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TPI Africa Trip Report 9

1 message

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John and Bobby Ferguson are now in Livingstone, Zambia for the 6th and final week of training for the summer. John's email below chronicles traveling from Bujumbura, Burundi thru the first day of the Kinshasa, DRC institute (week 4). One interesting thing John mentions is the money. I didn't even realize there's a date on US bills until going to Africa. We've always had to seek out crisper, unmarked bills, but now we are having a harder and harder time getting the older series accepted. Sometimes they won't take them at all, and others give a poorer exchange rate. Go figure. Seems like money's money, but that's just one of the small challenges/inconveniences we deal with.

A praise is that the airline in Bujumbura didn't charge extra for the boxes of notebooks and their luggage. They were certainly carrying more than allowed and could have easily been charged. So praise the Lord for watching out for them. Also, everything arrived safely in Kinshasa and they weren't stopped by customs and charged a fee. That airport is totally chaotic and I've seen people try to milk money out travelers, especially white Americans who don't speak the language (French).

They didn't have enough notebooks for everyone at the institute, which saddens me. However, we can be thankful that the pastors accepted it and didn't cause a fuss. You may remember hearing last year how there was a small riot in Kinshasa when there weren't enough books to go around. I've never seen anything like that in person - people yelling, pushing and grabbing. We knew we'd be short this year, so I heaved a big sigh of relief when I read the pastors who didn't get books agreed to make their own copies. You may be asking why we don't just print more. Mainly b/c it's so expensive to print and pay to get them there. Then there's the fact that we always have more people than expected in the DRC. We plan for a certain number, but more show up. How can we turn them away? They are so hungry for the Word of God and for training. So we just do the best we can.

*Thanks for your prayers. This has been a really good trip with only a few inconveniences, but nothing major.
Jennifer Balmer*

Early in the morning after midnight, the next day, [Saturday, July 24th](#), Scott Girard and I got our bags together and Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana and Alain Migabo arrived to pick us up at the Kings Conference Centre to take us to the Bujumbura International Airport. I checked out of my Room # 301 at the Kings Conference Centre in Bujumbura, Burundi. Our hosts helped us load our large and small bags and two boxes of TPI notebooks into Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana's Toyota Rav 4 SUV. Scott and I paid our hotel bills for the week, and I also used Emmanuel's laptop computer in the reception desk cubicle outside the hotel to send an Email Report to Jennifer and answer a few emails. I later found out after we got to Kinshasa, DRC that some of the \$100 USD bills that we paid for our hotel bill were older than what is accepted in Burundi by the banks, but we were not notified about this nor told at the time of this problem when we checked out of the hotel. Then we said goodbye to our friends at the King's Conference Centre, and Pastor Sylvestre Hakizimana and Alain Migabo drove Scott Girard and me through town in the Toyota Rav 4 SUV about 30 to 45 minutes outside the city to the Bujumbura International Airport.

When we got to the airport, we got a couple of carts and put our bags and boxes on the carts and proceeded through a security checkpoint and came to the Kenya Airways ticket counter. We were hoping to see if the Kenya Airways authorities would be able to let our two TPI notebook boxes go to Kinshasa, DRC without any charge or very minimal charge. We thought that we were very early for our check-in time for our flight which was to take off at 3 AM, but we found out that the plane was soon to take off and we were two of the last passengers to board the plane. Two of the Kenya Airways ticket agents checked in our bags, and did not charge us any money for our excess weight due to the two extra boxes of TPI notebooks, but quickly

processed our bags and checked us into the flight, and told us to move quickly to get to the gate. We rejoiced that the Lord had given us favor with the Kenya Airways authorities, and then filled out our immigration forms, said goodbye to our Burundi hosts, and then went through Passport Control, and then on to the gate. No sooner than Scott Girard and I got to the gate, we were immediately ushered through it, on to the tarmac, and we were the last two passengers to board Kenya Airways Flight KQ 446, leaving Bujumbura, Burundi at 2 AM and arriving at Jomo Kenyatta Airport in Nairobi, Kenya at 4:30 AM. Scott and I sat next to each other thanks to a gentleman trading seats with Scott, and enabling him to sit on the aisle right next to me on the window seat. I had to put my bags at the very back of the plane since the plane was so packed and there was no room in the overhead storage bins. We were so glad, however, that we made the flight and that the boxes were put on the plane without any further costs to us. We had a small snack of a muffin and some juice and arrived in Nairobi, Kenya about an hour early.

