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TPI Africa Trip Report 6

1 message

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John and Scott Girard should be leaving Kinshasa, DRC, today (Saturday) and fly to Nairobi, Kenya. Scott will then fly home to Charlotte, North Carolina. John will spend the night in Nairobi and then fly out early Sunday morning for Harare, Zimbabwe. He will be joined by Pastor Bobby Ferguson of Blountville, TN. He is pastor of Gunnings Baptist Church and one of our TPI board members. His church graciously printed 4 sets of notebooks for this trip.

John's email below concludes the second week of institutes in Tanga, Tanzania and his arrival in Bujumbura, Burundi. After the celebration ceremony in Tanga, where they gave out 88 certificates, they drove through the night to the Dar Es Salam airport. Unfortunately, John's suitcase did not make it with him, but he got it late that same night, which is pretty good for Africa. One interesting tidbit, he was allowed to go back in to the customs area of the Bujumbura airport to wait for Scott Girard. Granted, the airport is pretty small and our national director knows people who work there, but that would never happen here in the U.S.

Thanks for your prayers. Two more weeks to go. Jennifer Balmer

This begins the fuller missions journal:

The next day, [Friday, July 16th](#), I woke up early in the morning in my Room 14 at the Panori Hotel, and did some typing on my Email Report and looked over one of my sessions on Biblical Hermeneutics. This is the fifth and final day of our Tanga Institute in Tanga, Tanzania. We are seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time in the United States. I first tried to see if I would get hot water, and it took a few minutes, and I got hot water out of the nozzle overhead. I took a nice hot shower in my adjoining bathroom with an overhead nozzle in a small shower stall with a shower curtain around it. Then I got dressed for the day and went down with Paul Swets to the inside restaurant near the lobby of the hotel. I met several of my good friends again from 2008, one of whom is Adolph Matthew, and they served us a nice breakfast, which consisted of two fried eggs, a sausage hot dog, two pieces of white toast, some Mango fruit and a banana, a glass of pineapple juice, and African Chi (tea). We had a great breakfast meal talking with our hosts, and preparing for the upcoming day. At the end of our meal, we went quickly back to our rooms and finished getting ready and then brought our small bags and all our luggage back downstairs to load them in the trunk of Thomas Tarimo's four-door sedan when he finally arrived after 9:30 AM with Bishop Ayubu Mgweno, who came to pick us up with Thomas Tarimo after taking care of some details before coming to us. We also had to sort out and pay for our bills at the front desk before leaving from the hotel. After doing so, we packed up all our bags and checked out of the Panori Hotel for good and loaded all the bags in Thomas Tarimo's four-door sedan.

Pastor Thomas Tarimo drove Bishop Ayubu Mgweno, Paul Swets, and me in Thomas' car over to the venue where we have conducted the institute for the week, the Tanu Hall, which belongs to the CCM Party in the Legislative Branch of the government, located in the city center, about a fifteen minute drive from our hotel. When we came into the main hall, there were many pastors already there, and they were worshipping the Lord in song, being led by a worship leader. [We have 92 pastors, evangelists, and national missionaries attending the institute in the morning session on this fifth day.](#) The number of pastors is still low this week because there are two other [pastoral conferences that are competing for the pastors here in Tanga to attend this same week here in Tanzania.](#) We started a lot late today about 10:30 AM due to getting picked up so late at the Panori Hotel. After a few songs of worship and some remarks by Raphael Mhando, one of the translators of the TPI Institute this week in Tanga, Bishop Ayubu Mgweno, the Assistant National Director of TPI in Tanzania got up and invited me to come to begin the teaching today, and I came and started the first session.

I started the first session on Biblical Hermeneutics, which is a follow-up course to Expository Preaching. My interpreter for the morning is Rev. Samuel Kamoge. I began my session on Biblical Hermeneutics reviewing over what we covered so far by looking at what is meant by Biblical interpretation and also reviewing back over the historical-cultural context, the Biblical-theological context, and the beginning of the grammatical-syntactical analysis of the text. We reviewed back over the need to study the meaning of the words. The danger is to violate the context of a passage and so misinterpret a text by imposing our own meanings on a text rather than discovering the original intended meaning of the Biblical passage in its context. Today, we looked at the form of the words, which involves how the words and verbs are inflected so as to determine the function of those words in a sentence. Then we looked at the function of the words, specifically the parts of speech and their function in the sentence. First, we looked at the Noun Family by explaining the nature of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and prepositions. Second, we looked at the Verb Family by explaining the nature of verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, and interjections. I went to several texts to show the importance of how the different parts of speech help to determine the meaning of the text. Then we looked at the relationship of words in a sentence, which is the purpose of looking at the syntax or how the author puts together words in a sentence to form phrases, clauses, and sentences. We first looked at the meaning and significance of phrases, which mainly involves looking at the prepositional and participial phrases in a sentence. We then looked at the meaning and significance of clauses, which involves looking at main verbal clauses, coordinating clauses, and subordinating clauses, which denote many different relationships depending on their use in the sentence.

