



2010

Africa Journal 6



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Day 1 – At the moment I'm on a flight from Chicago to London. Next to me is Tom Regan who went with Chris (my wife) and I last time we journeyed to the Dark Continent in late 2008. I'm excited to have the opportunity to be typing another journal. Wow this is my 6th one. I can't believe it. Who would have thunk it? This trip is starting off differently because we are heading to London instead of Amsterdam as the transfer point for the flight to Kenya. There must be a reason, the Lord knows. We have a 12 hour layover so we'll head into the city and check out some of the sights. Hopefully we'll be able to catch some sleep at a hotel near the airport and then jump on the flight to Nairobi.

This trip's agenda seems like a carbon copy of the 2008 trip with just a couple of exceptions. As soon as we hit the ground in Nairobi we want to start our journey to Kisumu. Last time we took an extremely long route as I needed to meet a friend in Kisii. But this year we are planning a shorter route; approximately 5 hours to Kisumu. I want to see if we can stop in Nakuru to visit Benard who we met last time. He ministers to AIDS patients in the village and tries to love on them. He and his wife Pauline had a baby girl since our last time we were here. They were going to name it after me or Chris depending on the gender and thank goodness it was a girl. That is the second African baby named after my wife. This time instead of me going to Eldoret, we are heading to Mbita to visit some old and new friends. My friend Sue connected me through her church to Day Spring Academy who has a director there who has been able to visit one of the orphanages we support. Jackton is someone who I've emailed for 2 years but have never met but Joe from Day Spring has met with him and helped assess their needs for us. Our plans are to take a ferry across Lake Victoria which will take an hour instead of driving all the way around the lake. Sunday we plan on having Church with Phoebe and then head to Kisi to visit River Road Congregation Orphanage. Mary and Pastor Karani have been getting support from us now for a couple of years. I will finally be able to see how they are running the operations there and get a better understanding of the need. Monday will be a day in Nairobi with John and Dorcus. And then Tuesday through Friday off to Burundi to see how the women are doing with the microloans. I hopefully will be spend some time teaching them about some basic business concepts to help them grow and maintain a profitable business.

I've been thinking about capturing some of the thoughts and impressions in my spirit down in the journal because I believe they are important revelations. The first item that I'd like to convey is the element of deception. As I prepared to say good bye to my wife, children, home, workplace, work associates it became painfully obvious that I had taken all of it for granted. I was deceived that all was normal. The Lord exposed this in my heart as I drove my daughter to school this morning. Tears filled my eyes as I realized that I had been living in a state of "nothingness." Just living in the elements of the world. Hurry up and do! Now I ask myself "Do What?" Do – Family – Yes, Do – Church – Yes, Do – Prayer - Yes , Do Scripture Reading – Yes, Do Work – Yes. But have I been doing: Love Unconditionally, Compassion, Peace, Selflessness? Not with the passion Jesus has called me to. My heart cries out something is missing.

Of course the Lord knows all of this and has a plan. As I am spending time listening to my Ipod and thinking about all of these things I start thinking what have been doing wrong? The Lord reveals it to me through the book I'm reading "The Applause of Heaven" by Max Lucado. In the second chapter Max talks about being in a hurry. Yes that is what I'm in – "a hurry". A hurry to do - family, church, prayer, scripture reading, work and even rest. He uses Jesus' Sermon on the Mount to explain that Jesus moved up the mountain when the crowd gathered. He gave himself time to commune with the Father before trying to do what was needed. Have I been doing that? Reading scripture, praying, sharing the Lord with others, that I have done. But commune with the Lord first, nope hadn't been doing that. So I start to commune with Jesus in my seat and it is precious. But it doesn't last long because I think about the time and oh I should pray for the children at the church tonight. And with grace the Lord says "Got it covered." Of course He does. It's Jesus, my very breath of life, loving as He always does. I am so blessed!

Communion with God through fellowship with the Holy Spirit before doing what is needed is the purpose of this journey. I look forward to the Glory that is sure to follow.

Day 2 – We arrive in London, England at 7:00 am which is 2:00 am (EST) and we pretty much hit the ground running. This time I'm prepared for the extra time we have compared to the last time when it launched upon us from a delayed flight. I also had some extra help from our Customer Service Manager Susan who grew up in London. She was able to get me some key "tube"/train schedules which really made the day go by smoothly.

After we jumped on the Piccadilly line we were about 45 minutes from Central London. One interesting note about the train is whenever the doors are going to open a recorded voice comes on and says, "Mind the Gap" as you exit or enter the train. It was a definite indication we were in London and not in NYC or Chicago. It was very proper and all. Later in the day we would find in souvenir shops t-shirts, cups and plates with that saying "Mind the Gap". Another interesting thing about being in London was the newspapers. They all were really more interested in the gossip of the day than the world events. And of course everyone one was reading the same one, Metro.



When we exit the train at Westminster we weren't exactly sure what we'd see but right out the door was Big Ben and the House of Parliament next to the River Thames.

It was cool but not raining which was in the forecast. We wandered around a while before grabbing a traditional English breakfast; sausage, bacon, beans, mushrooms, boiled tomato, hash brown type potato and toast. It was a big bargain just 4.95. That was another shocker the exchange rate; \$100 = 56 pounds. Ouch.