After deboarding the plane, Scott Girard and I walked along the tarmac of the airport, which is a normal occurrence in Africa, across an elevated staircase into the international wing, and went into the main terminal of the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, walked to our gate, and waited at the gate on a row of chairs for our next flight to Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. Since Scott and I were at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport very early in the morning, we spent several hours waiting for our flight before it was time to check-in for our flight. We then checked into the Kenya Airways flight for Kinshasa, DRC, went through a security checkpoint, and waited at the gate to board the flight. Scott and I waited for a little bit longer before it was finally time to board the flight. We then boarded Kenya Airways Flight 550, leaving Nairobi, Kenya at 7:30 AM and arriving in N'Djili International Airport in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo at 10:20 AM. Scott and I boarded a pretty lightly crowded plane, and he was able to sit on the window across from my window seat on the other side of the aisle, such that we were the only two people sitting on our row on both sides of the aisle. 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 first at the Brassaville International Airport, in Brassaville, Congo (a separate country from the Democratic Republic of Congo on the West Coast of Central Africa), which is about a twelve-minute flight from Kinshasa, DRC. We had about a thirty minute wait while many more people boarded the flight, and Scott Girard had to move over to the aisle seat next to me with an empty middle seat between us. Then we took off again from Brassaville, Congo and flew a very short flight and landed without incident at the N'Djili International Airport in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo at 10:20 AM on time. We deboarded the plane and went on a bus to the security area of the airport, and we went through Passport Control, checked for our Yellow Fever shots, and proceeded through the Baggage Claim area, and waited for awhile for our bags. Finally, Scott Girard's bag and my bag and the two TPI notebook boxes arrived at the Baggage Claim area, and we took the bags off the belt. [Then two young baggage attendants helped us carry our bags outside the airport, past the customs area, who asked us about the boxes, but let us go through without a problem.](#) We tried to get one attendant help us, but another guy helped us as well, which means that we will have to pay them for taking these bags outside the airport.

Once we got the bags outside the N'Djili International Airport, we were met in the front of the airport by Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa, The TPI DRC National Director, and Rev. Benjamin Undugu, the TPI DRC Assistant National Director. It was great to see these two key leaders, who have helped us put on ten TPI Institutes in Kinshasa (five) and other cities in the Eastern and Southern Congo (five). They are a great leadership team, and I was so glad to be in the Congo under their leadership to conduct our 11th TPI Institute in the DRC, the most in any country in Africa, and the 6th in Kinshasa, the most of any city in Africa. They helped us get the bags and boxes over to the vehicle, where they were loaded up in the Mitsubishi Pajero SUV, and Rev. Nepa paid our two attendants a remuneration, and we all loaded up in the vehicle. Then Michel Kitenga, our driver, drove us in his SUV out of the airport, and through the city of Kinshasa, a city of over 10 million people, where there were many people crowded in the streets all along the way. There was not too much traffic today, but we eventually arrived about thirty minutes later at the Imperium Hotel on Salongo Blvd., a dirt road in the Lemba Estate in Kinshasa. This is the same hotel that Jennifer and I stayed at last summer 2009 for the Matete, Kinshasa TPI Institute. We really liked this hotel back then, so we wanted to stay here again this year. We unloaded all our bags out of the SUV and into the hotel. Then Scott and I were checked into our rooms at the hotel. I was checked into Room # 103 on the second floor that looked out over the front street of the hotel. This was the same room that Jennifer and I stayed in last year, so it reminded me again of Jennifer since I could sense her presence in this room. It made me miss her and feel close to her at the same time. Several of the hotel staff greeted me again, and helped Scott and me get our bags into our rooms. We paid an initial installment of our bill and filled out some forms and got sorted into our rooms. Then Scott and I bade our hosts goodbye while they went to buy us some water and sort out a few other things in town.

Meanwhile, Scott Girard and I went down to the restaurant on the second floor where we had our lunch, and Benjamin, our cook last year and years before at the Hotel Universe, was there to cook for us again. Both Scott and I ordered a cheeseburger and fries and a coke for lunch. It was a very good meal and great to have somewhat of an American favorite, but the cheeseburger is not like our American cheeseburgers. It is hard to describe the difference other than to say that it is not very much like our burgers. We had a very leisurely meal, and at the end of the meal, Nepa Wa Msambelwa brought three large bottles of water for both Scott and me, and gave them to us. We then went back to our rooms and said goodbye again to our hosts for the day, and we would rest in the hotel for the whole day. Then Scott and I spent the afternoon in our rooms, just relaxing and getting our things unpacked in our rooms. I spent some time resting on my bed for part of the afternoon. I also spent some time typing my Email Report on the laptop computer at my desk. I also downloaded some cards and charged some batteries. Later in the evening, Scott Girard and I met up again and went down to the restaurant on the second floor for our dinner. I had Spaghetti Bolognese with Tomato Soup, a coke and water. Scott and I had a good time reflecting on the events of the day and some of the chaos that represents the city of Kinshasa. After dinner, we both went back to our rooms for the evening. I spent some time typing my Email Report on the laptop computer at my desk. I also tried to watch some of the French TV stations, but I really could not get into any of the shows since I could not understand any of them. I spent the evening working at my computer and playing a few games of solitaire on my computer. I worked until about midnight, and then went to bed after a great day of traveling on two good flights, getting our boxes safely, and meeting our two leaders and getting here safely at our hotel here in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