Then we looked at the meaning and significance of sentences as a whole, which involves looking at simple sentences, compound sentences, and complex sentences. Lastly, we looked the meaning and significance of word order and repetition in a sentence, where the author uses both the word order in a sentence and repetition to place emphasis on something and/or give precedence to a particular truth. Then I gave the pastors a checklist of several questions to ask in order determine the grammatical understanding of a passage. We need to consider the following grammatical aspects: 1) subject, 2) action of the verb (tense, voice, mood), 3) object of the action (direct or indirect object), 4) modifiers of main parts of sentence (adjectives, adverbs, and participles), 5) relationships interjected in various parts of a sentence (prepositions, conjunctions, relative pronouns), 6) relationships of phrases and clauses in a sentence, and 7) relationships of sentences to other sentences in a paragraph, unit, or book (conjunctions, interjections, structural markers). Then I finished this section by going to a few passages and showing how these principles of syntax are important to determining the meaning of the text, such as: John 1:11, Rom. 12:1-2, and Matt.16:19, 18:18. Then I concluded my session by looking at the value of the rhetorical-literary analysis of the text, which involves looking at the different literary forms or genres in the Scriptures, the style of the authors, and the structure of the letter or book. Then I closed out the session with a review of what we discussed and I handed the microphone over to Bishop Ayubu Mgweno, who made a few concluding remarks.

We broke for our morning tea break and had African Chai (tea) and pastries outside the hall under a canopy. I spent some time talking with several pastors about the need to interpret the Word of God correctly in our preaching. Then we went back inside the Tanu Hall to resume the institute. There was some singing led by the worship leaders. Then Bishop Mgweno had Pastor Paul Swets to come up and teach his fifth session on an exposition of Philippians. He came up and reviewed over the book of Philippians and the main theme verse, Phil. 4:4, gave an overview of the truths of the book, and an outline of the week. Then Paul began his fifth message from the passage of Phil. 4:1-23 on "Joy in the Presence of God." This passage deals with standing firm in our faith in the midst of difficulties in our lives. The key question is: What difference does the presence of God make in our lives, especially when we encounter difficulties or trials? The apostle Paul seeks to challenge the believers to stand firm in four areas in their lives. First, he challenges them to stand firm in seeking peace with one another (4:2-3). Second, he challenges them to stand firm in their joy (4:4-7). The believers are to know that God is near, anxiety is forbidden, prayer is prescribed, and peace is promised. Third, he challenges them to stand firm in the way they think (4:8-9). The believers are to think about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable. The key is that one's thinking leads to one's practice. Fourth, he challenges them to stand firm in their contentment in Christ (4:10-23). The apostle thanks the Philippians for their gifts, reminds them that he has learned to be content in all circumstances, testifies that he can do anything through Christ's strength, and promises that God will meet all their needs according to His riches in Christ. Paul Swets then went over some verses to memorize and some other verses outside Philippians that speak to some of the issues raised in this book. He then closed out the session by applying this passage to the pastors with actions to take and other verses to think about. Bishop Ayubu Mgweno came up and made a few concluding remarks and we then had a short time of worship led by the singing team and keyboard players, and then we broke for lunch.

We all went outside the hall and everyone got into the African queue (long lines) to receive the meal, which was rice and beef, vegetables, and water. We brought our plates back into the hall and sat at the main speaker's table

to eat our meal. After lunch we had some good fellowship with the pastors as some of them came up to us to discuss different things, and then we went back inside the hall to resume the institute. [We had 90 pastors, evangelists, and church leaders for the afternoon session for our fifth day of the TPI Institute.](#)

Then Raphael Mhando made a few comments and Bishop Ayubu Mgweno came up and welcomed me to come up and begin the next session on Evangelism and Missions. I preached a message on the theme "The Gospel of the Kingdom." I first dealt with an introduction to this theme by showing that John the Baptist and Jesus preached the same message, "repent for the kingdom of God/heaven is near." The twelve disciples and the seventy were given this same message to preach when they were sent out by Jesus. He also taught His disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). In the book of Acts, Philip and the apostle Paul preached concerning the kingdom of God. Then we looked at five aspects of the Kingdom of God.

First, we looked at the meaning of the Kingdom. There are several meanings of the use of the term kingdom both in ancient times and in the present day. There are two words that are used for this word in the Bible. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *malkuth* means "God's universal rule, His sovereignty over all the earth." In the New Testament, the Greek word *basileia* means "the authority to rule, the sovereignty of the king." Therefore, the term "kingdom of God" in the Bible means "the rank, authority, and sovereignty exercised by a king," and therefore, refers to God's reign, God's rule, and God's sovereignty. The usage of the word "kingdom" in the Bible can refer to a king's rule on earth, or a kingdom of God, whose nature is His authority and right to rule, and has the characteristics of His power, sovereignty, reign, and rule.

Second, we looked at the mystery of the kingdom. The term "mystery" carries with it many different meanings, but the term in the New Testament is a technical concept regarding the revelation of God's truth and purposes throughout eternity. It carries with it the idea that something which has been kept secret about God's purposes or truth from all eternity now has been disclosed in God's revelation in the New Testament (Rom. 16:25-26). The Old Testament saw the prediction of the Davidic Kingdom to establish God's kingdom from one of David's descendents forever (2 Sam. 7:12-13), and the prediction of Daniel's prophecy about the coming kingdom of God will dethrone all earthly kingdoms (Dan. 2:44). The prophets looked at the coming kingdom of God as one climactic event in history when God would sweep away all earthly kingdoms and establish His kingdom on earth with great power and authority and fill all the earth with His righteousness. The New Testament saw the impending coming of the kingdom, but John the Baptist presented a two-fold ministry of the coming of God's kingdom to the earth seen in Christ's two baptisms: (1) Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Messianic Salvation in Christ revealed in the Death and Resurrection of Christ and the birth of the Church, and (2) Baptism of Fire – Messianic Final Judgment of Christ and the setting up of God's Kingdom on earth (Matt. 3:11). There was also several who misunderstood this dual aspect of the coming kingdom of God in the New Testament such as John the Baptist (Matt. 11:3) and the disciples at the Ascension of Christ to heaven (Ac. 1:6). Therefore Jesus presentation of the kingdom of God in two stages: (1) Spiritual Kingdom – Baptism of the Holy Spirit – "with persuasion" and (2) Physical Political Kingdom – Baptism of Fire – "with power."