After that we headed to London Bridge and the Tower of London and Tower of London Bridge. This was a hike and we were starting to feel it since it just about 26 hours since we had slept. I absolutely have no knowledge of English history but what is really cool is there are these historic landmarks and right behind it is an ultra modern building. The Tower of London was where they did the executions

back in the day. Funny I had just watched the end of Brave Heart before leaving last weekend and here I was right where he was beheaded. It had this deep moat around it and was pretty daunting.

We were exhausted from walking probably 3 miles and jumped back on the train to Buckingham Palace; our last stop on the journey. It looked more like a governmental legal building than a residence. We saw the changing of the guard, the band play and the horsemen trotting into the royal court. I knew that the Queen was in residence since the Royal flag was flying. I learned that from watching the movie "The Queen". It has a large park out in front of it and a traffic circle where people gather to catch a glimpse. In my opinion it was not as impressive as the White House.



That was it and it was now about 12:20 pm. Not a bad way to spend about 4 hours. We jumped back on the train as we were headed to the hotel I rented for a couple of hours. From the train we jumped on a bus based on the directions we got from the hotel. Unfortunately we jumped on the bus going the wrong way and took us about 4 stops before we figured that out. The 222 bus took us right to the front of our hotel which was a huge blessing. It was 1:20pm. We checked in and slept literally for 2 hours. I jumped in the shower, changed clothes and off to the bus again to head to the airport. Those 2 hours made a huge difference in just being able to put my feet up and stretch out.

We made our flight without issues; thank you Jesus. It is amazing how blessed we are in all the little things in life. I don't like missing the chance to just thank our Lord for His ever present provision and answers to prayer. On this flight across the aisle is Lynn who is in her early 70's I guess. She is going to Kibera slum area to work helping with the school that she helps sponsor. She started this in 2006 after her father at the age of 97 gave his children his money to go and do good to those in need. Her spirit is so sweet as we talk about her plans to help the children. I hope that on Monday I might have the chance to visit her there and just connect and pray for their work there. I am so blessed.

It is now 4:10 am and we will be arriving in Nairobi in just a few more hours. I can't sleep, a little too tired to read and there are no good movies on the screen. That is good. I'll just shut this down, get comfortable and spend some quiet time with my Lord.

Day 3 – We arrive in Nairobi with a slight glitch. Our luggage didn't make it. Now it kind of baffles the mind because we had a 12 hour layover in London. If there is any solace in this is neither Tom's nor mine made it. Now we have to figure out where it send it to us since we are going to be in Kisumu just for a couple of days and if the bags get there on Saturday's flight in, then where are they going to send to us since we'll be back in Nairobi Sunday evening. My big disappointment is the soccer balls for the children and the microscope that Tom brought for Phoebe. We will pray that the bags make it to Kisumu on Saturday so we can give out the gifts.

Dorcus picks us up with Simon who is a friend. John, her husband, has some working going on in town and we'll get a chance to see him on Monday. On our drive to Nakumatt, a local store much like a Target where we'll be some necessities, I get some information that is rather disappointing regarding the work being done in Burundi. I am not going to mention it now until I can confirm it. My heart is heavy and again I feel as if I have taken this wonderful gift the Lord has given me for granted. The chance to minister and support the work of the Body of Christ in Africa is a tremendous blessing and I just have this conviction that I have let other "things" take priority to my focus and support of the work the Lord is asking me to be involved. Tom makes a great suggestion that we pray for a renewing of our minds and spirit. We do. It is done. Praise the Lord for His loving kindness towards His children.

After getting the necessities; socks, underwear, a shirt for Sunday's service and getting my African phone logged with minutes we are ready to go. I was fortunate that in the gym bag I brought with had my toiletries and a change of clothes. Ken will be our driver for the journey and we'll be trucking through Kenya in a Toyota Rav4. Hopefully it will be good on gas since we have a 5 plus hour journey ahead of us. Before saying good bye to Dorcus I was able to give the gifts for the 3 precious daughters; Soila, Marlene & Olivia and also her adopted son Johnny, who was her sister's son who died of AIDS. (ref African Journal 4). They are just simple gifts; coloring books, colored pencils, a Lego Bionicle for Johnny and couple of items for Dorcus and John. They are unbelievable people and I am extremely blessed to call them friends.

The drive to our first stopping point, Nakuru, is amazingly different from past drives there, the road is paved! It actually resembles a typical 4 lane road in the US. The car doesn't have to dodge pot holes and we are actually able to maintain a normal speed without having to slow down every few minutes to avoid them. I also don't feel the need to keep my eyes open to view the sights of what the life of the people are as you drive down the road. It is as if with anything that you've done or seen a number of times you just become familiar with surroundings and you can then begin to focus on other things.

The other things at this moment is my reflection of "taking for granted" Africa. I ask the Lord to forgive me and to please put in my heart the desire and fortitude to fulfill His will regarding the ministry here. I again get another realization that it is Him that needs to do these things since I have shown that I am not capable and that will strengthen my dependence on Him which is a great thing. How arrogant and proud I can be thinking that I have it "understood or figured out." I guess we Christians call this "growing".

Phoebe walks me to another room of the school and there sit 7 toddlers ages 2-4 in little plastic chairs and each is just looking at us with great curiosity. One of them, Moses, was given to Phoebe from the police just a few weeks ago. They found him in the bush alone and severely sick. Now he is healthy and is enjoying being held. Phoebe dotes on him and love fills the room. I get to hold Samuel who is just 4 months old. He was very sick back about a month ago. We were able to send some support to help Phoebe with the medical bills and now my joy is complete as I hold him. I spend the next 20 minutes loving them. What joy there is to be here! The presence of God is near and my spirit is filled.