The next day, [Sunday, July 25th](#), I woke up early in my Room # 103 at the Imperium Hotel in the Lemba Estate in Kinshasa, DRC. I spent some time typing on my Email Report at the laptop computer at my desk. I also spent some time looking over my message that I will be preaching this morning at Bible Faith Church, which is the church that Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa pastors in the Mpsa village in Kinshasa. At around 8 AM, I took a hot shower in the adjoining bathroom, which has an overhead nozzle in a shower stall but no curtain, so the water goes all over the floor. The water is heated from a water heater in the bathroom, and it was a nice hot shower. Then I got dressed and ready for the day and I met Scott Girard for breakfast at the restaurant on the second floor. We had an omelet, two pieces of toast, African Chai (tea), and water. Then we went back to our rooms and finished getting ready for the day. I worked some more on typing my Email Report at the laptop computer at my desk. After awhile, Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa arrived at the Imperium Hotel to pick us up around 10 AM to take us to his church for the morning service. We took our small bags downstairs and some of the hotel staff helped us pack them in the vehicle that was parked in front of the hotel on the dirt road. Then Michel Kitenga, our driver for the week, drove us in his Mitsubishi Pajero SUV down the dirt road away from the hotel, through paved streets into the city of Kinshasa, which was packed with people along the route past the N'Djili International Airport on the main road in the city. Then we came to a turnoff onto a dirt road, which was filled with deep white sand and therefore made driving very difficult since the tires would sink deep into the sand. [We turned down one road and got stuck in the sand, and everyone had to get out of the vehicle and help push the SUV out of its stuck position, while the driver tried to maneuver the vehicle out of the deep sand to a place where he could get better traction on the road. Then we all got back into the vehicle again and continued the trip down the sandy road.](#) A group of small kids had directed us down a particular road that was rather deep in sand so that we might get stuck so they could possibly help us get out and get some money in the process. Once we got out of the first predicament, Pastor Nepa paid these kids, and we drove deeper into the village until we got stuck a second time in the deep sand right in the middle of the small town on a wide sandy road. Once again, we got out of the vehicle and pushed the SUV out of its stuck position until the driver could maneuver the vehicle to better traction on the road. Then we all got back inside the vehicle and continued the journey down the sandy road. The vehicle had four-wheel drive, but it did not work at all, so that is why we had such difficulty driving in the deep sand. Finally, we got to a more hilly terrain that was easier to maneuver since it had hard sand and rock upon which to drive the last portion of the trip. We drove down some narrow dirt roads until we came to Bible Faith Church, Mpsa I village, in the Nsele Estate on the other side of the N'Djili International Airport in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. [This is a one room village church with a tin roof and temporary walls and a dirt floor since the more permanent structure had been destroyed several years ago when a strong wind destroyed the church and blew the walls down. The walls went most of the way to the top, but there was an opening at the top of the walls and in the back of the church. The roof was split in the tin roof into two parts with a crack right down the middle of the roof. There was one light bulb right in the center of the church, which did not seem to give off very much light, but it was not needed in the broad daylight like today. There was a big banner across the outside front wall advertising the coming TPI Mpsa Pastoral Training Institute beginning tomorrow for the whole week.](#)

As we went inside the building, the place was packed and the church service had already begun, and the worship leader was leading the congregation in several songs of worship while several boys accompanied the singing with their beating of the hands on two bongo drums. There were also two others who beat the side of the drums with sticks. After playing several songs of worship, there were some announcements made, welcoming of visitors, and then the taking up of the offering, where all the people would come up front and individually place their offering in offering plates that Rev. Hector Edwards, the pastor of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Joliet, Illinois, had donated to this church several years ago. Then Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa came forward and greeted the church and introduced the TPI team. He had Rev. Scott Girard come up and greet the church, and then he introduced me to come up and preach a message for the church service. This was now my third time to preach in this church, but the first time since the new building was constructed after the old building was destroyed. **My message was interpreted into French by one man and then into the local dialect by another woman from the French translation, so it took a long time to preach the message since the message was being preached three times over for every sentence preached.** I preached 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). Confession of sin always leads to God's forgiveness of sins in God's plan of redemption in both the Old and New Testaments. 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. A whole group of about forty people came forward to receive Christ as their Savior, and I asked for those who were receiving Christ for the first time to come out of that group and stand a little closer to the front of the church. A group of 30 people came forward to receive Christ as Savior for the first time, which included men and women, boys and girls. I prayed with these 30 people as they prayed after me to receive Christ, 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 I gave a second invitation for those who wanted to come and rededicate their lives to Christ and renew their commitment to Christ, and another 17 people came forward to rededicate their lives to Christ. Then we had a time of prayer for these people as they surrendered their lives to Christ. Then Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa came up and led in prayer for any who were sick and needed prayer, and several more people stood at their seats and were prayed for by Pastor Nepa for their sicknesses. 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 as we went outside the church building. Pastor Nepa talked with several people about preparations that still needed to be made before our TPI Mpsa Institute would start right here at his church tomorrow morning for the next week. Then several of the people helped us load our small bags into the vehicle that is parked out in front of the church. Michel Kitenga, our driver for the week, drove us in his Mitsubishi Pajero SUV down the dirt road away from Bible Faith Church in the Mpsa I village area, down a hilly terrain that was easy to maneuver since it had hard sand and rock upon which to drive the initial portion of the trip. We drove down some narrow dirt roads until we came to the main part of the town where there were many shops and businesses along a long dirt road that had some deep sand. We got stuck again in the deep sand right in the middle of the small town on a wide sandy road. Once again, we got out of the vehicle and pushed the SUV out of its stuck position until the driver could maneuver the vehicle to

