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David Rawson Letters to Sweetheart and Family

David Rawson

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September 7, 1992
Room 305

Sweet heart,

We have a break in the proceedings. After ceremonial opening session yesterday we were to begin at 9:00 AM this morning, but then the organizers realized that the proposals from both sides would have to be translated into English, so we don't meet until 3:30 PM this afternoon. I took the extra time to rest up. Although I woke up at 5 A.M., I determinedly went back to sleep and finally got up at 8:15. That gives me two good nights of rest after not having much sleep since I left Washington. I am feeling a lot better and even think my cold is abating. Its good to get back on a regular schedule and steady diet rather than all these airplane meals.

Speaking of airplanes, after I got to Kigali, they found out that my plane to Addis would miss the onward flight to Nairobi by 15 minutes, so they had a car drive me down to Bujumbura. It was great to travel through the countryside again and what used to be a bumpy, dusty road has now been paved. I must confess that my eyes kept closing as we travelled along so I did not take it all in. We got to Bujumbura after dark and the Ambassador had laid on a nice meal for me before I went to the airport. My plane to Nairobi from Bujumbura was to leave at 1000 PM. Because it could not get fuel in Kinshasa and had to fly over to Brazzaville to refuel, it was 2 hours late. It was 3:30 A.M. Nairobi time by the time I got to the hotel. I had to be up at 700 to get the things I left at the Embassy and to get on over to the DHL bus. I was one of the last passengers to be allowed on, so I had to sit in an aisle jump seat for the first-hour trip to Arusha. I kept nodding off all the way down. After having tried so hard to get here before Monday, in fact we did not have opening ceremony until Monday afternoon at 5:00 PM and won't do anything substantive until today. But once having arrived, I could unpack, settle in and rest up and that is really what I needed.

Since I had part of the morning free (the Western observers had to meet the Tanzanian Foreign Minister at 11:30) I walked down to the central market. I had looked for it in town before but unsuccessfully. Yesterday when I took the package to Faduma's brother, he drove me back by the market to show me where it was. So this morning I wandered through it buying a tinpan to cook soup in and two ^{chips} cups so I don't have to use my Sierra cup all the time. The market was full of produce of all kinds: eggs, beans, grains, lots of oranges - it must be orange season - giant big tomatoes and the usual sticks and weeds bundled up which, I suppose, were for medicines. It was a joy to see so much activity. There were of

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course, as well, the usual blacksmith shops with hoes and axes and cooking stoves of all kinds and enough different kinds of baskets to make me want to buy one of each kind. The only thing missing was you thing with me buying produce for our own home. Maybe someday again... in Africa...

You good little man has waiting for me when I arrived. What a joy to have it said 'me! True, you told me all of the news, but to reveal it made you seem close and I'm afraid I got hung over a tired and had to pause. But that's just because I love you so and miss you even as I enjoy these adventures in new places and the challenges of helping people reach forward in peace with each other. I particularly thought of you today as I took my walk into town along the little stream that separates this hillside from city center. At the end of the dry season all trees and flowers seem to make one last flourish reaching to the sun before the rains come. The plane trees are flowering, jacarandas are in flower, tulip trees drop their large orange petals and along the paths the young birds have a hope of that first wild flower. ^{the first} ~~first~~ of all is the thistle, and ~~spring~~ plant topped with a most delicate yellow flower. I tried to pick me and get picked. I guess we are just supposed to enjoy them from afar.

Anyway, I now have flowers (seem to have misplaced my blue Bic) in my room. There were so many beautiful flowers in gardens around here that I asked downstairs where I might buy some. They told me house buying would put ~~the~~ some in the room for me. Initially I got some more of a bush in the garden but last evening they brought up a clay vase with callillies,[?] along with roses, carnations and daisies. It really brightens this spare room.

We are having another dinner time as each side studies the other proposals. They are far apart at this time and having a hard time seeing how to accommodate the other demands. They meet again this afternoon at 5:00 PM for general debate. Then there is to be a working group formed to put together a document that can be negotiated. So we are in for a couple of more days of discussing continue at all.

