



August 14, 2008

Hello to all from Tanzania,

On Monday, August 11th, Glenna and I returned from our latest teaching seminar which took place on Ukerewe Island. We were away for eight days and this trip proved to be another memorable experience. Our good friend Pastor James was able to accompany us and we very much enjoyed working with him again. As in the past, the Lord was faithful and blessed us in our efforts!

We left for our destination the previous Tuesday morning on a crowded ferry heading northward across Lake Victoria. God gave us a beautiful day to make the journey and when we finally sailed into the harbor, we saw many small fishing boats with their nets cast. Several of the boats were rigged with sails and reminded me of the men in Jesus' day who pursued their trade on the Sea of Galilee.

We arrived around noon at the coastal town of Nansio where we were warmly greeted by Pastor Jonas. We promptly checked into the local guest house where we'd be staying and then embarked on a brief walking tour of the surrounding area.

On Wednesday morning we were driven across the island to a place called Muriti where the seminar was to be held. The trip took about 45 minutes as we wound our way over rough, dirt roads through one tiny village after another. Our driver, Jehosaphat, was an older man with multiple wives and 18 children. He had just accepted Jesus and wanted to be of help to Pastor Jonas and his church.

The sessions went very well with Glenna speaking on such topics as worshipping and following the "one true God" of the universe. We had been told of the strong influence of witchcraft on the island, so she discussed in detail, how the blood of Christ frees us from such idolatrous and evil practices. She went on to elaborate, with scripture, from both the Old and New Testaments, how we are to rely totally on God for all our needs. That only He knows the end from the beginning and is in full control of our circumstances.

On Friday, Glenna spoke on the need to be faithful, not only in our walk with God, but to our partners in marriage as well. Since AIDS has had such a devastating effect on the African continent, this message is extremely relevant and always causes a hush to settle over the crowd.

During the afternoon session on Thursday, I told the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego and how these three young men refused to compromise. Dovetailing Glenna's message on worshipping the "one true God," I emphasized that we as Christians are sometimes called to take a stand for what we believe in. Because these three young Israelites refused to bow, an entire pagan nation was brought to recognize the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Likewise, there are many people today who are watching us to see if "our walk matches our talk." Glenna and I are both fond of the verse that the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 14:8, "If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; but whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord."

Over the weekend Glenna, I and James were very excited as several people stepped forward to renounce the hold of witchcraft on their lives and accept Christ for the first time. Our driver, Jehosaphat, stood up and told the gathering how he had destroyed all the evil charms in his house and was now firmly committed to the Lord.

After finishing our seminar on Saturday evening, with special prayer for approximately 50 people, we did a final service the next morning before making our way back to Nansio. Pastor Jonas and his congregation gave us gifts and we were asked to return soon to do an even bigger seminar and crusade. Our friend James, says that many of these villages are seldom visited by missionaries from the West and thus the people are extremely grateful for any encouragement we can offer.

On a final note, we were also very excited about the number of pastors that attended the program. On this trip, we had around 12 with some of them coming from many miles away to attend. Because we have tried to stick to the basics of Christianity, we have been successful in bringing many denominations together.

Glenna and I want to extend again our deepest thanks for all your prayers and support. Both of us fought off a bit of illness on this trip and we know that your petitions to God made a great difference! As always, we keep you in our prayers as well. I just wanted to mention that at our services last weekend, Pastor Jonas and his congregation raised up our supporting churches in America and Canada to receive special blessings. Needless to say, we were deeply touched by the experience!

On August 19th, we are heading for another week long program to the Northeast of us in a town called Shirati. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers and we promise to do the same for you.

Love to all,

John Paul and Glenna