



Greetings to everyone,

Well, Glenna and I just finished our first missions trip together. We went with Pastor James to the town of Bukoba which is roughly a 10 hour journey. It is a very remote area. Pastor James is originally from this region. We also took two other church members. A man named Judica did our driving. He's a truck driver and knows the roads quite well. Paschal, a young man of about 30 years of age was a big help with keeping things organized. By the way, Paschal is also from this area and had not been home for over 10 years. When he left he was not a Christian.

We left on the morning of the 17th. It was a beautiful day and we were all excited! We rode a ferry across Lake Victoria for the first 30 minutes of our trip. Then we departed the ship and began the long drive. We weren't more than about 3 hours into our journey when we began experiencing car trouble. First the engine began overheating and then the timing belt broke! There we were, out in the middle of nowhere and stuck high and dry, literally! We started pushing the car to try and get it to a distant driveway when a large truck came along and ended up towing us to a little village called Chato. We had to have a new belt sent in all the way from Mwanza. The car that was delivering the belt also broke down out in the middle of nowhere!!

Anyway, as we began to look for God's purpose in all of this James asked around if there were any pastors living in the area. Within a few minutes one turned up whom James had known years before. The pastor seemed very surprised to see all of us. He later said that he had had a dream the night before. In the dream God told him that white people were coming to his house the next day for a visit. He was so excited that we were there and asked us repeatedly to return to the village in the near future to teach and preach.

Finally, late Saturday afternoon we shoved off again. It was more than interesting to bounce over roads with ruts a foot and a half deep, especially in areas where robbers frequent. However God was obviously watching over us and we made it safe and sound.

It was a gorgeous Sunday morning when we finally arrived at our destination. James' mother along with many of his other family members started celebrating when we pulled in. We actually stayed there for 3 days. As well as getting to know his family we visited many people in the area including attending a church service conducted especially for us! It was very moving.

On Monday we took Paschal to his home village. It was quite a reunion. The family had just about given up hope of ever seeing him again. This opportunity gave Paschal a chance to witness to a lot of people. Most of his family are not Christians and he managed to bring several of them to Jesus!

The following Wed. we began a 3 day seminar. Glenna spoke on the love of God as well as maintaining good spiritual habits to keep a vibrant relationship with Christ. James and I preached on surrendering your life completely to God and running with the vision He gives you. Despite me struggling with a stomach ailment and Glenna with a sore back the Lord blessed us richly!! The people seemed very happy with the teachings and asked us to come back as soon as God allows. Another wonderful thing was that we had pastors attend from several denominations. Since no one from the outside ever ventures into some of these places they are so grateful when someone does agree to come. Many were encouraged by what was said and recommitted their lives to the Lord.

On Saturday Aug. 26th we arrived back in Mwanza after an overnight ferry ride from Bukoba. All in all, it was an incredible experience. It's almost impossible to put into words all you see and feel. Someone once wrote that when you choose to follow God He will stretch your faith beyond anything you thought possible. I now know that to be a fact!

One last area I wanted to comment on is the real needs these people have. Many of the churches, which are nothing more than small, rough, concrete rooms, go unfinished because of a real lack of funds. The pastors sacrifice so much to follow the call of God. It's hard for us to begin to comprehend the conditions many live and worship in. At times it breaks your heart. As I said, it's so difficult to put into words all you see and feel.

Well, that's all for now. As Ringo Starr once said to John Lennon after an all night recording session, "It's been a hard day's night." And so it has.

Love always,

John Paul

[\(John Paul in Africa\)](#)