



December 7, 2010

Tanzania Update

Greetings to family and friends, from East Africa,

As we see pictures of snow falling in certain areas of North America it seems as foreign to us now as icicles in the Sahara. Here in Tanzania, as many of you know, there are only two seasons – rainy and dry. Thus each day seems to blend into the next and the passage of time can be best summed up in one popular phrase, “no hurry in Africa.” Still, as much as we miss the change of the seasons, we realize God has a purpose for everything and that includes where He puts us.

On November 24th, our mission’s team boarded a bus and headed west to conduct a seminar in the village of Mubuhenge. The trip, which took over eight hours, brought us to within a few miles of both Rwanda and Burundi. Glenna and I had never been to this part of the country and were impressed by the beauty of the rolling green hills and deep valleys. The hills were quite high in elevation and our old African bus, must have been muttering, “I think I can, I think I can” for much of the journey. The soil is quite fertile here and as we neared our destination we noticed large groves of banana trees, along with patches of corn, beans and peanuts growing in the distance.

When we finally arrived in Mubuhenge, a half hour taxi ride beyond Ngara, we were warmly welcomed by Pastor Joel, his wife Grace, and several members of the congregation. Following introductions, we were ushered into the pastor’s house where we were graciously shown our accommodations for the next five days. Being in a remote village, with no electricity or running water and with no guest house nearby, means you quickly learn to “go with the flow” of whatever Divine Providence sets before you.

It’s the rainy season here and Joel had been desperately praying for dry weather since the roof on his unfinished church consists of several well worn tarps. The Lord, however, didn’t disappoint him and we were blessed with beautiful weather throughout most of the program. The first message Glenna focused on, was titled “Uniting daily living with Christian faith.” She read from Joshua 22:5, “...love the Lord your God, walk in all His ways ... hold fast to Him, and serve Him with all your heart and soul.” She discussed how so many people separate their faith in God from their daily lives. And if we are going to live victoriously in Christ, to fulfill the plans He has for us, we must strive to bring the two together. Living totally for God also means trusting and obeying our Heavenly Father regardless of what the world may be telling us. It’s resisting the temptation to compromise and standing firm on God’s commands. (See attached photos.)

I led out one evening with the story of David and Goliath. We saw how a young shepherd boy with only a small stone and a slingshot conquered a mighty warrior. I related how when I first came to Africa, I kept hearing how the devil, the demons and the witch doctors have power, but it is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who possesses ultimate power! What David said to Goliath is worth remembering, “you come against me with sword and spear, but I come against you in the name of the living God ...” (1 Sam 17:45). We must always remember that no matter what “giants” we encounter in life, whatever challenges or difficulties we face, the Lord is in control and able to deliver!

The seminar continued to be blessed throughout the week as the people seemed greatly encouraged by the teachings. Following the final service on Sunday, Pastor Frank gave an altar call and over 100 people came forward to receive special prayer for various afflictions, either physical or spiritual. We were thrilled that 16 of those who came forward asked to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior! Among those 16, were two young women (both married to the same man) of the Muslim faith! They had been attending the seminar for three days and had made a bold decision to accept salvation despite the severe consequences they might face. As the three of us waded through the crowd praying fervently

for each of the requests, I could feel the Holy Spirit's presence in a special way. This trip had proven to be one of the most challenging, but it soon became apparent that the needs far outweighed the sacrifices.

In addition to the Lord blessing the seminar, we were also able to distribute another large box of Bibles to a needy area. As in the past, we sold them at a price the people could afford and were elated when the last few were taken on Sunday afternoon. It's gratifying to remember that long after we leave, God's word will still be there opening minds and spirits to the "Truth."

As we departed early Monday morning, following an emotional farewell, our thoughts and prayers went out to Pastor Joel and his family. In many of these isolated areas, where life is so precarious, various denominations will plant a church but then fail to assist and encourage it. In addition to facing numerous challenges from within his congregation, Joel faces many on the outside as well. This particular region has a very high rate of HIV and AIDS, and in just one year five members of a single family succumbed to the disease. Witchcraft is also rampant in the area, and we in turn directed some of our most pointed messages at that specific problem. In spite of the hardships, Frank, Glenna and I were deeply impressed with Joel's commitment to Christ and will continue to lift him up before the Lord.

On December 12th, we are speaking at a large church just outside of Mwanza and on December 15th, will begin a week long seminar at a church in Kilamahewa, also near the city. We ask you again, to remember us in your thoughts and prayers.

Finally, we extend our deepest appreciation for all your prayers and financial support. We are forever grateful for your faithfulness and commitment to the Lord's work. It will be wonderful to someday hear our Heavenly Father say, "Well done, good and faithful servant! ... Enter in to the joy of your Lord!" (Matt 25:21).

In His service,

John and Glenna

John and Glenna in Tanzania



Glenna Teaching



Gilgal Mubuhenge Church