better traction on the road. Then we all got back inside the vehicle and continued the journey down the sandy road. The vehicle had four-wheel drive, but it did not work at all, so that is why we had such difficulty driving in the deep sand. We then made several more turns at a rather fast pace to keep from getting stuck in the sand, sometimes just missing some pedestrians along the road until we got to the last turn to go out of the village. We met another larger truck who was also trying to keep from getting stuck on this road. We made several attempts to get around this truck and got stuck a second time in the deep sand at this point in the road. The road was filled with deep white sand and therefore, it made driving very difficult since the tires would sink deep into the sand. So everyone had to get out of the vehicle again a second time and help push the SUV out of its stuck position, while the driver tried to maneuver the vehicle out of the deep sand to a place where he could get better traction on the road. Then we all got back into the vehicle again and continued the trip down the sandy road and out of the village back onto the main paved road that leads straight into the main center of the city. We then drove past the N'Djili International Airport back towards the city of Kinshasa, seeing countless numbers of people congregated along the side of the road. We also hit some traffic along the way and finally made it to the main statue of the first prime minister of the Congo and the tall needle-like spire that looms over the city as a monument and fixture of the city. Then we turned back towards the Lemba Estate and made our way to the turnoff down another dirt road, and we eventually arrived about thirty minutes later at the Imperium Hotel on Salongo Blvd., a dirt road in the Lemba Estate in Kinshasa.

When we arrived back at the Imperium Hotel, our home here in Kinshasa, the hotel staff helped us get our small bags into our rooms. Then Nepa Wa Msambelwa and Didier Ndimba, the TPI Kinshasa Treasurer, came to my Room # 103, and we went over the TPI Mpsa Budget for the week. I then gave Pastor Nepa the remaining balance for the institute so he could cover the expenses for the week of the TPI Mpsa, Kinshasa Institute. He then released Didier Ndimba so he could go back home, while Pastor Nepa helped us sort through a few things about our rooms. He also helped us deal with a few things concerning the hotel like making sure we got our meals sorted out with the kitchen staff since they could only understand French, and our understanding of French is minimal at best. He also helped us to sort out going to the internet café downstairs when Peter comes in for the day. Peter is the only one in the hotel who knows English, and was a great help to us last year when we needed any help for anything in our rooms or in the hotel, especially going to the internet at all hours of the night. Then we said goodbye to Rev. Nepa as he went home to eat lunch with his family and Scott Girard and I could do the same thing here in the Imperium Hotel. After Scott and I sorted through a few things in our room and worked a little while typing on my Email Report at the laptop computer at my desk, we went down to the restaurant on the second floor and had our lunch/dinner around 5 PM. Scott and I were served by Charlene and Nasha and had a great time trying to communicate with them in French and their trying to communicate in English. Scott's wife used to teach French and his daughter also knows French, so it came in handy as he knew a few things, but still it was quite limited. We ordered our meals and took some time for them to bring them to us. I had steak and rice, bread, tomato soup, and coke and water. We had a relaxing meal enjoying our company, and then Scott left to go back to his room rather quickly, and I finished getting the bill sorted out. Then I went to my room and spent a little time typing my Email Report at my desk.

After awhile, I went up to Scott Girard's room on the third floor (Room # 208), and we had a talk about the first week and his experience here so far in Africa. Last week was his first week in Africa except for a trip to South Africa once, but this was his first week in the real continent of Africa. We did not know each other prior to this trip because Jeff Richards had recommended Scott to go on the TPI Missions Trip when he could not go with us due to scheduling conflicts for another Missions Trip to Mexico. So I did not know Scott very well except through my time with him last week, nor did he know me. He did a good job picking up things last week and taught Jeff Richards' notes on Romans and Systematic Theology since we had already finalized the notes and they were already translated in French from a previous trip that Jeff made to the Bukavu, DRC TPI Institute in August 2006. Scott had a few questions and observations from last week, and we talked out some things that he had seen from last week in Bujumbura, Burundi. He is very sensitive and was wondering why certain things were done the way there were done and if I really appreciated what he did last week. I assured him that I did appreciate his teaching and involvement with the pastors last week and helped him to see why we do certain things here in Africa. Scott has always had an interest in missions and felt that God has called him in some way to serve Him in mission, so he is very grateful for this opportunity to serve the Lord in Africa. Since we did not know each other before last week, this time with Scott helped me to get to know him a little better and let him know a little more about me and how things work during an intense week during the institute. I pour so much of my time and effort into the week and the pastors here in Africa that I often do not have as much time to communicate things out as fully as Scott might want from me after each day is done, but we had a good conversation, and I think we were able to communicate a lot of things and get some things

sorted out before we begin our second week here at the Mpsa, Kinshasa TPI Institute. We finished our time by praying together about the upcoming week and the ministry we have this week in Kinshasa. Then I went back to my room and typed some more on my Email Report on the laptop computer at my desk, which is a small board, which protrudes from the wall with a chain and some small hinges to keep it in place. I also downloaded some cards on my Jobo Spectator and charged some batteries to prepare for the upcoming week at the TPI Mpsa Institute this coming week. I also had a chocolate chip breakfast bar for dessert and worked through the evening until I got too tired to type any longer. Then I went to bed around 1 AM after a great first full day in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, especially thanking the Lord that we saw 30 people saved, by coming to faith in Christ for the first time, and another 17 people rededicate their lives to Christ this day in preaching the Word at Bible Faith Church in Mpsa I village, a part of the Nsele Estate, about 30 minutes away from here in Kinshasa, DRC.