Third, we looked at the message of the kingdom. The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom among the apostles in the Early Church by Philip and Paul shows that the kingdom has already come and is not future (Ac. 8:12, 28:23). It is also seen as when Paul offered the gospel to the Gentiles (Ac. 28:28,31). It is clear in the New Testament that the message of the gospel of the kingdom is equated with the "message of salvation," which was offered to both Jews and Gentiles alike. Jesus said that "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14). The content of the gospel of the kingdom involves Christ's victory over three enemies, sin, Satan, and death. The content of the message includes these three themes: (1) Victory over Sin, (2) Victory over Satan, and (3) Victory over Death.

Fourth, we looked at the mission of the kingdom. The meaning of history is to see why man is here on the earth, and the answer to this question can be seen in a progress of history, a cyclical history, a pessimistic history, and in the Biblical meaning of history. When you look at the progress of redemption in Biblical history, we see the past mission of Israel (Gen. 12:1-3), Christ's mission to the world (Jn. 1:12, 3:16), the present mission of the Church (Ac 1:8, 1 Pet. 2:9), God's program for the Church (Matt. 24:14), and the mission tasks of the Church's program, which include preaching the gospel to every person in the world, making disciples of all nations, planting churches in every culture, people-group, tribe, tongue, and nation, and developing leadership in every church.

Fifth, we looked at the motive of the kingdom. With the Olivet Discourse, Jesus gave us the certainty of the Lord's return – "the end will come" (Matt. 24:14). Jesus gives us a picture of the end times in Matthew 24 that involves the expectation of the disciples (Matt. 24:3) and the revelation of the end times, where the following will happen in succession: (1) Evil will prevail until the end of time, (2) the Church will suffer hardship and apostasy, (3) the

intensification of the major conflict between the two forces in conflict with each other, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan, will get worse in the world, and (4) the ultimate victory of Christ and His Kingdom over Satan's Kingdom and empire. This point of confrontation is seen when the Church confronts the Kingdom of Satan when the gospel is shared by believers and non-Christians accept it and believe in Christ in the world, and when Satan confronts the Kingdom of God by deceiving the world and the Church, destroying the work of God, and discouraging believers from sharing the gospel message of Christ. The point of deliverance comes for the believer when he shares the gospel message to unbelievers, when he experiences personal deliverance from this present Evil Age, and when he experiences daily victory over sin, Satan, death, the flesh, and the world. Lastly, this revelation of the end times gives us the urgency of the task in light of Christ's return. This involves the Church's role in God's mission and the Church's responsibility in God's mission. **The job is not yet complete! There is still work to be done! Christ has not returned yet! There are still millions of people who have not yet heard the gospel message! There are still thousands of unreached people groups with no church or gospel presence among them. There are still open doors that God is providing to get involved in His mission to the world. Let's get busy with the work that God has given us to expand the Kingdom of God in our day! I then gave an invitation to come forward and submit to God's mission to take the gospel to the world and bless all the nations in Christ. Most of the pastors came forward and we had a time of prayer and dedication to God to carry out His mission to the world. Bishop Ayubu Mgweno came up and made a few concluding remarks and we took a short break.**

During the break and into Paul Swets teaching session, I met with Rev. Ayubu Mgweno and Rev. Hassan Lambert outside the sanctuary about the overcharge of funds that the food catering service had given to us since we had only 100 pastors for the week and we had budgeted for 250 originally. I told the two of them to go meet with the lady and retrieve some of the funds back from the lady since we did not use all of the funds for the food portion of the budget. They met with the lady and she returned \$600 US dollars back to TPI, which was a little low, but within the fair portion of the range we should have received back from her. While I was there, I also received a call from Martin Shikuku` the TPI Area Coordinator for the Rift Valley Area in Kenya, about the update of the follow-up meeting of the Lumakanda TPI Institute. **He announced the formation of the Lumakanda Pastors Fellowship, which has been formed as a result of the institute. This is the first time that all of the denominations have been able to come together collectively like this, and they determined to meet together regularly from now on once a month to focus on some of the things that came out of the institute and to review over the things that were learned over the week. Previously, most of the pastors would meet within their own denominations, but not in an interdenominational meeting like the one we just had this week in the Lumakanda TPI Institute. Pastor Martin also confirmed that there were an additional 7 certificates written this morning at the meeting to bring the total number of certificates given at the Lumakanda TPI Institute to 232 certificates. There were 225 given out last week plus 7 additional today for a total of 232 certificates given out in Lumakanda, Kenya.** Pastor Martin also confirmed that he had burned the extra certificates that I gave him last week now that the total number has been correctly given out to the pastors and all problems have been resolved. I thanked him for his leadership displayed in this situation and asked him to greet his wife and the pastors there, and we completed our call.

Meanwhile, Raphael Mhando made a few comments and Rev. Ayubu Mgweno invited Paul Swets to come up and lead his afternoon session on "The Art of Leading Successfully." Paul began by giving an overview of the outline of study for these five afternoon sessions on Leadership. Then he proceeded to deal with his fifth session on "What is Our Plan for Leading Successfully?" He dealt in this last session on seeking counsel in making plans, committing our plans to the Lord, trusting God to direct our steps, and seeking to improve our plan by making adjustments along the way. Many leaders do not evaluate their plans as they go along in their ministries, they just react to each situation and suffer the consequences. Paul recommended four questions to ask to help in this evaluation step to better improve your leadership. First, ask yourself what has not worked in the past and what do you need to abandon? Second, ask yourself what has worked and what do you need to strengthen? Third, ask yourself what new directions in your ministry would stir your emotions? Fourth, ask yourself what are some of the risks to take and what risks do you need to avoid? Then Paul moved to the main focus of his teaching today, which is to get the pastors to state in writing their leadership plan. He challenged them to write out their vision, which is what they want their church to look like five years from now. Second, he challenged them to write out their mission, which are the specific elements that makeup the main focus and nature of their ministries. Lastly, he challenged them to write out their goals, which are 3 to 5 aims for their church to fulfill the mission of the church and accomplish their vision as well. Paul then concluded this session on leadership influence in pastoral ministry with a challenge to make some practical applications for their church ministries today. Then Rev. Mgweno came up and made a few concluding remarks.

