



October 14, 2008

Hello to everyone from East Africa,

Glenna and I want to continue to thank each of you for your faithfulness in lifting us up in prayer. Despite the difficult circumstances we face at times, we know that you are standing by us in our endeavors. We also know that the Lord is listening and blessing us wherever we go!

On Monday, September 29th, we left for another week long seminar in the town of Moshi, which lies east of us near the Kenya border, at the foot of the legendary Mount Kilimanjaro.

After traveling by bus to the town of Musoma, we learned that due to unforeseen circumstances, we wouldn't be able to reach our destination by that direction. Deciding to spend the night there, we returned to Mwanza the next day to regroup and re-plan an alternate route. On Wednesday, Oct 1st, we set out again, this time heading south and later east through such places as Shinyanga and Singida. The trip to Moshi is quite long, regardless of the roads taken, and it required over 13 hours getting there.

As we've mentioned before buses here are considerably different from the leisure coaches in North America. Break downs are such a common occurrence that 3 or 4 "shade tree" mechanics ride along on each trip. Wednesday night as we careened along on our journey, the back window shattered from the vibrations caused by the rough roads, and then something broke loose inside one of the rear wheels and we came to an abrupt halt.

As everyone filed out and sat along the roadside, Pastor James was told that this area, which is quite isolated, was not safe. It was around 6 pm, shortly after James' church in Mwanza had gathered for their weekly prayer meeting. He immediately contacted them by cell phone and they began fervent prayers for our protection. Two and a half hours later, with our bus still unable to move, another one arrived to take us to our destination. Finally, at around midnight we reached Moshi where we were warmly greeted by Pastor Job and taken to a nearby hotel.

The next day we started our seminar with Glenna speaking on such topics as the importance of the choices we make in life. As Joshua once told the children of Israel, "choose this day whom you will serve ... as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15) we must also choose to love and serve God with all our "hearts, minds, souls and strength." She went on to explain that every day of our lives we have to make decisions, some with eternal consequences.

As Glenna taught this lesson, I remembered a young African girl I had met at one of the seminars during my first stay in Tanzania. Her name was Dorcas and she seemed deeply committed to Christ and possessed a real gift for teaching young people in the church. Pastor James told me that some time ago she had met a young man and approached her pastor about getting married. When the pastor expressed some doubts about the man's character, she began making some bad decisions and James said Dorcas contracted AIDS and has since returned to her village to live out what little life she has left. I was deeply saddened by this news as I believed the Lord had great plans for her.

In one of the lessons I presented, we examined 1 Peter 4:7-11, which is as much a message for us living in the "closing age" as it was to the believers in Peter's day. Looking from a prophetic standpoint at the present upheaval in the world; economically, politically, socially; along with "wars and rumors of wars" in the Middle East, we shifted to the exhortations of the passage which included remaining "clear minded" and "self controlled," so that we can pray effectively. Peter also urges us to love one another and to take the spiritual gifts God has given us and serve others.

Pastor Job and his congregation were very uplifted by the teachings and I believe one of the reasons God led us there was simply to encourage this small congregation. Moshi, which is somewhat westernized and a little more prosperous than other towns in Tanzania, has been quite resistant to the Gospel. There is a large Muslim presence along with a few "established" churches which seem static at best. In spite of the circumstances, Pastor Job has a big vision for his church including evangelizing and setting up a special ministry to reach the many street kids who roam the area.

On the last day of the seminar we had special prayer for the entire church, calling upon the Lord to continue to fulfill His great plans for Moshi through them. Later we met with church leaders and again prayed and encouraged them to stay close to Jesus. As we bid our farewells they urged us to return in the spring for more teachings.

In conclusion, we thank all of you for standing by us with prayer and financial support. As I've said many times it will be wonderful when we're finally standing in the presence of Christ and hear all the stories of what the Lord accomplished through each of us.

On Tuesday, October 14th, we begin a seminar in an area just outside Mwanza, called Igoma. We have been planning to go there for quite some time and ask that you will keep us in your thoughts and prayers.

Love to all,

John Paul and Glenna