The next day, [Monday, July 26th](#), I woke up early in my Room # 103 at the Imperium Hotel in the Lemba Estate in Kinshasa, DRC. I spent some typing on my Email Report at the laptop computer at my desk. I also spent some time looking over some of the Scriptures that I will be teaching this morning at the Mpsa, Kinshasa TPI Institute. At around 7 AM, I took a hot shower in the adjoining bathroom, which has an overhead nozzle in a shower stall but no curtain, so the water goes all over the floor. The water is heated from a water heater in the bathroom, and it was a nice hot shower. Then I got dressed and ready for the day and I met Scott Girard for breakfast at the restaurant on the second floor. We had an omelet, two pieces of toast, African Chai (tea), and water. Then we went back to our rooms and finished getting ready for the day. I worked some more on typing my Email Report at the laptop computer at my desk. After awhile, Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa arrived at the Imperium Hotel to pick us up around 9:30 AM to take us to the venue for the beginning of the TPI Mpsa, Kinshasa Institute, which will be at his church, Bible Faith Church, about thirty minutes away. We are about one and a half hours late due to the registration process of getting all the pastors registered for the week. Then we took our small bags downstairs and some of the hotel staff helped us pack them in the vehicle that was parked in front of the hotel on the dirt road.

Then Michel Kitenga, our driver for the week, drove us in his Mitsubishi Pajero SUV down the dirt road away from the hotel, through paved streets into the city of Kinshasa, which was packed with people along the route. We stopped three times to pick up interpreters and others who were coming with us to the institute. We picked up Winner Lozolana and Caleb Kanku, both of whom are interpreting for Scott Girard and me this week. We also picked up Nehemiah Dennis, who is the husband of Manek Eulalie Dennis, who was an interpreter for us at several TPI Kinshasa Institutes, including last year in Matete. She is having a baby boy this week any day now, so she could not interpret for us since she is at the end of her pregnancy and waiting to have her baby sometime this week. All of these people got into the back part of the SUV and sat back there. We also picked up Rev. Benjamin Undugu, the Assistant DRC National Director, who is the key Administrator for our Kinshasa Institutes. He got into the SUV next to Nepa Wa Msambelwa, and when we stopped at the next junction, Benjamin went to one of the booths and bought water for Scott and me to drink during the day. Finally, Michel Kitenga drove us past the N'Djili International Airport on the main road in the city. Then we came to a turnoff onto a dirt road, which was filled with deep white sand and therefore made driving very difficult since the tires would sink deep into the sand. We turned down one road and got stuck in the sand, and everyone had to get out of the vehicle and help push the SUV out of its stuck position, while the driver tried to maneuver the vehicle out of the deep sand to a place where he could get better traction on the road. Then we all got back into the vehicle again and continued the trip down the sandy road, and we drove deeper into the village until we got stuck a second time in the deep sand right in the middle of the small town on a wide sandy road. Once again, we got out of the vehicle and pushed the SUV out of its stuck position until the driver could maneuver the vehicle to better traction on the road. Then we all got back inside the vehicle and continued the journey down the sandy road. The vehicle had four-wheel drive, but it did not work at all, so that is why we had such difficulty driving in the deep sand. Finally, we got to a more hilly terrain that was easier to maneuver since it had hard sand and rock upon which to drive the last portion of the trip. We drove down some narrow dirt roads until we came to Bible Faith Church, Mpsa I village, in the Nsele Estate on the other side of the N'Djili International Airport in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

As we went inside the building, the place was packed and the TPI Institute had already begun, and the worship leader was leading the pastors in several songs of worship while several men accompanied the singing with their beating of the hands on two bongo drums. There were also two others who beat the side of the drums with sticks. After playing several songs of worship, it was now time to begin the institute. When we got there about 10 AM, the registration of the pastors had already taken place and the pastors were now ready for the institute to begin. We are beginning the institute without giving out the TPI notebooks since we

just arrived with the boxes in the SUV and there is not enough time to hand them out before the first session. We started the TPI Mpsa Institute around 10 AM with 307 pastors, evangelists, and national missionaries for the morning session.

Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa opened the TPI Mpsa Institute with a short introduction of Training Pastors International and what to expect this week. Then he introduced me to begin the first session on Expository Preaching. I took a little time to introduce the TPI philosophy and share the three pillars of our TPI training program, which are preaching the Word of God, leading the Church of God, and reaching the world for God. I also introduced Pastor Scott Girard from Charlotte, North Carolina, who will be joining me this week as a Pastoral Trainer to preach through the book of Romans and teach a series on Systematic Theology. I will also teach Expository Preaching, Principles of Biblical Leadership, and do an overview of the Old Testament. Then I began teaching the first session on Expository Preaching. I began by introducing the need for Expository Preaching since most preachers in Africa do not study the Bible before preaching from it only because they have not been taught how to study the text before preaching it. Many also take verses out of context and impose their own meanings on the text and preach messages which do not reflect the original intended meaning of the text. I then went to several passages and sought to show what is meant by expository preaching. In order to preach an expository message from the Word of God, it is imperative that pastors spend at least one hour a day studying the passage that they will preach from on Sunday morning. I also used many different illustrations to help them see the need for presenting a good exposition of the text during the worship service, which is like their wives preparing a meal to eat for dinner. We spent some time looking at the main verse of the week, which is 2 Tim. 2:15. We also looked at two definitions of expository preaching and illustrated these definitions by showing that a preacher in Africa must first go back to the Biblical times almost 2,000 years ago and seek to determine the original meaning of the text by observing what the Biblical author said to his audience in the first century or before. Once he has observed these truths and correctly interpreted them, then the African pastor can apply these truths to their people in the 21st Century. I spent some time to show the importance of preaching through books of God's Word, not just preaching verses out of books and bringing several of them together for a message. Finally, we looked at several principles of expository preaching before illustrating the nature of expository preaching with several analogies. Then we closed out the first session of the day with a challenge to prepare the text before you preach the text. Then Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa came up and underscored the importance of this session on expository preaching and encouraged the pastors to implement these principles in their preaching ministries.

We had a short stand-up break and Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa invited me to come up and introduce Rev. Scott Girard, a pastor from Charlotte, North Carolina, and help the pastors to see the need for this next session when Scott would teach through the book of Romans as an example of how to preach through a book of the Bible. Then I invited Scott to come up and begin his session on Romans. Scott then came up and gave a few personal comments about his life and ministry, and then he started his session on Romans. He started off by introducing the apostle Paul, who was set apart to the gospel of God and called as an apostle to the Gentiles. He wrote this epistle in Corinth and addressed it to the Church in Rome and sent it to them with Phoebe. Then Paul tells the Romans that their faith is known all over the world, and he prays for them and longs some day to see them. He wants to impart some spiritual gift to them so that he and they might both be encouraged in Christ. He then concludes this section by declaring that he is not ashamed of the gospel of God because it has the power of God to save souls and it has the righteousness of God, which is received by faith. Paul then talks about God's wrath against all godlessness and sinfulness of mankind. All of mankind has no excuse because God has revealed Himself in creation, but man chose to ignore God and worship creation. They were foolish and not grateful to God and worshipped idols instead. They then exchanged the Word of God for a lie (Ro. 1:25), and God gave them over to their lusts, but they received the penalty in their bodies for their sins. Scott then taught Romans Chapter 2. God will judge all sins, but we are not the judge because we do the same things. God will judge all people at the Day of Judgment, and He will give to each person according to what he has done (Ro. 2:6). At that time, we will be rewarded for our good deeds. The Jews thought that they had an advantage, but they sinned, and the Gentiles blasphemed God because of the Jews. The physical sign of circumcision only has value if you keep the whole law. A true Jew is one who is circumcised on the inside, that is, the heart. Then Scott began Chapter 3. God is faithful and true, but man is a liar – "No one is righteous, not even one" (Ro. 3:10). Now Paul turns to the divine remedy of righteousness from God through Jesus Christ. "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," (Ro. 3:23), but Jesus provided the sacrifice of atonement, and therefore, God is the God of the Jews and the Gentiles. Then Scott Girard concluded his teaching on the Book of Romans and closed in a word of prayer. Afterwards, Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa came up and made a few announcements and told the group to wait while the pastors received their TPI notebooks. He explained to the pastors the predicament that we had since we were short

over 100 notebooks and did not have enough for all the pastors to receive one.

After Scott's session, the TPI Mpsa Committee handed out TPI notebooks to most of the participants. We had a shortage of notebooks since Bobby Ferguson's church had inadvertently printed 250 Burundi notebooks for last week and 200 notebooks for the Mpsa, Kinshasa Institute this week instead of 200 for Burundi and 250 for Mpsa. [Pastor Nepa had to exhort the pastors that there would be more than 100 pastors who would not get notebooks today, but whoever did not receive one could go to someone who did get one and copy it and make their own notebook.](#) Even though there were many who did not like this problem, the pastors accepted the dilemma and made the best of the situation unlike how the Matete, Kinshasa Institute took place last year when many pastors literally fought over the books and ripped them out of other pastor's hands in a frenzy. Most of them were very excited to get their books, and the 100 or so who did not get one could go and get one by copying it for themselves. After receiving their TPI notebooks, Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa came up and made a few announcements and dismissed the group for lunch after a pastor led in prayer.