After another short break, we were led in a worship song by the worship team. Then Rev. Ayubu Mgweno invited me to come up and teach the last session on the overview of the New Testament on the section dealing with the second half of the book of Acts. We first reviewed over all the events of the New Testament that we have learned so far, dealing with the events of the inter-testamental period leading up to the gospel accounts of the life of Christ,

the uniqueness of the gospels, the geography of the gospels, and the early story of Christ's life and ministry in Judea and Galilee, the story of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, concluding with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and the first half of the book of Acts, dealing with the birth of the Church and the coming of the Holy Spirit, and the growth of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 1-7), and Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12). I then taught the section of the book of Acts on the growth of the Church among the Gentile regions of the world (Acts 13-28), which involved Paul's three missionary journeys to Galatia, Greece, and Asia Minor, the Jerusalem Council, the three trials of Paul in Caesarea, and the two imprisonments of Paul in Rome, his release, and the expansion of the Church around the world. Then we reviewed over the events of the whole New Testament and then closed out the teaching of the institute. Therefore, we closed out the session as we reviewed over all the signs of the 400 Silent Years between the testaments, and the birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Christ, and the whole book of Acts. As a result, the worship team led us in thanksgiving to God for this story of the New Testament. Then Raphael Mhando came up and reviewed over some of what we covered today and explained the significance of these training sessions for their ministries. Then he gave the mike over to Rev. Ayubu Mgweno to make a few concluding announcements before closing out the institute for the day, and having a closing word of prayer by one of the pastors.

We immediately began our Celebration Service to give out the certificates and bring our institute to a conclusion. We had everyone turn their chairs around to face the back of the big room since there was another group planning for a wedding needing to make preparations in the room, and therefore, we could continue with our ceremony. Rev. Ayubu Mgweno, the TPI Tanzania Assistant National Director, and Rev. Hassan Lambert, the TPI Tanzania National Director began the service by recognizing all of the TPI Tanga Local Committee, which included ten people. The whole group of pastors gave thanks for this group of leaders for all the work that they did to make this institute a success. Then Pastor Ayubu Mgweno invited me to come up and recognize others who had an impact in the success of the week. I publicly thanked Jennifer Balmer, my wife, who worked very hard to put the notebook together along with a handful of staff in the United States who worked hard to produce these notebooks for the pastors. Jennifer also printed out the certificates for the pastors. I then pointed out all of the churches and individuals who gave to make this institute possible for the pastors to attend this week. I showed the twenty-four churches on the inside of the notebook cover, who were responsible for helping with this financial need. I encouraged the pastors to pray for these churches that the Lord would continue to bless their ministries. The pastors responded with a round of applause. I also thanked the local Tanga TPI Committee and Pastor Ayubu Mgweno and his team.

The local Tanga team under the direction of some of the ladies, gave both Paul Swets and me an African shirt. They also gave Rev. Mgweno and Rev. Lambert a shirt as well. We thanked the ladies on behalf of the whole group for these nice gifts and held up our African shirts, and everyone applauded their appreciation to see us with their African apparel. Furthermore, I also presented Pastor Ayubu Mgweno with a book on *The Manner and Customs of Bible Times* in appreciation for what he has done all week to put on this institute. I also gave Pastor Hassan Lambert a book by Charles Swindoll in appreciation for his leadership. Lastly, I gave both Rev. Mgweno and Hassan Lambert a scarf for their wives that my mother made by hand, and they were very appreciative of the scarves. I announced that anyone who needed to stay in touch with TPI needed to get in touch with both Pastor Ayubu Mgweno and Pastor Hassan Lambert for any concerns or updates about TPI in Tanga, and we want people to be in touch with them, not contact us directly. Then they gave their contact information so the pastors could keep in touch with them. I also thanked Pastor Paul Swets for his teaching and sacrifice to come here to offer his ministry to these pastors.

After all the preliminary matters, we began the commissioning service. I challenged the pastors to stand and present themselves to the Lord. I read Ephesians 3:14-21 to reflect Paul's prayer for these pastors. Then I asked Pastor Hassan Lambert to come and pray for these pastors as they presented themselves to the Lord and we commissioned them in their ministries to the Lord. Once this process was completed, we began the certificate ceremony, where we handed out 83 certificates to each of the pastors, evangelists, and national missionaries. We called out the names of most of the 88 pastors to come forward to receive their certificates in the back of the Tanu Hall. As this certificate presentation process was completed, we closed out the 2010 Tanga Institute, and dismissed the group. Then we exited the big room and went outside since another group was making preparation for a wedding inside the Tanu Hall. We then had our group picture taken outside in the dark. There was a whole group of pastors standing in the dark, but we got our pictures taken of the whole group. Then there was a group of about 5 pastors who said that they attended the institute all week, but did not receive their certificates. So we began a very tedious process to get the Registration Chairman to validate the attendance records for each of these pastors, and then we wrote these additional 5 certificates for a final total of 88 certificates given out at the Tanga, Tanzania TPI Institute. Then more pictures were taken, and many pastors also shook hands with Paul and me and thanked us for the week of teaching. Then we talked afterwards with many of the pastors, and they left with their notebook and certificate in hand very happy men indeed. We then all said our good-byes to the pastors

and took some more pictures, and talked with many of the pastors afterwards, and waited until most of them went on their way home as many of them got onto their bicycles, motorbikes, or walked on foot back to their homes.