We arrive at the orphanage and there is a lot of activity with the children. A boy of about 11 years of age has a chicken by the wings and is carrying back to kitchen area. That'll be dinner. Phoebe introduces me to a couple of support people she has in from Romania and Denmark. They are having a learning session in the living room with the high school students. They are; Camille – 26 and Laura – 23 from Romania and then Elsa and Nita both 20 from Denmark. Elsa and Nita are explaining life in Denmark and how after high school most students spend a year traveling before going to college. They are not part of a Christian organization but of a governmental

outreach program. That didn't seem all that significant until we eventually sat down for dinner.

I left the older students for the younger ones. They are absolutely beautiful. They love touching my skin because it's white and different from theirs. Almost instantaneously I have about 20 of them circling me as I sit at a table. They just want to talk or sing worship songs. So I ask them their favorite color, we try to do one of those let's tell a story by everyone giving input to the story. It was amazing that every time we did it, the children always wanted the main character to be a man with 3 children who was a farmer and a harder worker. I tried to put some fun things in there about an elephant sipping tea but they weren't able to expand their imaginations to see what is possible. I also told them a made up story about a young man named Ephraim who was a good boy but one day decided he wanted to do things his way where were not necessarily good. Ephraim had some problems and I was wanting to create a small moral

that you must make choices and those choices can have a significant impact on your life.

Now it was time to feed the children. It was a plate of rice and beans but it wasn't skimpy but abundant. They did not have forks or spoons so they ate with their hands after being washed. We handed out somewhere about 50 plates of food. Some of the older children eat later. It was amazing just how organized and considerate they were of each other. This was their 3rd meal of the day, a



luxury in any African country. Majority of them were between 5 and 12 years of age and I couldn't image trying to get that many children ready to eat at one time. There are no other distractions here, just family time which includes stories, eating and singing.

Now it is our turn to have dinner and it is the 4 visitors, Tom, Ken and I. Our conversations revolve around the different ministries we are involved in and how do we get the things done. Are we a part of our church or another type of ministry. I just explain it is just what the Lord has called me to and that we have La Charite on the ground in Burundi who does the teaching of the widows.

After dinner was finished I asked the girls from Romania if their churches were experiencing the "signs and wonders" that are supposed to be experienced where the gospel is preached. They stated that in the Charismatic and Pentecostal churches they have them but not in the main line Protestant churches. The girls from Denmark then explained that in their country the church was just a part of the culture but they didn't go to church buy maybe 4 times a year. She stated that they like the values of the bible but they don't really think that Jesus was God in the flesh. The woman from Romania Laura just looked at me with a sad look in her eyes. This opened the door for us to share the gospel with them in a way that was matter of fact. All the rest of us at the table had met Jesus and accepted Him as our personal Lord and Savior. We told them how He changed our lives then and every day since. We shared testimonies of our salvation and how awesome it is to know God. Nita explained that she like her life as it was and that everything was how she wanted it to be.

Then Phoebe explained how she met the Lord. Phoebe had 2 children die when they were infants and her third child Pauline was sick again in the hospital. The doctors said she had a bad disease and would not live very much longer. They released her with pity on Phoebe so it wouldn't cost her anymore hospital fees. She mentioned that she walked into a church where there was a service going on. She put Pauline, who was listless and inactive on the altar next to her as she cried out to God to help her baby. After she got up from the prayer, she walked over to get the baby and the baby was awake and active. Pauline has been healed by the Lord. Pauline is now 17 years old.

The girls were smiling at this story and it was evident that their hearts were touched. They knew Phoebe and I'm sure that seed that was sown will be harvested in some future day. We hugged the girls, told them we loved them and said good night.

Day 4 – We got up at 5:30 am to make sure we catch the 8:00 am ferry to Mbita. It is none stop but I feel awake and not tired. The Lord's travel mercies have been apparent on this trip and we are grateful. I'm going alone with Ken and



John, Phoebe's husband. It won't be a long ride maybe 1 ½ hours and the roads are supposed to be in good shape. We arrive at the Ferry dock and there are women there gathering water and cleaning dishes in the lake. It reminded me of the 4th Chapter of John where the woman at the well doesn't come out when the other women collect water but much later when no one will condemn her. I image there is a woman in this village who experiences such sneers.

The ferry arrives a little late but that is to be expected, we are in Africa. It isn't a huge ferry but one that can carry about 8 cars or trucks. The shoreline is beautiful and reminds me of Hawaii in some sorts; big lush mountains that shoot up on islands. Unfortunately the water isn't blue and there aren't any beaches. I've contacted Jackton and he will meet me at the ferry dock but Francis I can't get a hold of. As I reach the doc, I try one more time to reach Francis and I connect with him. He tells me that he and Jackton are waiting for me and they know each other for many years. I say good bye to John and

Ken and tell them I'll be back in time for the 2:00 pm ferry. Francis invites me on the back of his motorcycle and we are off to his house with Jackton and Paul on another motorcycle.

The ride isn't long and on the way we run into Francis's nephew who we support for schooling. He is much taller than the original photos and he will be graduating this year and will be off to college. We arrive into Francis's house and it reminds me of Pastor Isaac's house in Africa Journal 3. We have Chia and bread and visit for a while. It is here I find out what they have planned for me; From Francis's house to Day Spring school that is where Jackton holds a pre/grammar school, then to Francis's father-in-laws house where he also has a school and then to see some widows and then to Jackton's and then back to ferry. They expected me to spend 3 days in Mbita and now I am only giving 4 hours. They wanted to take me to a swimming area and a hiking trail. It is more beautiful up close.



