



November 24, 2008

Hello to all from the city of Mwanza,

Glenna and I send our warmest greetings and thank you's after just arriving back home from another trip to teach God's Word. We were very blessed and know that each of you were with us in your thoughts and prayers.

On November 12th, Pastor Frank, Glenna and I set out for the village of Kakola which lies to the south of us. We are now in the rainy season and the skies were threatening as we boarded a ferry for a trip across a small portion of Lake Victoria. Besides the usual large crowd of people, buses, cars, bicycles, baskets of fish, ducks and chickens are also seen on board. By the way, before we got on the ship, we were entertained by an interesting little man with a megaphone selling rat poison. He insisted on praying for our safety, as well as calling upon the Lord to produce a few more rodents to keep his business thriving!

After our short crossing, we climbed onto a bus for a long and bumpy journey to our destination. The roads proved to be quite treacherous in places with large ruts made even worse by recent downpours. Running well over an hour behind schedule, we eventually pulled into Kakola around 5 pm. Despite our late arrival, we were enthusiastically welcomed by Pastor Yusef and escorted to the local guest house.

As with the last town we visited, Kakola is located in a gold mining area. Many of the residents are employed at the mines and live in relatively nice housing and enjoy benefits not found in many other parts of Tanzania. Their work hours are long, but they seem to greatly appreciate their higher standard of living. We were told that the gold that is mined is transported out of the country on cargo planes to final destinations in the west.

The next day, the seminar got underway with Glenna expounding on the fact that we were created in the image of God. We were originally meant to have an intimate relationship with Him, but through the tragedy of sin we became separated from our Creator. However, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ this fellowship can be restored. As it states in 1 Peter 2:24-25, "He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep gone astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

Dovetailing Glenna's lesson, I taught on Psalm 139:13-18. King David wrote, "For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made ... All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be. How precious are Your thoughts concerning me, oh God." In these last days when sin and salvation are dismissed by many as part of an early stage in our "social evolution," it's crucial to keep in mind where we as Christians came from and where we're ultimately headed!

Pastor Yusef was very excited about the lessons we presented and concluded each service with special prayer, calling upon the Lord to forgive, heal, and empower his congregation. One could sense the spirit moving across the church as various people wept and lifted their hands high toward Heaven. As I have written before, there is a "primitive godliness" here in Africa, a sincere hunger for the presence of God. I'm convinced that it must have been the same situation with the early Christians in the book of Acts. Frank, Glenna and I just feel deeply privileged to play a small part of all of this.

Another thing that we found encouraging was that other pastors were able to join us in the seminar, some traveling several miles to attend. Because we keep the teaching basic, we have been blessed at bringing people together who wouldn't normally be worshiping under the same roof. One pastor in particular invited us to see his new church which is still under construction. What impressed us was not only the size of his new building, but that he had managed to plant three other churches over the last few years. We praised him on his efforts and promised to keep him and his congregation in our prayers.

We concluded the seminar Sunday night by preaching on how the Lord can deliver us in the most difficult of circumstances. The three of us had experienced this just the day before when Pastor Frank became seriously ill. After offering up fervent prayers, Frank made a miraculous recovery and was eventually able to continue the program.

Pastor Yusef and his congregation thanked us profusely for coming and urged us to return next year. We said that we would do our best, but of course God is in control of all our "comings and goings" in this world.

On December 3rd, we are leaving for the town of Bunda to conduct another week of teaching. Please continue to lift us up before the Lord.

Finally, we again thank you for standing by us with your prayers and financial support. God has a role for each one of us to play in His great plan of salvation. Therefore, "let us not grow weary of doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Gal. 6:9)

Love to all,

John Paul and Glenna