After the Tanga Institute was over, we loaded up all our bags in Pastor Thomas Tarimo's four-door sedan, including our suitcases for my flight to Bujumbura, Burundi and Paul Swets' flight to London, England for a week of vacation with his wife Janeice. Then around 10 PM, Pastor Thomas Tarimo drove Pastor Ayubu Mgweno, Paul Swets, and me on a five-hour excursion through the night back to Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. They decided to drive us back personally rather than hire a van because they wanted to ensure that we would get safely back to Dar Es Salaam without any problems. Manasse Martin also took several of the team members in his car such as Rev. Hassan Lambert, Rev. Ayubu Mgweno's wife, and a few other people in his small four-door sedan. They had gone ahead of us, but later on we met around midnight at the Segura stop, which is at the crossroads from Uganda to Zambia. We ate dinner at an open restaurant there with all of the people in both cars. We had chicken and rice and sauce, vegetables, vegetable soup, bananas, oranges, water, and English tea. It was a great time of fellowship with all the team members before going our separate ways again. While we were there, I met with Pastor Ayubu Mgweno and Pastor Manasse Martin about the final budget and what the final numbers were for the actual expenses of putting on the institute. Furthermore, we discussed the final arrangements for the Food Catering service, and making sure that we try to settle these things before the last day like what happened today. Then we said our goodbyes to the people in Manasse Martin's car, loaded up everything in our car, and Pastor Tarimo then drove us the rest of the way through the night for another three hours to the Dar Es Salaam International Airport, where we arrived around 4 AM.

We have completed two TPI Pastoral Training institutes in Lumakanda, Kenya and in Tanga, Tanzania. We are now traveling to Bujumbura, Burundi, where we will conduct our third TPI Institute this summer, which is the third of six such institutes in East/Central/Southern Africa in six countries for the duration of six weeks. We came here last year this very week in July 2009 for our first ever Burundi TPI Institute, and I was assaulted by three thieves with big rocks and big wooden poles and my camera was stolen and Joel Taylor's shoes were also taken, but all the stolen items were returned to us due to the good work of our host hotel, the King's Conference Centre located near Lake Tanganika, where the incident took place in Bujumbura, Burundi. So we have returned to Burundi for our second TPI Institute in this small country that was ravaged by war for 11 years and finally delivered from that war five years ago in 2005.

Since we arrived very early in the morning the next day in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania by car, Saturday, July 17th, I did not get any sleep that night. When we arrived at the Dar Es Salaam International airport, we took all my bags and loaded them in a cart, and went over to the main terminal, where I said my goodbyes to Rev. Ayubu Mgweno, Rev. Thomas Tarimo, and Paul Swets. I thanked our two TPI National leaders for all the work that they had done for the Tanga TPI Institute, and also thanked Paul Swets for coming to teach here in Lumakanda, Kenya and in Tanga, Tanzania. Then I proceeded into the airport terminal by myself to go check-in to my flight to Nairobi, Kenya. Meanwhile, the team will drive Paul Swets to check into a hotel here in town and come pick him up tomorrow morning for his international flight to London, England, where he will meet his wife Janeice for a one-week celebration of their 45th wedding anniversary before going back to Memphis, Tennessee the following week. I went to the Kenya Airways ticket counter and checked into the flight, went through Passport Control, and a security checkpoint, and waited at the gate. Then I boarded Kenya Airways Flight KQ 481, leaving Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania at 5:10 AM and arriving at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya at 6:25 AM. I sat on the window seat next to Joseph Wamakau, a construction worker from Nairobi, Kenya, who was doing business in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania for the week. Next to him on the aisle was a woman named Lustina Chapola, who was a Geology teacher at the Catholic University at Malawi in Blantyre, Malawi. She had been teaching this past week in the Rift Valley area for a short course and now returning back to Malawi via Nairobi, Kenya. We had a small bag of peanuts and a glass of orange juice for a snack and arrived in Nairobi, Kenya on time.

After deboarding the plane, I walked along the tarmac of the airport, which is a normal occurrence in Africa, and went into the main terminal of the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, walked along the inside of the

international wing of the terminal, and waited at the gate for my next flight to Bujumbura, Burundi. I checked into the Kenya Airways flight for Bujumbura, Burundi, went through a security checkpoint, and waited at the gate to board the flight. I then boarded Kenya Airways Flight 448, leaving Nairobi, Kenya at 8:10 AM and arriving in Bujumbura International Airport in Bujumbura, Burundi at 10:20 AM. I sat on the window next to an open seat between a man named Emmanuel Baribarira, who was some sort of government official in Bujumbura, Burundi, who had gone to an African Union Pre-Summit meeting which met in Kampala, Uganda for the past week. He was now returning home. We had a short discussion about the possible threat of the Al-Shaabab terrorist group from Somalia that had bombed two restaurants in Kampala, Uganda last week (Sunday night) and killed 74 people. He told me that this group is in 80% of the territory of the country of Somalia and has amassed a total of 30,000 in their group. Both Burundi and Uganda have troops in Somalia fighting against Al-Shaabab, and this is why the terrorist group attacked Kampala, Uganda last Sunday night at the final match of the World Cup, and why they have also threatened to attack Burundi in the near future. It made me a little concerned about coming to Burundi fresh off this latest attack, but we must trust the Lord to protect us during our Bujumbura, Burundi TPI Institute. We had a small breakfast snack of a roll and a croissant and some assorted fruit, and a tropical juice and English tea. Then we landed without incident at the Bujumbura International Airport in Bujumbura, Burundi on time. I went through Passport Control and proceeded through the Baggage Claim area, and my black suitcase did not arrive with me on the flight. So I went over to a lady in the Baggage Claim area, who was seated at a table. She was filling out claims for other passengers who did not receive their bags. I waited my turn and filled a baggage claim ticket for my bag, and while I was doing this, one of the Burundi team members, Alain Migabo, came inside the Baggage Claim area and met me there. I then sorted my carry-on bags through a security checkpoint, and collected them and put them on a cart, and proceeded to exit the customs area into the main terminal, where Sylvestre Hakizimana and his team of committee members were there to meet me at the airport.