Robert Bentley & Dan Sedman has been here with me and is returning to the for a couple of days to get some work done with ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ people up here meet in private session to study the other's position. I am working this with him in hopes of finding a carrier back to the US, maybe DeLameth's themselves. It comes with all my love. Hopefully, ^{session} ~~session~~ ^{the} ~~the~~ will push through to conclusion and we'll be out of here next week this time. Since there are a lot more obstacles here, then time, there is a lot more pressure to get the negotiations back at the table.

See you soon, I hope
Love,
David

Room 305
October 12, 1992

novotel mount meru

Dear Family,

I should be writing you, each one, a separate letter, but given the uncertainty of our meetings' schedule and the fact that this session may be close in a couple of days, this is the most certain way of making sure you all hear from me at Arusha.

The peace talks are making some progress and for that we are thankful. This time, the negotiators are meeting together in private or separately with their negotiating teams so we are on the sidelines. Because they cannot calculate how long these ^{private} discussions will be, it is difficult to schedule regular open meetings. So we must know when we will be invited to plenary session. Yesterday (Sunday) we were to meet twice and ended up not meeting at all.

So I went to church twice. The Anglican Church had advertised "Holy Communion" at 8:00 A.M. on the second Sunday of each month. Since the sign was in English, I assumed that the service would be too. Wrong! It was all in Swahili, but since it followed the liturgy, I had a pretty good idea of what was being said -- could even follow along in the Scripture readings. Wanting to worship in my own tongue, I then went to the English (community service at 10:30).

Afterwards some Lutheran short-term missionaries and I went out to lunch. They are here preparing simple courses for new believers in Bitta study. Their lessons will be translated into Swahili. There is a big need for this since ~~there are~~ ^{there are} an awakening has sprung up amongst the people in the surrounding regions. People say the Tsimanika are asking for instruction and baptism. North of here a month ago over 1000 people were baptized in one Sunday service. We walked from church downtown to the New

Arusha Hotel for lunch and then walked back along my favorite mountain stream to the road leading to our hotel. There we parked and they walked on $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles up the hill to the school where they are studying.

That inspired me to do some walking later in the day. I walked up the foot hills of Mt. Meru, steadily upward until I reached a crest under a giant cedar tree and could look up at the mountain straight ahead illuminated by the setting sun. It was dark when I got home, tired, hungry and ~~sleepy~~ ^{drunk}. Because, at the end of the dry season, parts of the paths are deep in dust, we otherwise had a chance to chat with the Taingarian facilitators and a fit with the two Rwandan parties last night. It sounds like we are making progress. We are to hear a

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report in open meeting at 11:00 today. It's good to be a part of this process and to be here in this lovely spot just I miss being home and in closer touch with you all. Please keep Rwanda in your prayers. The peace we negotiate has had to be accepted at home. That may not be easy. Please turn over

I guess you get the original. Am also sending one to Christa, Jon, Perry & Dad. You may show this to Joan if she should stop by. It looks like I am going to be here longer than I intended but I still plan to be home as scheduled. Will just have to cut down on my stay in Europe. They may have a meeting of the joint political military ~~meeting~~ ^{conference} after this is over. I do not now expect this to end until Saturday or Sunday. The pace is slow. We had a meeting this morning, will have another tomorrow P.M. so I am going to a lodge nearby just to get away from the hotel for a bit. There are many little lodges ~~be~~ around here, tucked away in beautiful spots on the hills. We visited two of them yesterday on an afternoon's excursion. That is where I got the idea ^{of an overnight get-away} ~~I~~ ^I ~~guess~~ ^{guess}. Visited the market with the Ugandan Vice-Minister today. Bought some grapes and washed them thoroughly. Hope that takes care of whatever is on them. They are a bit tart, but plump and juicy.

Well, I had better get this to the post office and on its way. It comes with bundles of love. I'll save all the hugs and kisses for when I get home. Miss you awfully and wish you were here.

Love,

Dave