We now are arriving at Day Spring School which is one of the ministries we support here in Kenya. Today is the first time I've met Jackton in person and he is much younger than I expected. He has a full time job and wants to support the needs of the children on his own time. He is passionate about the needs here and introduces me to the principle Caroline. She conveys the need as we are in a small metal skinned building that acts as her office and administrative support. She explains there are 108 children who attend the school and about 80 of them are below 5 years of age. They have 3 small classrooms grades 1-3 have just a few desks in each. The area where the younger children are is much larger and has a number of teaching aid materials on the walls. My good friend Susan is also supporting the cause

here and she will be happy to know that what she is giving is making a huge difference. The good news is that they do have a school and the support we have been providing fills a need. Jackton explains that the children come here mostly to eat for it will be there only meal of the day. They get porridge in the morning and beans and rice in the afternoon. If they don't have any food because of funding many of the children will not come back until there is some. It is a story I've heard before but know it is staring me right in the face as the small amount of food needed to feed them each day is running low. They actually store the food at a different location so no one will come in and steal the food. Thieves know that where there are children's schools there is also food. How sad is that? I feel good about what is happening here.

Then we are off to Francis's father-in-law's school. He is retired and helping the children in the village. It is a rural area and he has a number of one room houses on the property. We are welcomed by the children who are excited to see me. They have been told that a special visitor was coming and that they should be ready to sing for him. The children are of preschool age and there are about 40 of them.

I hear the story of the school and the needs for books and a roof that leaks. The father-in-law explains that these children come to school even if it raining on them from the leaky roof. They are motivated to learn. I want to be among them so they make a space for me in the middle of the group and I listen to the



rest of the story. Then they pick out 4 children to sing a song to me. The song was a manipulation attempt. Please don't let the rain fall on us when we go to school here, please fix our leaky roof. Of course I am not upset with the children but with Francis and his father-in-law for trying to guilt me into doing something. It is a tactic Francis has tried before and he is now showing me his true colors. But the question is who suffers because the needs are real it is just that the delivery is not right. Much prayer will be needed if support is to be given.

We are supposed to have lunch there but it isn't ready so we decide to head back through town to the other side for meeting with a widows sewing group. It is sometime during this ride that I confront Francis about the means by which he seeks support that I do not like. He has asked me several times to pay for things that I have not felt was in the interest of anyone other than himself. I am not worried that I am telling him this as he drives me on the back of his motorcycle. He understands that it might have been the wrong timing to ask such things. As we arrive to this small shop there are about 15 women who are also excited to see me. I have never had any communication with them or was even aware of their ministry but it is another divine

appointment. We begin with prayer which is awesome. Then they give gifts; a African top and shorts for me, a basket for Chris and a soapstone hippo for Cameron who they had prayed for last year. I'm touched. They then explain the process by which the ministry works with the widows; each woman helps create materials for them to sell and they get 80% of what is sold if they make it and the rest goes to the group.



I again believe that this approach is on paper good but could be fraught with problems. They have not developed the division of labor principle that would maximize their efforts. One of the

woman is outgoing and engaging and it is obvious to me she should be in sales. They communicate that they are doing something like that but not as potentially structured as it could be. As the meeting ends we have song and dancing and praises to our Lord. Wow what a great experience.

Jackton is disappointed because he wanted me to visit his house and family and there is no more time. I tell him let's go for a short visit since it is not very far from where we are. Usually that means it is about 10 minutes away. African time and space are not communicated in the same way that US time and space are perceived. Believe it or not he was telling the truth. 3 minutes later we were in his home having a drink of juice. It was too short a visit for their liking but at least I met his wife and children and they got to share a small token of appreciation the drink. Then we are off back to the father-in-law's house. As I reflect back on these multiple journeys through town it becomes apparent to me that I am now indoctrinated into the culture. I am not worried about anything. I am alone on the back of a motorcycle of a person I met on a flight about 3 years ago. I spent ½ an hour with him during the last trip. The familiar sites of garbage in the streets, raw sewage in drainage ditches and the smells that accompany that are just a part of being in Africa in these rural towns. I had left my two traveling partners to travel through Mbita as they wished not having concerns of where I was or if I would be safe. It is a great feeling.

Upon the arrival at the father-in-law's home it is time for lunch. A young American man is the house and will join us for lunch. Andy is staying with the family and is helping with organic farming. He is from Portland OR through Florida. He is your prototypical Oregonian. Into the uncluttered life of entraps so many of us work for the "Man". He is not overly political because he stays out of a conversation regarding if I had voted for President Obama. I went on a little speech

about why I didn't which was all based on my Christian values that don't coincide with Obama's behavior and he didn't counter or comment on any of it.

Lunch was traditional Kenya food; Ugali, Schoomaweekie, rice, Mukimo (green pea puree), tilapia, beef and chicken. It was very good. We are going to have to get going but I must speak with "the Mother" before we depart. She has some things she wants to say to me. She sits next to me and she gives praise to our Lord for my visit and asks Him to bless me during my journey. She speaks very softly and her words express the heart of a mother who is concerned about her family. She knows that it is the support we provided her daughter that allows her daughter to be with us this day. Her daughter, Francis's wife Olgah, was arrested for stealing about a \$1,100 back in October. She spent a week in jail and her health was deteriorating. We helped get her out so she can with her family and prepare her case. Her mother is grateful and tells me that she has a gift for me to take back and that it is outside. I was appreciative of her warm thanks but I couldn't get my mind around the gift that is outside. We say our goodbyes and I walk outside and there is my gift; a male goat tied to a tree. I was like "Wow what an honor to have bestowed on me such a lavish gift." I greatly appreciated her kindness but I had no means or desire to have a goat. It was a special moment because I knew the relevance of it to them.