I was met at the Bujumbura International Airport by a team of nine Bujumbura TPI Institute Committee members, including Rev. Sylvestre Hakizimana, the TPI Burundi National Director, Rev. Methuselah Baruwani, the Vice-National Director TPI Burundi, Rev. Daniel Semuhanuka, Rev. Boniface Okalo, Bishop Tharcisse Rutozi, Corneille Ndikumana, Bernard Abdi, Alain Migabo, and Pastor Sylvestre's youngest daughter, Leah Ishimwe, who brought a bouquet of really nice flowers arranged in a plastic clear covering, and gave them to me. I wished that Jennifer was here because it would have been nice to present the flowers to her. Little Leah, 8 years old, was so cute with a big smile when she gave the flower arrangement to me. We all went outside the airport terminal and took a few pictures of the group assembled at the airport. Then we loaded my small bags up in two vehicles, one of which was a Toyota Rav 4 SUV which I got into, and we drove about thirty minutes back into the city of Bujumbura. We drove to the edge of town and came to the King's Conference Centre, where Jennifer and I and Joel Taylor stayed last year at the Bujumbura, Burundi 2009 TPI Institute. It is a beautiful hotel run by a Christian owner about one half of a mile from Lake Tanganika, where I was assaulted last year this very week and hit over the head and had my camera stolen, and got beat up pretty bad by three thieves. The hotel staff, however, were just fantastic, and demonstrated their love in very practical ways, by paying the people about \$250 that the thief had sold the camera, so they could retrieve my camera and get it back to me via a missionary girl with Young Life who returned it to me by FedEx when she returned home. I checked into Room 301, which is the same room that Jennifer and I had last year on the third floor looking out over Lake Tanganika out in the distant horizon. Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana and Alain Migabo helped me get my bags into my room. They left me there to rest for awhile before it was time to go pick up Scott Girard at the airport around 1 PM.

I spent some time getting things sorted into my room and downloaded some cards and charged some batteries. I also took a short nap and watched some World News on a French TV station. Being in the same room # 301 as last year brought back memories of Jennifer being here in this room. It made me miss her and wish that she was here with me again this week. At around 1 PM, Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana came and picked me up in the Toyota Rav 4, which he is renting this week to take us around town for our transportation needs. He packed up my small bags in the vehicle and drove me back over to the Bujumbura International Airport, about thirty minutes away, to meet Rev. Scott Girard, who has flown yesterday from Charlotte, North Carolina to Washington D.C. and from there to Addis Abbaba, Ethiopia, and from there to Bujumbura, Burundi with one stop in Kigali, Rwanda. When we got to the airport, Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana went to check on whether my black suitcase had arrived on the 1 PM Kenya Airlines flight from Nairobi, Kenya since my bag did not make my flight earlier today, and we are still missing the bag. He went back through the security checkpoint of the departure part of the airport terminal, and was told by the Kenya Airways ticket office that the bag did not make the 1 PM flight, and that he should come back at midnight, and he would probably retrieve the bag at that time. Then we went over to the international arrival hall and waited for the Ethiopian

Airlines flight to arrive with Scott Girard. His flight arrived on time at 1:20 PM, and after waiting for awhile, I went back into the customs area to see if I could meet Scott back there and help him sort out his bags. When I got back there, Scott had still not arrived yet, but I saw the TPI Notebook boxes, so I went and got a cart and loaded all four TPI boxes on the cart. About that time, Scott Girard arrived in the Baggage Claim area, and I met him for the first time in person. He is a good friend of one of our pastoral trainers, Jeff Richards, and since Jeff could not come with us this summer, he recommended that Scott Girard go in his place. We then found Scott's suitcase and loaded it on the cart, checked the bag and boxes through a security checkpoint, and loaded them on the cart again, and went through the customs area into the waiting area to meet Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana, who was waiting with my small bag on another cart. After meeting together briefly, we went outside the airport, and loaded the bags and boxes into the Toyota Rav 4 SUV, and Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana drove Scott and me out of the airport back to the King's Conference Centre in Bujumbura, Burundi, where we checked Scott Girard into his Room # 302, right next to my room, where Joel Taylor stayed last year. Then Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana left Scott and me to unwind a little bit at the King's Conference Centre, our home for the week, while he went and sorted some other things out. He planned to return later tonight after checking on my bag again at Kenya Airways at the Bujumbura International Airport.

