

Wings in the Water

I felt a certain sisterhood as I read an article in “*Best of Women in the Harvest*” by Sharnel Smith entitled “Things they forgot to tell us in Missions 101”. We have a certain bond as we go forward into the world initially a bit naive, but graduate into an “experienced missionary” rather quickly. No, Missionary Training 101 does not completely prepare us for our new life. There are some experiences that need to be learned “in the field”; a sterile school room just can’t do it justice.

What first comes to mind is how to remove “picas” from my feet. A “pica” has been described to me as being an egg sack laid by either a flea or a worm. Which ever you wish to call it, it has to be removed. This process can only be learned through experience; therefore, why go into the subject in Missionary Training 101? That would spoil all the fun!

But, let’s discuss the various “critters” that live in our homes. Myself, Sharnel, as well as many other third world women, have an indwelling of ants in our kitchens. I took a frying pan out of the cabinet and saw the bottom moving. My thoughts were: a) the pan wasn’t cleaned properly before putting it in the cabinet and now has ants; or b) my ants have developed a taste for Teflon. I actually think it was both a) and b), as my ants can live on anything! They have just about developed a taste for Baygon, a local ant poison.

We also have various sizes of geckoes in our living room and bedrooms. If you aren’t familiar with these, they are clear lizards. They are rather harmless, but scurry out from behind the curtains and can startle you. I’ve often wanted to catch one (good luck!) and take it outside for some sunshine. They are in dire need of whatever vitamin or mineral there is in sunshine that makes plants green. Their clearness is bothersome and looks sickly.

Our bathroom has several inhabitants that aren’t human. We have hundreds of flying things. These things aren’t mosquitoes, flies, ants, or anything I’ve ever seen. They are also harmless, but do like to fly at you while you are taking a shower. Praise the Lord, I’ve not found any in my hair. A good dose of bleach daily can keep these at bay.

My bathroom also has lots of frogs. These are very small, about the size of a quarter. I’m not sure what kind of frog they are except maybe just bathroom frogs. During the pinnacle of their season, they hide under the toilet seat and can surprise you when they jump up on your fanny. They also like the inside of the sink where the overflow water drain is. I think these little critters are okay, ‘cause don’t frogs eat mosquitoes?

We’ve also have the occasional mouse in the house. The first time I saw a mouse running in the kitchen to hide behind the stove, I said to my husband, “There is a mouse in the house”. His answer was, “I’m sure all you saw was a frog.” Well, I think I’m fairly sure that a mouse runs and a frog hops, this animal was *running* behind my stove! After my husband saw the little guy running in the kitchen, he was convinced to buy a mouse trap. It took several days to catch him as he was too small to trip the trap.

Now, we have geckos, lizards, frogs, mice, plus other winged critters in our house. One night, my husband came running out of the bathroom with a wash cloth in his hand. Hoping he hadn't totally gone crazy I asked, "What are you doing?" His comment was, "We have too much wild life in the house, and I'm getting rid of a frog". Well, the frogs were the least of my worries, how about the mouse in the kitchen? The mouse finally did eat the bite of meat on the trap and went to his great reward, but he was followed by another family member. Our weather finally got warmer which meant the mice were finding homes in the great outdoors – PTL!

We also have large toads living in our outside flower beds. We sometimes spend the evening watching them catch bugs on our screen door. This may seem like a rather boring evening to some, but we find it rather entertaining. Not only can we be assured SOME of the flying critters will become an evening meal and not enter our house, but we don't have very good television reception. Reading books is great, but sitting outside watching the wild life can be very educational.

I'm reminded of the many uses we've heard for toads. I once met a local woman who had quarter size red circles all over her body. When I asked what she was doing to care for these places, she said she was rubbing pig fat and a toad on the circles. Hmm – is it a specific toad each day or does she just use whatever random toad happens to be in the garden? Another use is to boil a dead toad and use the liquid to drink to cure hemorrhoids. I was advised not tell the patient what they were drinking because it tasted bad and they may refuse. Remind me to ask the next team heading south to stick a tube of Preparation H in their bags.

But I have digressed to the outside world. I haven't mentioned that our water for our house comes from a hand dug well. The water sometimes is very clear, other times it is as cloudy as orange juice. We only use this water to shower in, wash dishes, and wash clothes. While filling a pot to heat on the stove to wash dishes (we don't have hot water), I noticed the water seemed to be full of stuff. The next day, more stuff was in the water both on the bottom of my pot and floating on top. I mentioned this to my husband who said, "Those are just wings in the water". "**Wings?**", I asked while scratching my head; my glasses apparently need to be changed the next time we are in the states. My husband said, "Yes, I don't have my ladder to get up to the water tank, but I think we must have a nest of some type of bee living around the lid of our tank. But just think, with that many wings in the water, I wonder how many dead bees are in the bottom of the tank?" I didn't think this was such a wondrous thought, but started to strain my water with a tea strainer as it ran into my pot.

My husband did finally get his ladder back, and climbed on top of the roof to inspect our water tank. Yes, indeed, we had a LARGE bee nest hanging down from the lid of our tank, *inside* the tank. Now, what to do? My husband threw the lid off the tank onto the roof of the house; then he *quickly* climbed down the ladder! He only managed to get two bee stings in this process, but the nest fell into our tank.

Next step – get the nest out of the tank. We let the bees settle down, some dying inside the tank. Hubby took a rake up to the tank in order to scoop out the majority of the nest. This was 85% successful. But to get the rest of the nest

and dead bees out of the bottom of the tank, we decided to overflow the tank. This worked, putting all the dead bees and remains of the nest on our roof and patio, but they were out of our tank.

Our water is still not potable. Our hand dug well is only about 45' deep, with only 2' to 3' of water in the bottom. However; we are thankful for all our many blessings – we now have "wing-free" water.

Have I mentioned the name of our ministry? It's Agua de Vida, which means Water of Life. We are water well drillers. However, in the Lord's infinite sense of humor, we haven't been able to drill us a well – maybe in the future...