I make it back to the ferry on time where Ken and John were waiting for me. They had been out visiting friends of John and were resting their eyes in line for the ferry. As we made our trek back to Iwanda I was very pleased on how this trip worked out. I got to see many areas of need; some that I'll look to support and other's I will not. I was blessed with gifts that were from the heart and I was able to experience good fellowship. The trip back is peaceful and the scenery is unique.



We arrive back to Phoebe's apartment where we are staying and we have news that the luggage will be at the airport around 5 pm. Praise the Lord. Even though it sounds promising we are a little skeptical. As we enter the airport and speak to an agent it becomes apparent that the bags are not there and there is some misunderstanding. He tells us that it is terminated which means that it is no longer lost. He can't tell us if it is on the next flight in but says he will call us. Tom is anxious because he wants to give Phoebe the microscope. I'm more interested in giving the children the soccer balls and candy.

We then spend the next hour and half with the babies again. They are pure joy. We get to help wash their hands before dinner, feed them and help clean up. Phoebe sings to them and loves on them. She has more energy than any of the children. She never stops working for the needs of others. Lydia who cares for these children was ostracized from her village when her husband abandoned them. Phoebe upon visiting the village recognized that something was wrong and reached out to Lydia and invited her to work at the orphanage. She has 2 sons who are now a part of Phoebe's family. The Lord prompts me to ask Lydia where she might want to go on vacation. She is embarrassed and cannot say. She is so humble it is beautiful. After many promptings from Phoebe and myself and after about a half an hour she quietly says to me, "I've never been to Nairobi. That is where I'd like to go". She has family there but has never been able to visit them. Phoebe thinks that is a good idea for she will be refreshed for she is managing the care of 7 of these young children. We arrive at the orphanage for dinner and the electricity is out due to the storms.

We light candles in the eating area and the children attach themselves to you as if you were a magnet. They are happy to see us and we just enjoy hugging and loving on them. Then Phoebe begins praise and worship and all the children join in and the open eating area is filled with praises to the King. In Kenya they speak to Jesus' Kingship and their desire is to worship the King of Glory and the King of Kings. The concept of a King is an idea they are more familiar with than we are in the US. It is wonderful. Then Phoebe tells the children the Lord has shown her a girl in need who is being sexually abused. We all begin to pray in our own way for her and the pathways to be made straight so that all the children who are need can find themselves here. It is absolutely a blessing to be with God's children in an environment of love.



At dinner we see our friends from Romania but the girls from Denmark have gone to town to spend time with friends for the weekend. It is great to hear from them just how things are in a country that is only 20 years removed from Communism. They are too young to remember the different way of life that was lived there but their parents and grandparents remind them of things used to be and how blessed they are to be living at this time. It is a great fellowship as well as always great food.

Day 5 – Phoebe has asked me if I would teach again like I did last time. That is a request that I do not take lightly. I have been praying about what teaching the Lord would want to share and I have been recently examining the life of John the Baptist. So I prepare my teaching based on these scriptures: Matthew 3:13-17 (John experiences the Lord with signs and wonders), John 3:22 - John proclaims the gospel, Luke 7:18-23 (John sends his disciples to double check to see if Jesus is the one or is there someone else). The teaching is related to our own time in season and what happens when the Lord is ready to move us and things don't go the way we plan it. It truly is an amazing example of just how the devil works night and day to get in between us and Jesus. Doubt is the first weapon used in the Garden; Did God really say you couldn't eat of the fruit? No prophet was greater than John and yet he doubts.

He experienced the Holy Spirit descending like a dove and lightening and then the voice of the Father; this is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased. John's whole life was purposed for that moment and it must have been unbelievable for him to baptize Jesus. In the second scripture writing, John recognizes that he must get smaller and the Lord must get bigger. He proclaims the gospel to the Rabbis. He is strong in faith. In the last scripture reading John is in jail and can't understand if Jesus is the Lord then how can it be that he is in jail. The greatest prophet before Jesus should not be in such a situation. Jesus answers John's disciple with simple truths and then closes His statement with, "blessed is the man who isn't offended by me." It is a serious learning for all of us that there is a season for everything and when that season ends, we must remain strong "in" our Lord or the king of this world will influence our thinking and cause us to doubt. I closed with the reading Act 16:23 where Paul and Silas pray and sing praises to our Lord as they are in chains in jail. Something we need to be aware that those practical acts give us power to control the attacks of the enemy. Praise the Lord!!

Before the teaching I sit down with Phoebe to go over a proposal she has for a sports academy and a farming project. She has over 100 acres and is looking to subdivide so it can be helpful to the orphanage. It is well thought out; a corporate structure, 2 boards 1 International, 1 Kenyan, pro forma statement and details of how the operations are going to work and give back to the community. She is amazing and I am for helping in any way possible. When you experience working with Phoebe it is like the Lord is laying out His plans right in front of you through her. Awesome!

The teaching goes well. I try more of a teaching style rather than a preaching style.

I come down from the altar and join the congregation at ground level. It is where I feel most comfortable. I try to engage them with questions but it is a little choppy because of the translation of every word. Phoebe tells me she has never looked at John's life in this way and it spoke to her. I am grateful. We give out the lollipops to the children at Sunday school. Everyone is happy and singing praises to the King of Glory.

Before we leave I get a chance to say hello to an old friend, Alice. When Chris and I were here last time, Chris had the chance to go to Alice's home in the slums. She is infected with HIV but she is looking well and is happy to see me. I can't wait to tell Chris that I saw her and she is doing well. We say good bye to the Romanian missionaries and we promise to communicate. I am going to send them a newsletter from a good friend of mine, Brad Hayes, who has been a missionary in Romania for longer than 10 years. Maybe they can connect when they return back home.

We have a 2 hour drive to Kisii and it is unbelievable but the roads are paved. No dodging pot holes or going off the side of the road to get around major cracks in the road. It makes it so much easier to type. We are going to meet with Mary and Pastor Karani from the River Congregation Orphanage. I'm not sure what we are going to experience since the only communications we've had have been emails. I have no idea at that moment that what I am about to experience will be life changing, passion infusing, call receiving. I about to get blessed in a way I could not ever fathom. We serve an awesome God!



We meet a team of people at a hotel at about 12:20 pm. There are 5 of them, Mary, Pastor Karami and his wife, another Pastor and an advisor. As I get out of the car to shake hands I am greeted from Pastor with a strong hug. After some handshakes with the others I experience a passionate greeting from Mary. She is hugging me like I was the prodigal son. She did the same for Tom and Ken. It is just her way. She is so happy to see us and her smile lights up the gray sky. They are going to take us

to their orphanage where over 72 children live. I've heard about orphans and inflated numbers to make it sound more important but they are firm that these are the children that stay with them every night.

Pastor Karani joins us for the drive to the orphanage. The drive is always longer than they tell you. 5 minutes turns into 20 minutes and of course you here, it's just up the road. There is some good news, we are heading in the right direction to head back Nairobi.



As we arrive the children are waiting at the gate but as we come forward up this hill they just keep pouring out by the second. They are singing how much Jesus loves them and how thankful they are for His love. They literally attach themselves to me and hug me and hold my hand, arm, legs, my belt loops. I am overwhelmed with the purity of their love. At that moment I became aware that this is how our Lord wants us to be with Him. He is asking me to take His turn at this moment and I am humbled it. I get love the children for my Lord. A huge blessing. The property is severely sloped and it is hard to walk up the hill. The view

from the top requires a second glance since it is more beautiful than what you'd expect in a place that looks so depressing.

After prayer, some more worship and a short talk it is time for Tom and I to walk through the compound. I begin to get a glimpse of the very significant needs of these people. They have small dormitories with crammed beds to fill every inch



of space. It is musty and depressing. In the girls area they have possibly 8 bunk beds and a lower single bed which as we enter is being visited by a chicken. They explain that they have 3 girls per bed for a grand total of 43 girls. The beds are old wood beds with very thin mattresses and supports so far apart to be good for a healthy sleep. Then they walk us to the toilets but it isn't a toilet but a 4 stalls with holes cut in the concrete. There are no showers they take sponge type baths. The kitchen is just

large enough for a large pot that sits on the ground of an open fire. They are cooking beans and corn for the meal. Food is a significant issue and I am confident the Lord is going to open the windows of Heaven for these children and their worlds are going to be dramatically changed through the Body of Christ. Phoebe's orphanage is like club med compared to this and I am going to invite her to sow into this situation as it is her desire to help others even outside the huge responsibility she has. That tells you a lot about Phoebe.



We return and I receive some beautiful poems and a short skit about sowing seeds and harvesting them. They are soil and I need to get the seeds so they can be harvested unto the Lord. They are calling me their earthly father which really freaks me out. I am quick to mention that we have only 1 Father who arts in Heaven. We are adopted sons and daughters through the Blood of Jesus. They also give me some plans of expansion and food needs so I can fully understand the needs for funding. Next it is time to give out some soccer balls. We give out 8 of them and take a picture of them so that the children who donated them can see that their ball has been given to another child. The children are so happy to be given a gift. I also pass out about 80 lollipops and we are singing and dancing to the Lord. We are in need to leave because we have another 4 ½ hour drive ahead and we shouldn't be driving in the dark.

Now it is my turn to speak. I tell them that as the Lord's children their cries have been heard and that He is going to pour out His blessing on them. Not a little but a lot. So much so that they will be in awe of His might work. It isn't going to take a long time but very quickly. They are very encouraged and it is crystal clear to me what needs to be done and that we need to get started on this right way. I lay hands on every member of the congregation and pray. I am filled with purpose and desire to get started on helping and I am overwhelmed with the blessing the Lord is giving me.



We say our goodbyes and there is much love in the air; us for them and them for us. Just as our Lord has called us to be. It is just an awesome experience when scripture comes to life and Jesus is glorified. We pray again, hug again and then depart. In the car we all share our concerns about the conditions these children are living in and that we need to make a difference.

We have fun on the way back by giving out soccer balls to children on the road as we travel. Most of the children are surprised that they are receiving this gift. They look at us with an inquisitive expression like are you sure you're talking to me. Ken has to interpret for us so the children won't be frightened. On one occasion a young man came near the car and as I gave him the ball 2 other boys came by and tried to take the ball away from him. I felt bad. We gave away another 10 balls. What joy it is to give unconditional gifts.

We arrive at Mayfield, which is the mission house we stay at each time we come to Nairobi. It feels like home. Because it is late and dinner is over Tom and I were going to have to walk through the streets to get some food. James, second in command, wouldn't hear of it and said that he would whip something up for us. I like being at Mayfield. It was the very first place I stayed in Africa and I know the staff who extremely kind and accommodating. We eat some grilled cheese, a bowl of soup and a salad as we watch Manchester United win the League Cup in London.

It is now 9:30 pm and I have finally caught up on my journaling. We prayed before we left for divine appointments and I have experienced them throughout this trip. We prayed for safety in our journey and the Lord has been faithful. I am so excited about what lies ahead regarding support the orphanages here. I immediately recall a word the Lord gave me about 6 years ago as I ate breakfast; "Feed my Children." I remember telling Chris, honey the Lord wants me to feed His children, "do you know what that means?" At that point I didn't know Phoebe or had I connected with anyone else in Kenya. Now it is time for obedience, prayer and expectation. For I know if I am faithful, He will be faithful providing even more than I can ask or image. It is time for us to buckle up, it's going to be a blessing ride of a lifetime.

Day 6 – It's an off day regarding our schedule and travel. We'll be in Nairobi for the entire day with just a few appointments. I've reached out to Lynn, my across the aisle seat partner on the flight from London to Nairobi. We'll be heading to Kibera which is the accepted as one of the most poverty stricken residential areas in the world. 12 square miles of 1 million people living in shanties of metal roofs without plumbing. It will be my 3rd trip to this sad place but we are going to do good which is Tom will be taking pictures for Lynn so she can post them on her website.

We meet a great couple Jim and Ellie Jewell from the US who is in Kenya for a medical conference. Jim is a surgeon and Ellie is a nurse. They have been working in Zambia for the past 7 years teaching at a government hospital. When I tell them I'm from Atlanta, Ellie gets excited and says that her brother lives there and if I wouldn't mind and call him and tell him that I ran into his sister, that would be wonderful. I would be delighted. I look forward to making a new connection in town.

After discussing more about the microloan ministry, she says that is something her brother might want to invest into. Perfect another reason to reach out. She lets me know that her brother is not a Christian but a wonderful guy. They have been praying for him for years and are believing that he will receive the Lord.

Dorcus is our driving companion for the day and though she tells me she'll be there at 9:00 am I'm expecting her at 9:30 at the earliest. We want to go downtown to buy some gifts before meeting up with Lynn and Zachesus, the coordinator of Lynn's school project, at 10:45am. My prediction is correct as Dorcus pulls up at 9:50 which will cause us to go downtown in the afternoon. No biggie. We head to the local market area where we can catch email, get some cash and eventually meet Lynn.

I try to describe Lynn to Dorcus and the one word that comes up is "sprightly". She has a tremendous amount of energy and is extremely engaging. She instantly makes you feel welcome and wanted. They arrive just a few minutes late because they had taken a Matatu which was delayed by the rain. She is wearing flip flops and her yellow Capri pants already have splattering of mud from the walk over from the bus. Dorcus and her begin talking immediately about their Kibera experiences.

So we are off to Kibera and the rain that hasn't really stopped from early this morning won't make it an easy task. The previous 2 times I've been there, we parked the car and walked about a mile. Dorcus drives her van on to what was a dirt road but is now a mud puddle. Now I need to give a good explanation of the terrain; a car and half mud road that on either side is a small gully carries raw sewage and that is large enough that if your tire went in it you are stuck, an endless row of shanty businesses directly next to the gullies and of course people walking on either side of the car. And I forgot to mention trucks and other cars coming the other way just to make things fun. I thought for sure we were going to get stuck, tip over, or get hit. I was in the back praying, Lord please make our path straight and may we arrive at our destination without issue. And by God's grace in the driving skills of Dorcus we do. She was amazing sliding past cars within a whisker. A prayer was answered.



During this tense drive Tom who has never been here is trying to capture all he can through the front windshield. I let Tom know that there will be times when it is not going to be a good idea to take pictures and I ask him a couple of times to stop taking pictures because these people could be offended of having their picture taken and could cause damage to the van, him or all of us. I do understand because if you have never seen poverty in this manner your mind cannot comprehend it and the rain is making it even more unbelievable. You're like, how could anyone live like this. No slum in the US comes close to this, not even close. Dorcus stops the van so Tom can take a couple of pictures out the top of the sun roof. I'm like, that's it let's get going and no more pictures. Tom understands.



We arrive at the place where the school is located. Lynn tells me it takes her 50 minutes if she walks this. In the van it was 15 minutes. We walk down a narrow walk way that is covered with wet garbage and the smell is obnoxious.



The school is the only concrete walled structure in Kibera. They still have some more building to do but they are off to a good start. 222 children attend this school with basically 8 classrooms for teaching. One of the classrooms is where they used to pile wood and they've put up a blackboard on the wall and have put benches on the ground. The good news is it is covered by a roof.

The children are excited to see us. But unfortunately we are interrupting the teachers. We quickly get the children refocused and begin to discuss the future plans for school. They have 10 shanties that have were a part of the purchase of the school land that will be torn down next month. The residents have been given 18 months notice but haven't left. Hopefully no confrontations will occur. To build a school they have to buy from the landlord the buildings. The landlords own the buildings but the government owns the ground. You can buy the shanties and tear them down and build a school. They ask the parents to pay 200 Schillings a

month to attend ZELYN Academy or about \$1.85. They are given 1 meal a day and they would love to offer more but it is estimated to cost \$400.00 per month. I tell Zachus that I will see what I can do in organizing some type of help. He is appreciative. We also meet the 3rd member of the project team who is Elisha, who is a male. Hence the name Z(Zachus)E (Elisha)LYN. Lynn tells us that the "EL" in the middle is a word for God and therefore God is in the middle of this project.



