



March 10, 2010

Update from Tanzania

Glenna and I send our greetings once again from the shores of Lake Victoria. We also extend our deepest appreciation for all of your faithful prayers. It is a privilege to be involved in a ministry supported by so many faithful friends. May the Lord continue to bless your walk with Him.

Last week we traveled to the village of Nyeunge to conduct a seminar and distribute Bibles. Nyeunge, a remote area with no running water and no electricity, lies to the south west of us and takes around 3 ½ hrs to reach.

Our trip began with a short ferry ride across part of the lake to a landing point known as Kamanga. As I have described previously, ferry rides are an experience in themselves, transporting everything from ducks and chickens to cars, trucks and bicycles, all crammed on board. Vendors also circulate throughout the boat selling such items as soap, pens, cookies, and face cloths.

Following our 20 minute trip across the water, we boarded a bus and continued on to our destination. It's rainy season again and although the roads were quite muddy in several places, we arrived safely. Pastor Zabron, a friend from when I first came to Africa in 2006, greeted us with great enthusiasm. I must admit that Zabron has always been one of my favorites with his keen sense of humor and love of singing and dancing with the choirs. If there is a more gregarious pastor over here, I haven't met him!

Despite the fact that the Nyeunge church is small, the congregation proved to be just as enthusiastic as their pastor when we finally commenced the seminar. One of the lessons Glenna taught was entitled, "Bringing up our Children." She explained to the African parents two goals that we should all have for our children: to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior; and to follow the Lord's plan for their lives. She read from Proverbs 22:6, "Train your child up in the way he should go and he will not turn from it." She stressed the fact that while the church has a major role to play in helping children in their Christian walk, it's really the parents teaching and example that is the strongest influence.

In several of my lessons, I elaborated on 2nd Cor. 5:17, "Therefore if any one be in Christ, they are a new creation, old things are passed away, behold all things are made new." Together we explored some of the aspects of "newness" that we receive through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. This included a "new Father," who loves us and wants only the best for us; "new family," which means we have brothers and sisters in the faith all over the world; "new nature" as we see in Galatians chapter five; and finally, "new destiny." Through the realization of who we are in Christ, God can begin using us in ways we never thought possible.

As I mentioned, the enthusiasm of the congregation throughout the seminar was quite evident. There is a hunger over here for the things of God, especially in these far removed places, that's hard to imagine. In 2006, when I first visited this village, several of the younger ones had never seen a North American or heard many of the teachings we take for granted in the West. It's amazing to see how the Lord works in reaching His children!

On Sunday morning, the last day of our program, Pastor Frank, Zabron and I all felt moved by the Spirit to call for special prayer. A large number of the congregation came forward requesting physical and spiritual healing, which included such things as infertility, recommitment to Christ and deliverance from demon possession. It was truly moving to see people weeping and crying out to the Lord with such passion. Every one rejoiced as two women who had drifted far from God had made the decision to return!

We were also pleased that we were able to distribute another large case of Bibles to a place sorely in need of God's word. We try to pick the more needy areas to do this ministry and the Lord has blessed us every time. A few Bibles are sold in Nyeunge in a tiny bookstore, but most of the people simply can't afford them. We put them at a price they can manage and it's gratifying to witness their joy when they obtain one.

On a personal note, when I first visited Nyeunge, I met a teenage girl named Baraka (blessing). Pastor Zabron and I were invited to her mother's house for dinner. She was such a sweet and intelligent young girl who had just begun nursing school and her mother had such high hopes for her. Last Friday, we happened to meet Baraka's mother while walking in the village. Her face appeared drawn and sorrowful. She informed me that her daughter had died several months ago of what sounded to be a cerebral hemorrhage. I was deeply saddened and reminded once again of how fragile and fleeting life is over here.

On March 12th, we are leaving to do a weekend seminar in the town of Geita, and then on March 17th we begin a 5-day seminar in Kiseke, an area near Mwanza. Please continue to pray for us.

In closing, we thank you again for your prayers and financial support. None of this would be possible without your commitment to the Lord's work. May "God supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil 4:19

In His Service,

John and Glenna