We broke for lunch and all the pastors stayed at their seats while the TPI Local Mpsa protocol team came to each pastor and poured water for the pastors to wash their hands and then brought them their plate of food so that they could eat it inside the sanctuary at their seats. Meanwhile, the leaders, including Scott Girard and me, also stayed inside the sanctuary in our chairs and I ate some crackers, granola bars, and peanuts which Jennifer, my wife, had put in my bag. We had a great time of relaxing after a full morning of teaching, and some of the pastors came up to us and wanted their picture to be taken with us. The whole lunch process took a very long time since each pastor had to wash their hands before getting their meal. Then once everything was completed, everyone went outside for a break and then came back inside the sanctuary after a short lunch break to resume our institute. [We had 309 pastors, evangelists, and church leaders for the afternoon session for our first day of the TPI Institute.](#)

Then after lunch, we resumed in institute in the main sanctuary again, and there was some singing led by one of the pastors. Then Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa had me come up and teach my second session of the day on the Principles of Biblical Leadership. In my introduction, I stressed the critical importance leadership plays in the success of a church ministry, and without good leadership, a ministry will falter, as many churches are doing today around the world. I began this session by defining what is meant by leadership. I spent some time looking at different definitions of leadership and dealing with the different aspects of my definition. My definition is an expansion of both Bruce Cook and Robert Clinton's definition to define mainly pastoral or ministry leadership contexts. Leadership is a process whereby a God-given/gifted person equips and influences a group of believers by the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's purposes in the church/world according to His will revealed in the Word of God. I then spent some time elaborating each aspect of that definition in terms of the origination and provision of leadership by God, man's responsibility and accountability for leadership, and the Holy Spirit's enablement in leadership. In terms of helping the pastors to look at selecting leaders and developing them, I also taught them the three dimensions of leadership, which are the person, the people, and the purpose. The leader is a person of credibility and integrity who equips and influences a specific group of people to accomplish God's purposes in the arena of the church and the world. I then helped them to see the three circles of these three dimensions, and how they interact with each other to produce the whole leadership spectrum. Then we discussed how leadership usually breaks down in one of these three dimensions and how important it is to grow in our leadership in all three of them. Many times pastors spend their ministry "doing ministry" but not developing other leaders, and thus, equipping others to help them do the ministry with them, and therefore, accomplish God's purposes in their ministry. [I then closed out the session, and encouraged them to put these principles to work in their ministries. I then gave an invitation for the pastors to come forward to commit their lives to the Lord to become the best leader possible for their church, and 102 pastors came forward to deal with some aspect of their leadership development. There was a short time of prayer and then I closed in a word of prayer.](#) Then Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa came up and made a few concluding comments, and led the group in a song to worship the Lord.

After a short stand-up break, the worship team led us in a song. Then Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa invited Scott Girard to come up and lead his afternoon session on Systematic Theology. He started his teaching session on Theology Proper or the study of God. He first dealt with the existence of God, which can be approached by naturalistic arguments such as cause and effect and the purpose argument. It can also be approached by using Biblical arguments, although the Bible does not argue for God's existence, but rather, assumes the fact of His existence. Then Scott looked at the two different types of revelation: general

revelation by nature and special revelation by the Word of God and Christ. Based therefore on special revelation, Scott examined the characteristics of God, and discussed the different aspects of God's character and nature, which are that God is omniscient, holy, just, love, true, free, omnipotent, infinite, omnipresent, and sovereign. What then does God call Himself? There are several Old Testament names that reveal the character of God, such as Elohim, Yahweh (Jehovah), Adonai, and other Old Testament compound names, such as El Elyon, El Olam, Yahweh Jireh, and Yahweh Shalom. Then Scott taught the trinity of the Godhead, which is that God is one God that exists in three persons, and all three, Father, Son, and Spirit, equally claim to be God. The evidence for oneness is seen in Deut. 6:4 and Jas. 2:19. The evidence for threeness is seen for the Father as God in John 6:27, for the Son as God in John 20:28, and for the Holy Spirit as God in Acts 5:3-4. The New Testament evidence is stronger than that of the Old Testament, but there are clear passages that teach the Trinity of the Godhead, like Matt. 28:19, the creation in Gen. 1:26 and the judgment of the separation of the languages in Gen. 11:7. The definition of the trinity is that "there is only one true God, but in the unity of the Godhead, there are three eternal and co-equal Persons, the same in substance, but distinct in subsistence." Then Scott taught about the nature and work of the Father since He is usually dealt with in the topic of Theology Proper. The Father is the author of the act of election, the Father sent the Son into the world, and the Father disciplines His children. Then Scott concluded the section of God the Father and Theology Proper.

Then he began the second section on Bibliology or the study of the Bible. The first question that is very important is whether the Bible is inspired. The English word Bible comes from the Greek word which means "book." The Scriptures refer to the Old Testament (2 Tim. 3:16) and to other parts of the New Testament (2 Pet. 3:16). The Bible is written by over 40 authors over a period of 1500 years. The word revelation means "unveiling" and refers to God making known what would remain unknown to man unless God revealed it. God revealed His revelation through His Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10). There are therefore two types of revelation: A. General Revelation (Ro. 1:18-21) and B. Special Revelation (John 1:18). The word inspiration means "to fill or breathe into" and refers to the process whereby "God's superintendence of the human authors so that using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to mankind in the words of the original manuscripts." There are several views of inspiration, such as natural inspiration, mystical inspiration or illumination, dictation inspiration, partial inspiration, concept inspiration, Neo-orthodox or Barthian inspiration, and verbal-plenary inspiration, which is that every word is exactly inspired by God in its complete sense, and yet constructed and written by the human author completely as well, and this view is held by most conservative scholars of the Bible. Then Scott dealt with the Biblical testimony concerning what does the Bible claim about itself. The Bible says that all Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16). Those who wrote the Bible were directed by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). The Bible reflects the human styles of its authors. The Bible claims inerrancy for itself (Matt. 5:18). Figures of speech and symbolic language are used in the Bible. Some authors did research before they wrote (Lk. 1:1-4). There are some difficulties and variants, which are not errors, but copying mistakes, and they can usually be explained once the mistake can be determined by how they arose from the copyists. Then Scott dealt with what books are in the canon of the Bible. The word canon means "rule or measuring rod" and refers to the books of the Bible that were determined to be part of the inspired books of the Bible. The test for canonicity was determined by the test of the authority of the author or writer, the internal evidence of the book itself, and the verdict of the early churches. The canon of

Scripture was formulated over a period of many years. The Old Testament was collected fully by the fifth century by Ezra. The New Testament was finally recognized at the Council of Cathage in 397 A. D. The Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint was completed in the third century B. C. (250 B. C.). The Apocrypha or books accepted by the Catholic Church as canonical at the Council of Trent in 1548 A. D. Then Scott dealt with the reliability of the Scriptures since the original copies of the Old Testament were written on leather or papyrus from the time of Moses in 1450 B. C. to the time of Malachi (400 B. C.). The Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 and the more than 5,000 manuscripts of the New Testament help to prove the reliability of the Scriptures we have today. Finally, Scott dealt with understanding the Bible, which is based on the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit and the interpreting work of the reader/Bible expositor. The illumination of the Holy Spirit means that the Holy Spirit makes clear the truths of the written revelation of the Bible to Christians who are walking in fellowship with God. Interpretation of the Bible is done by those who study the Bible and follow the normal grammatical sense of the passage, the verses are understood in the context of the book itself, the recognition of the progress of revelation over 1500 years, the recognition that the Bible has important divisions, the recognition that the Bible has symbolic language, poetic language, and other literary devices, and the need to study the original intended meaning that the author conveyed to his audience. Then Scott Girard concluded his session and Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa 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. Nepa Wa Msambelwa invited me to come up and teach the last session on the overview of the Old Testament on the section dealing the first part of the book of Genesis. I began by teaching an overview of the structure of the Old Testament with 17 Historical Books, 5 Poetical Books, and 17 Prophetical Books. Then I started the overview of the Old Testament with the first four events of the book of Genesis (creation, fall, flood, nations) and the call of Abraham to leave Ur to go to the Promised Land, and settling in Haran until his father, Terah, died there. Then we reviewed over the signs of the Old Testament up to that point of the story. This completed the first day of the TPI Institute in Mposa, Kinshasa. Rev. Nepa Wa Msambelwa then came and made a few announcements and directives for the coming days, including starting at 8 AM tomorrow morning. He then concluded the first day of the TPI Institute and one of the pastors closed the day in prayer.

[After the institute was over, we said our goodbyes to the pastors as most all of them walked on foot back to their homes.](#) Then several of the people helped us load our small bags into the vehicle that is parked out in front of the church. Then Michel Kitenga drove us back to the Imperium Hotel. Again, we got stuck in the sand several times, so everyone got out to push.

When we arrived back at the Imperium Hotel the hotel staff helped us get our small bags into our rooms. Then Nepa Wa Msambelwa and Rev. Benjamin Undugu came to my Room # 103, and we went over a few things that needed to be done here at the hotel as well as at the institute. Scott Girard, Pastor Nepa, Rev. Benjamin, and I then gave thanks to the Lord for a good first day at the Mposa, Kinshasa TPI Institute. Then we said goodbye to Rev. Nepa and Rev. Benjamin as they went home to eat dinner with their families, and Scott Girard and I could do the same thing here in the Imperium Hotel. After Scott and I sorted through a few things in our room and worked a little while typing on my Email Report at the laptop computer at my desk, we went down to the restaurant on the second floor and had our dinner around 7 PM. Scott and I were served by Charlene and Nasha and had a great time trying to communicate with them in French and their trying to communicate in English. We ordered our meals and took some time for them to bring them to us. I had spaghetti bolognese, bread, tomato soup, and coke and water. We had a relaxing meal enjoying our company and talking about the first full day at the Kinshasa TPI Institute. Then we finished getting the bill sorted out, signed them over to our rooms, and we went to our rooms for the rest of the evening. I spent some time typing some more on my Email Report on the laptop computer at my desk, which is a small board, which protrudes from the wall with a chain and some small hinges to keep it in place. I also downloaded some cards on my Jobo Spectator and charged some batteries to prepare for the upcoming week at the TPI Mposa Institute this coming week. I also had a chocolate chip breakfast bar for dessert and worked through the evening until I got too tired to type any longer. Then I went to bed around 1 AM after a great first day at the Mposa, Kinshasa, DRC TPI Institute.

[I thank the Lord for His faithfulness to give us a safe trip to start our fourth week of six week-long institutes in Central/East/Southern Africa. God has brought us safely here to Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, where it is always a challenge to hold institutes in this country due to the presence of wars and much chaos and the sheer numbers of people living here. Please continue to pray for us as we travel to the remaining institutes and 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.