to ask, but if He moves on you, we can really use the help.

I was at a school last week, and there is a new headmaster. The previous headmaster didn't finish high school; he got the position because of political connections and because the school was a write-off. They didn't expect much.

The school has improved so much that the government decided to get serious about it, so the new head master has a college degree and really wants to take the school to a new level.

I have to have eye surgery when I return to the states, but in some ways I'm seeing better than ever.

Your pal



Come join us July 31 @ 7-9 p.m. at Woolley's!

Woolley's Frozen Custard
 Hurst Location
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The Peifer's ALL NEW Favorite Links...

My friend Ryan Murphy has another book coming out! Find it [here!](#)

The Tius' 2010 Ride for Kenya Kids Can! -www.rideforkenyaskidscan.blogspot.com

We have been married for a year and a half and currently reside in Minnesota. In July of this year, we are planning to bike across America. We will use this opportunity to raise money and awareness for a wonderful organization called Kenya Kids Can! Check them out at <http://kenyaskidscan.org/>

Brewing an idea: Wake Forest (JT!) Student entrepreneurs cook up a hot venture. Read about it [here!](#)

The Impossible Mentor - The Trouble with Following Jesus by my great friend Ray Hollenbach-find this book it on amazon.com

Discipleship and spiritual formation books come and go at the pace of diet and exercise books, with approximately the same results in the lives of believers. The Impossible Mentor suggests Christians find Jesus a worthy role model while also holding the conviction that no one could possibly live up ...

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[Janelle Summerville](#) (JT's Fiancée!) is a dancer and choreographer with the Wake Forest dance company. She has conducted research in Kenya and organized a charity event on campus to raise funds for Kenya Kids Can, a service organization that combats poverty in Kenya.

The Peifer's Quick Links...

[Our Website](#)

[View Steve's CNN Hero Video on YouTube](#)

Contact Information

Steve and Nancy Peifer

Rift Valley Academy PO Box 80 Kijabe, Kenya 00220

Mission: AIM PO Box 178 Pearl River, NY 10965

Home Number: 011-254-20-3246-458

Office Number: 011-254-20-3246-170

Steve's Cell: 011-254-0734-124292

Nancy's Cell: 011-254-0734-124291



If you would like to contribute...

Kenya Kids Can is supported by the prayers and financial contributions of people like you, from all over the world. If you are able, please [make a donation](#) today to either the "Peifer School Lunch Program - 000339" or the "Peifer Computer Center Program - 000336." Steve and Nancy raise their own funding; to support their family directly, make your contribution to "Peifer, Stephen C and Nancy J - Support 047930001." Thanks in advance!

kenyakidscan.org

Please do NOT send checks directly to Kenya.

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