Meanwhile, Scott Girard and I spent some down time just relaxing in our rooms and planned to meet later for dinner. I spent some time at my desk typing my Email Report on my laptop computer, and also listening to some world news on a French TV station. After awhile, I met Scott Girard, and we went downstairs to the restaurant to eat our dinner meal together. I ordered Spaghetti Bolognese with tomato soup and several Pineapple juices. We had a good meal and spent some time getting to know each other better. We had a relaxing meal, and then went over to the Internet Café of desktop computers right across from the restaurant, and got on the internet. I sent an email to Jennifer to let her know that I had arrived safely to Bujumbura, Burundi, but we were having a difficult time with the computers tonight, so we did little else. Scott could not get to his wife through his email, so I told him that we would try again tomorrow. Then we both went upstairs to our rooms and settled in for the night. I worked some more on my Email Report and spent the rest of the evening in my room. About 1 AM, Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana showed up at the Kings Conference Centre with my black suitcase that he had picked up at the Bujumbura International Airport on the 12 AM Kenya Airways flight. Then he drove it back to the Kings Conference Centre, gave it to me, and delivered it to my room. I was very thankful to have this bag in good time so I could take a normal shower and get dressed in new clothes tomorrow. I thanked Pastor Sylvestre for getting the bag and bringing it to me, and then said goodbye to him, and retired in my room for the night. I then went to bed around 1:30 AM after a long night of driving from Tanga, Tanzania to Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, and then a good day of travel from Dar Es Salaam to Nairobi, Kenya, and from there to Bujumbura, Burundi on two flights and successfully meeting Scott Girard on his international flight from the United States with all the bags and TPI boxes arriving in time to begin our TPI Bujumbura, Burundi Institute next week.

The next day, Sunday, July 18th, I woke up in my Room # 301 at the Kings Conference Centre in Bujumbura, Burundi very early in the morning, and spent some time typing on my Email Report on my laptop computer at my desk. At about 8:30 AM, I took a hot shower in a very small stall with a curtain around you in a very confining space, but I was glad to have the hot water and take a good shower after traveling all night and day yesterday. Then I got dressed and ready for the day, and met Scott Girard, and we went downstairs to the restaurant for breakfast. I had two fried eggs, rolls with butter and jelly, a banana, African Chai (tea), and fruit juice. After breakfast, we went back upstairs to our rooms and finished getting ready for the day. I worked some more on my Email Report and looked over my message for the morning. Then Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana and Alain Migabo arrived to pick us up at the Kings Conference Centre, and Pastor Sylvestre drove us in his Toyota Rav 4 SUV into the city of Bujumbura, Burundi so that Scott Girard and I could preach in two different churches this morning.

We first took Scott to Eglise Trinite Libre (Trinity Free Church), pastored by Rev. Methuselah Baruwani, the Vice-National Director TPI Burundi, and we left Scott there to preach in a small open church with about 150 people present this morning. He preached on James 1: 1-11 on wisdom. His first point is that James acknowledges trials and temptations in life. If we think about the long-term effect of the trials, it will bring joy when you realize that your faith will be exercised and you will become more mature. God wants us to persevere in the testing of our faith, and make sure we have His wisdom to handle the trials. God's promise is that He will give us wisdom, which is the ability to use knowledge in

the midst of trials. There is, however, a requirement that God needs in order to give us this wisdom, and it is that we need not doubt God. We must remind ourselves about God's faithfulness and that He has never failed us. Many of the Psalms talk about God's faithfulness. James is not saying that we should never doubt because we are human, but God can't use you if you continually doubt Him. Many people in the Bible doubted God, such as Moses, Abraham, David, Solomon, and many others, but God still used them when they stopped doubting. A little doubt is understandable, but not a lot of doubt because God can't bless you if you continually doubt Him. God has proven Himself over and over again, and we have no basis for doubting God. We must learn to "doubt our doubt." Sometimes we feel bad and don't have faith and therefore doubt God, but other days we feel good and have faith in God, and God really uses us that day. God wants a consistent believer, who believes God not all the time, but He does not give wisdom to the person who doubts a lot. That person will be unstable and unproductive. The second point is that James next talks about our circumstances. Some people have good circumstances and some have poor ones. God wants us to thrive despite our circumstances. As James 1:2 says, we can have joy even despite difficult circumstances or trials since God uses trials to strengthen our faith to mature us. A man or woman in humble circumstances ought to consider his position as a high one. In God's eyes, you are rich because He provides everything that you need. This is not the case with the rich, who needs to have a low position. He may have lots of money but he can't take it with him, and he could lose his future in the process. God wants us to depend on Him and not on our resources since He is dependable and will provide all you need. Solomon asked for wisdom and God gave it to him plus riches. In the end, Solomon valued wisdom more than money. This is seen in Ecclesiastes 2:13, which says, "I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness." Scott then concluded his sermon and closed in a word of prayer. After the service was over, Rev. Methuselah Baruwani brought Scott over to Sylvestre Hakizimana's church, where I was preaching.

Meanwhile, Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana and Alain Migabo drove me through town in the Toyota Rav 4 SUV to Sylvestre's church, Eglise Evangelique de l'Afrique Centrale (Evangelical Church of Central Africa, ECCA), which is in the Bwiza commune of Bujumbura, and this church will also be the venue for the TPI institute this week. It is a large, well-built church on a busy street. The place was full, and they were already singing and worshipping the Lord when we arrived. Since the church was so packed, it was a little warm since they didn't have fans or air conditioning, just open windows. They introduced the TPI team and my translator, Jean Marie Nibizi, who translated the message for me into Kirundi, the main language here in Burundi. He lives in the Kibenga commune in town, and was also my translator at the 2009 TPI Bujumbura Institute. After several choirs performed and led us in worship, I was introduced by Sylvestre Hakizimana, and I came up to preach the message on "God's Provision of Salvation" from an Old Testament passage in Num. 21:4-9 that dealt with the deliverance of the Israelites from the fiery serpents in the wilderness with the erection of the bronze serpent on a pole. I read the passage and also read Ex. 16:1-12, which talks about the institution of God's provision of the daily manna and quail, which God gave to the Israelites due to their complaints to Moses. Then I taught the first point of our passage in Num. 21:4-5, which is the people's complaint against God that they have no food or water and the food that they are eating is "a miserable food." This complaint reveals their sin against God since they were complaining about God's provision of the manna and the quail, which God provided for them each day. Then I dealt with the second point concerning the Lord's judgment in bringing upon the people fiery serpents to bite the people and everyone who was bitten died as a result (Num. 21:6). God always

brings judgment on man's sin and this points to the ultimate judgement of God at the Great White Throne Judgement in Rev. 20. Then I taught the third point, which is the People's Confession of their sin to God and request to Moses that he intercede before God to remove the fiery serpents (Num. 21:7). This leads to the fourth point of God's provision of salvation with the command to Moses to erect a bronze serpent on a pole and everyone who looks at the bronze serpent shall live (Num. 21:8-9). As the pole with the bronze serpent was lifted up in the Jewish camp, every Jew bitten by a serpent who looked at the bronze serpent lived and was delivered from the curse of God's judgement for their sins. I then went to the New Testament passage in John 3:14-21, where Jesus says that "as Moses lifted up the (bronze) serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up (on a cross)" [John 3:14]. As God provided a bronze serpent on a pole to save the Israelites from their sins, He provided our Lord Jesus to be lifted up on another pole, the Roman cross, to save all mankind from their sins "that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life" (John 3:15). I then gave an invitation to anyone who needed to trust Jesus as their Savior to come up and receive God's provision of salvation. There were three people that accepted Christ as their Savior, Jeremie Nzeyimana, a 25 year old man, Marie Nzeyimana, a 54 year old woman, and Venant Hatungimana, a 48 year old man. I prayed with these three people and assured them of their salvation based on their looking to Jesus in faith just like the Jews looked in faith to the bronze serpent and lived. Then we closed in a song of worship and a few announcements were made and the service was closed and the people eventually left the church after much fellowship.

After the service, we were greeted by many people, and Scott Girard was brought over to Sylvestre Hakizimana's church after his preaching service was over, and some ladies eventually started bringing in lunch. They made us go through the line first, so everyone could see what we were getting. We had a choice of rice, beef, fish, peas, greens, and bananas. They also brought us cold cokes and water to drink. We ate our lunch in chairs in a semi-circle around the table with the food on it, so the rest of the Bujumbura TPI committee and people from church ate in chairs with us. We had a great meal and time of fellowship as we got to know each other and talked with several people there at the church. After lunch, we all loaded back up in the Toyota Rav 4 SUV, and Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana drove Scott Girard and me back to the Kings Conference Centre on the edge of town, and we stayed there for the rest of the day and evening. Meanwhile, Pastor Sylvestre went into town and bought both Scott Girard and me two big bottles of water each, and brought them back to us at the Kings Conference Centre so we would have some water. Then we said our goodbyes to our hosts as they left us for the day.

Meanwhile, Scott and I settled into our rooms for the rest of the afternoon. I spent some time typing my Email Report on my laptop computer at my desk, and also downloading some cards and recharging my batteries. I also watched some news on the French TV station, which is the only English TV Channel. After awhile, Scott Girard came over to my room and he counted all the notebooks in the four boxes because he told me that Bobby Ferguson had given him 250 notebooks for the Bujumbura, Burundi Institute and 200 notebooks for the Kinshasa, DRC Institute, which is a reverse of what we wanted, 200 notebooks for the Bujumbura, Burundi Institute and 250 notebooks for the Kinshasa, DRC Institute. So Scott pulled all the notebooks out of the four boxes and recounted them, and as he suspected, we had too many Burundi notebooks and too few DRC notebooks. This will not be good for the Kinshasa, DRC Institute, and Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa will not be happy about it because he is planning for more than 300 pastors coming to that institute, and we will only have 200 notebooks to give out to over 300 pastors. I guess we will have to deal with that process when we get there next week. So Scott repacked the four boxes, two of Burundi and two for the DRC, and thus, we had everything sorted out for tomorrow morning.

Then Scott and I met around 8 PM to go downstairs to the restaurant for dinner. I had a pepper steak with mushroom sauce and greens, tomato soup, and several Pineapple drinks. We had a good meal and time of fellowship after a full day of preaching. This was Scott's first sermon that he preached in Africa, and he enjoyed himself. Sylvestre Hakizimana had to send one of his translators over to translate for Scott because it was difficult for the translators in Rev. Methuselah Baruwani's church to understand Scott's Southern accent, but once they got another translator, everything worked out fine. After dinner, we went back over to the

Internet Café of desktop computers right across from the restaurant, and got on the internet. This time we got on the internet a little easier and we were able to send some emails to different people. I sent an Email Report to Jennifer, and answered a few other emails, and looked at the news and sports back in the United States. Then Scott Girard and I went back upstairs to our rooms and settled in our rooms for the night. I worked some more on my Email Report and watched a little more TV on the French TV station above my desk. I also had a chocolate granola bar with some water for desert and continued typing on my Email Report for the rest of the evening. I went to bed pretty late after a good first full day here in Bujumbura, Burundi, preaching the Word of God and seeing three people come to salvation in Christ.

I thank the Lord for His faithfulness to get us all safely to Bujumbura, Burundi for our third of six week-long institutes in Central/East/Southern Africa. Please continue to pray for all our logistics and the financing of these institutes because we are trusting the Lord to cover the expenses for all of these pastors in six institutes in six countries.

Yours for Christ's mission,

John Balmer, Jr
