



February 27, 2009

Hello to all our friends in North America,

We pray that things are going well for you in this new year. Despite the present economic uncertainties throughout the world, we, as Christians know that our “God ... is an ever present help in times of trouble” and our lives are under His control. May we find peace in those truths as we raise each other up in prayer.

After fulfilling speaking engagements in the Mwanza area, Glenna and I set out with Pastor Frank on February 18th to conduct our latest seminar. It took us to the tiny village of Kahangala, which is located about 45 minutes from where we live. Since the village is so close to home, we were able to make the trips back and forth every day.

As I've often written, taking the buses is always an experience, but the Lord provided safe passage – and comfortable seats – during the entire five days. A few times we felt like we were competing in the old contest of “how many people can you cram into a phone booth,” with the bus companies determined to haul as many paying customers as possible. However, the Lord never fails in taking care of His own.

When we arrived in Kahangala we were welcomed by Pastor Kapesa who took us to his house to meet his family and then on to the church to begin the seminar. The people, although somewhat low in number, were very excited that we had come and briefly entertained us with their lively choir.

One of Glenna's sessions centered on the love of God beginning with that beautiful declaration found in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son ...” She went on to use Ephesians 2:8-9, in explaining that there's nothing we can do to earn that love, or salvation, which is freely given through the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. She used the example of African men paying large dowries to marry their wives, in attempting to explain the supreme price Christ paid for His bride, the church. And as the apostle Paul stated in Romans 8:38-39, “neither death nor life, angels or demons, things present or things to come ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

When we first sat down with Pastor Kapesa he told us the name of his church was “Ng'ambo ya pili,” meaning “the other side.” It symbolizes when the children of Israel finally crossed the Jordon River and entered the Promised Land. The name stuck with me throughout the week and during one of my last sessions I recounted the story of Joshua and the actual crossing.

I began by discussing the first time the Israelites came to their God given territory and refused to “enter in” because “there were giants in the land.” This is a lesson for all of us who risk “wandering in the wilderness” when we pass up the precious opportunities God gives us.

The second time the Israelites approached Joshua was the leader and there was a new generation who knew the Lord and what He could do. Obedient to the command in Joshua 1:9, they were “strong and courageous” knowing that their God was with them wherever they went – another lesson for each of us in our Christian walk.

When we began the seminar, the number of attendees was around fifty, but each night brought in more and more people, some from other churches many miles away. On Friday night we had an altar call with several individuals coming forward either to recommit themselves to Jesus or accept salvation. Pastor Frank led out in special prayer for each and God's presence was deeply felt. On Saturday and Sunday we had many people requesting prayer for such things as healing or seeking God's direction in their lives. Again, we were deeply blessed as several cried out to the Lord sensing His presence in a powerful way.

Frank, Glenna and I were quite impressed with Pastor Kapesa. He had originally worked in the city of Dar es Salaam as an electrical engineer, but later felt God's call to the ministry. He eventually returned to his home village of Kahangala, driven by a desire to help his people. One of his projects has been trying to secure employment for the young men and women in his church. The pastor is determined to make each of them self reliant instead of depending on the government for assistance!

In conclusion, we want to thank Pastor Kapesa and his congregation for inviting us. They have begun praying for each of our supporting churches in America and Canada and they thank all of you for the “good works” that are happening here. Glenna and I also pray for each of you and continue to give thanks for your support. As Paul states in 1 Cor. 15:58, let us all persist in “giving ourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

In His Service,

John and Glenna

PS Plans are underway for us to conduct a seminar in Bariadi starting on March 11<sup>th</sup> and a seminar with crusade in Butundwe beginning on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers.