



April 24, 2008

Hello to all from the sunny shores of Lake Victoria,

On Monday April 21st we returned from our second missions trip. This time it was to a remote village southwest of Mwanza called Ushirombo. Things went very well and we consider it to be one of our most successful ventures yet. God blessed us abundantly!

We left for our destination on the previous Tuesday. It was again a long and tiring bus ride taking over seven hours to complete. Some of the most interesting moments of our rides are provided by vendors who get on and get off at various stops. They stand in the aisle—if it's possible—and hawk everything from small bottles of perfume and after shave to all purpose soap, toothpaste, and skimpy underwear. It's amazing how resourceful some people are at trying to make a living. By the way, when you stop at each little village the bus is swarmed on the outside with other vendors carrying large trays of bananas, oranges, cookies, candy, soda, or hard boiled eggs. In regard to the refreshments one has to be cautious, Montezuma's revenge, African style, is a constant threat.

We eventually arrived in Ushirombo late in the afternoon. As with so many other villages in Tanzania it is lined with multiple kiosks selling practically everything one could need for everyday life here. One thing I did notice was the many donkeys that were being used throughout the town. On almost every street you saw teams of them drawing small, two wheeled carts and at night you would see many of them grazing along the road.

Following a warm greeting from Pastor Shila, the person who invited us, we spent some time discussing the seminar, eating an interesting meal, and then settled into our guest house for the night.

Guest houses never cease to surprise us and this was no exception. The cost was \$8 a night and it looked fairly acceptable on our initial inspection. However, the first evening we discovered that there was no electrical power in the entire town and that what power we did have at the guest house was provided by a "huff and puff" generator across the road. We did manage to have three hours of electricity a night. One dark evening we were late getting home from the service and missed our window of opportunity with the lights and I brushed my teeth with a fungal ointment! Oh well...

On Wednesday our seminar began without a hitch. It was held at a church just outside of town and was well attended! In fact we had 37 pastors from several denominations turn up for the presentations!! Just as in our previous seminar in Serengeti, people came from miles around to hear the messages. We all felt the Spirit moving in a powerful way!

Since Pastor James is presently involved in trying to get his new church built, a Pastor Frank came along with us to interpret. Frank is from the African nation of Rwanda and has been a close friend of James for many years. He spent five years living in England, from where he just returned, and obviously speaks both English and Swahili quite well. Glenna and I were extremely happy with his efforts.

The people keep saying how excited they are by the teachings we present, so it's always a thrill for us to go to a new place and encourage them in the Lord. Glenna spoke on the many choices we make in life and when we choose to follow God it has to be a TOTAL commitment. She never fails to add that living for the Lord is "simply doing what HE WANTS us to do." She also spoke on the death and resurrection of Christ and what that really means to all of us in the Christian faith. It's remarkable how her teachings take on real depth without losing the listeners.

In connection with our commitment to Christ, she always adds the verse from Romans 14:8, "If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die we die to the Lord; but whether we live or whether we die we belong to the Lord." Throughout this seminar, as in previous ones, Glenna gave serious warnings on the evils of witch doctors and ancestral worship. I never cease to notice how quiet the crowd gets when she delves into these areas.

Holding to our usual schedule of two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon, I spoke on the love of God and how He has created and called us to serve Him. I told several stories of the Bible and explained how the Lord had repeatedly used people of little or no position in life to do mighty things! That God has a definite purpose for EACH of us if only we turn everything over to Him.

Everywhere we go we emphasize that God doesn't care what nationality we are, how much money we have, how much education we've earned, or how much status we've achieved in life. In His great plan of salvation we all are to play a part and whatever we need in the process He will provide. We always state that the people the Lord used in the Bible were no closer to Him than we are. He didn't love them anymore than He loves us and if He can use fishermen and tax collectors to turn the world upside down in the beginning He certainly has a role for us at the end!

Besides the teaching of the word, another good thing accomplished was the distributing of another case of forty Bibles. (The demand for Bibles has been overwhelming everywhere we've gone.) On Friday as we opened the box to begin handing them out our table was practically over run with potential buyers! We continually have far more requests that we can possibly fill.

In fact, one older pastor who was shabbily dressed and had faithfully attended every session appeared crushed when he failed to obtain a copy. He went half way back in the church, sat down and looked like he was going to start weeping. That evening we managed to retrieve a copy that had been set aside and we slipped it to him following the service. I can honestly say that I've NEVER seen anyone so excited to receive a Bible in my whole life! It was like Christmas morning!!

On Sunday we were invited to address services for two of the pastors who had attended the seminar. (It concluded Saturday night.) The service Sunday evening was in a large sanctuary and absolutely packed with worshippers! They were singing and dancing like they were already home in that Eternal City! Before we spoke they gave us gifts and urged us to come back as soon as possible. I later related to them the story of Joshua leading the children of Israel across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. I encouraged them to hold on, we're all going to the Promised Land too!

On Monday morning as we waited to board our bus, Pastor Shila said a great revival had started in the village because we had come. He said that it was their first seminar and the very first time that any of the pastors had worked together for the cause of Christ. He has a vision of us returning with Pastors James and Frank to do a large crusade. Glenna and I both feel that whatever the future holds it is totally up to God.

One final comment, on Friday evening we had a special altar call for anyone needing specific prayer, recommitment to Christ, or salvation. Many people came forward and it was a powerful service especially since so many pastors were in attendance.

Once again we want to thank all of you for your support. It has proven somewhat expensive for us to travel to the villages; between food, lodging, bus fare, and helping the hosting pastor with a small donation. Also we thank those who have contributed to buying Bibles. We are very excited about this program!

On Tuesday April 29th we're off again. This time it's to the village of Maswa for another week of teaching and preaching. Please remember us in your prayers.

As always, love to all,

John Paul and Glenna