



July 12, 2007

Hello again from beautiful downtown Mwanza,

Well we just arrived back from another mission trip to Nyehunge, a village to the west of us near Lake Victoria. The journey took approximately four and a half hours each way by local bus. Each of our out of town trips is an experience in itself. I don't know which is worse – the bumpy, potholed, washboard roads or the aged, reconstructed bus, that appears from the exterior to be rolling down the road diagonally. Riding a roller coaster at break neck speed can't compare with the protracted rush you receive from careening along in one of these aging DUNE BUGGIES!!

Our adventure began at 7.30 a.m. with a 20 minute ferry ride across the part of the lake. It was another beautiful Tanzanian morning – the temperature in the low 70's and an early morning cool breeze blowing off the water. I'm always amazed by the natural beauty in this part of Africa with the unique rock formations and flowering trees surrounding the city. Glenna, I, and our friend and interpreter Pastor James were excited about visiting Nyehunge since we are all good friends with the pastor that invited us. Zabron is quite a colorful figure – especially when he gets to hopping around in front of the choir during their song service. He has a good sense of humor and never fails to make you feel welcome and appreciated for coming. My visit to Nyehunge last year with James turned out to be one of my most memorable seminars, when many people either came to Christ for the first time or recommitted themselves to His service.

On arriving at the end of our lake crossing, we climbed back on the bus for the long dusty ride. As already stated the roads to the west of us are especially poor with potholes sometimes two to three feet deep – heavy rain is a continual problem with these unpaved roads, making some spots nearly impassable. The crews that operate the buses are an interesting bunch to say the least. You not only have a driver of somewhat questionable skill, but he has two or three others accompanying him just to keep the vehicle running. Occasionally you see steam blowing out of a radiator, or oil leaking out on the ground, or as we witnessed this time, one of the crew had to sit next to the driver just to hold the gear shift in place and other times they would push the bus to pop the clutch to start it. We haven't seen a bus yet with an intact dash board. Faith and trust take on new meaning when you put your life in the hands of public transportation over here! It's a little like the experience of the Apollo 13 mission when the astronauts were never really sure if they would see planet Earth again!!

Finally, after several stops along the way we arrived at our destination. Pastor Zabron and his family were very gracious in welcoming us. After having lunch and discussing plans for the seminar, beginning the following day, we checked in to a local guest house. Most villages have guest houses for travelers with prices ranging from \$1 to \$20 per night. The number and quality, of course, depends on the size of the village. Glenna and I always pray for a decent but cheap place to stay. The last guest house we were at had one bathroom (out house) and one “shower” room for everyone. They consisted of two small rooms, with tin roofs and doors, about 100 feet from our room. With no electricity or running water, we took a dimly lit lantern with us at night and hoped the cockroaches were in a good mood when we stripped off our clothes! As far as shaving, I remember seeing Clark Gable once in an African movie shaving with cold water using a small mirror hanging in a tree – I do it without the mirror.

At any rate the seminar proved to be another memorable experience! Glenna and I did double sessions, teaching both mornings and evenings. Our messages were very well received with attendance increasing right to the last service. I presented messages again on following Christ wherever He leads and how we are all like Noah doing our best to reach the world before the soon coming of the Lord Jesus. While Glenna discussed living for and following God and staying faithful to Him and to each other in these last days. Pastor James also spoke, as he often does, elaborating on the sermons given and further reinforcing the need to surrender all to Christ. On the final day of the seminar we had several people come forward and accept Jesus for the first time. Witnessing this response makes us realize that all the trials we go through on the road are worth it completely!! In the end, there will be nothing better than to hear “well done good and faithful servant, enter in” when we all get to the kingdom. After boarding our return bus at 5 a.m., that thought kept running through my mind all the way back to Mwanza.

One final note, Glenna and I did have a chance to deliver a suitcase full of used clothing to Pastor Zabron and his family. All the items were GREATLY appreciated!! We're hoping to do far more in the future in this regard since the needs are so great. Additionally, the church, as with many others we have visited, has torn plastic tarps as a covering for the roof, due to lack of funds to finish the building. The tarps provide some shade from the sun but are too worn and damaged to protect against the rain. So attendance fluctuates with respect to weather conditions.

Well, I hope that this letter gives you a glimpse of what life on the road is like for us. Without your prayers and support it would be next to impossible to continue in this ministry. God bless all of you!

Love to all,
John Paul