Tom finishes up his pictures of the buildings, children and classrooms. He'll photoshop anything that needs a little help because of the lighting. Lynn is appreciative. We are now going to trudge back through the mud road. My prayers begin immediately. We arrive back to the paved road without issue but not without a couple of close calls. We are off to lunch and to share more of our lives and about the Lord and His work.

We have lunch at a place called Jamba which if you didn't know you were in Nairobi you'd think you were in any US suburb. The place is like the UN. Korean people having lunch with Kenyans, Chinese, Eastern Europe, Australians, Scandinavians and Americans make up the patrons just within sight from our table. Of course we help with A 71 year old British woman, 2 American men, 1 African woman from the Kikula tribe, and 2 African men from the Luella tribe. Our conversations are fantastic as we learn about each other's lives and ministries. Lynn tells me that she had prayed that she would sit next to a Christian person on her flight to Kenya. I didn't even now I was an answer to prayer and she doesn't know that she was an answer to ours as we prayed for divine appointments throughout the journey. The Lord is just awesome!

We exchange information and Tom tells her that he'll be sending a disk of the images she can use for the website. I am grateful that we have met and she says, "If I don't see you soon, I'll see you in heaven." I'm planning on before. Dorcus has her friend Susan take us downtown for shopping since there is a noise coming from the front end of the van. It was there before we went to Kibera which is kind of a relief. I would have hated to know that our trip through that mud road caused this problem. John, Dorcus's husband, lets us know that it is the ball bearings and he'll be able to get them replaced quickly. We arrive downtown and go to the same shop we always go to because it has the best prices. It is run by an Indian man who understands business and knows that inventory is money. Unfortunately he has had a large contingent come in last week and wipe him out of his best carvings. It is the first time I've been coming that I haven't bought something there. I feel kind of bad about it, but so be it.

We then head to the downtown open Market area. I hate this place because it is a total bartering process. I know many of the shop owners but that doesn't make a difference. I need 5 family statues made of soapstone for the families who donated soccer balls. Funny enough each has two children. Oliver, a familiar friend at the market, chases them down for me. I give him a price and of course he comes back with a higher one. I tell him no more than this and he comes back 50 schillings more than I said. Ok, done deal. I find a couple gifts for some other friends and get Olivia an African game that she asked for. Or at least it is a game from Africa that I hadn't seen in the US.

We head back to the dinner location via bus. I find out later that we are going back to Jamba for dinner and John will meet us there. I haven't seen my good friend since I've been here and I am so looking forward to it. John is a wonderfully peaceful person with a giving and loving spirit. He is wise and intelligent and he is an advisor to me on many issues within Kenya. We have a strong embrace as we greet each other. He looks good and it is good to see him and Dorcus together. They make a beautiful couple.

He wants to get caught up on the details of the trip and we have a good laugh through many of them. John knows many of the people I've met with since I usually have all inquires go through John. He has talked with Mary from River Congregation but had never met her because his schedule never allowed him to get up there. We discuss how his projects are going and how they are different from my current work here. There is so much need here that if we had 100,000 people working to help through giving and work, there would still be things to do. It is a structural problem and by sowing into the lives of the young people we believe we can break the cycle of poverty and early death that is rampant in the country. We have a great time and unfortunately with my near departure tomorrow to Burundi, I won't be spending this amount of quantity time with him. He is going to be driving me to the airport but I probably won't see him upon my return because there isn't enough time between flights. I love John, for he reflects our Lord in so many ways.

Day 7 – I’ve been getting up around 4:45am to call back home and it is starting to take its toll on my sleep. But it is a good time to call home which it’s about 8:45pm there and the day is done. Everyone is doing well and I sense the answer to the prayers that have been lifted up by everyone who knew I was leaving on this journey. I am glad it is the same old same old; piano lessons going well, soccer practice was good, school work is the proverbial “fine”. I like no drama and that is what we’ve been praying for, peace to dwell in my house.

Today Tom and I are departing and going separate ways; him to the Mara and me to Burundi. Tom misses his flight due to a change in the flight schedule that John was not aware of. It is Ok since it still means that Tom will be able to go on safari this afternoon. I arrive at the airport and it is empty which I’m happy to see. I’m able to check emails for about \$6.00 US for the half an hour of time. When I was in town it was \$1.00 for 30 minutes.

We board the plane as usual. This flight is going to both Bujumbura and Kigali. My seat partner is Claude from Kigali who is just returning from Du Bai??. He notices the book I’m reading and says “Yes I am a Christian to!” He shows interest in the book which is Max Lucado’s Applause from Heaven, so I tell him I will give it to him upon our arrival. We are on the flight for about 20 minutes when I hear that we’ll be landing in 6 minutes. Odd, I didn’t think we were going to Kigali first. As we touchdown I start to stare out the window and Claude tells me that this is not Kigali but Nairobi. We are back in Nairobi. Ugh? We come to find out that the plane had a malfunctioned circuit board and we had to return and make an emergency landing. Well if I’m going to be in an emergency landing, this is the kind I want to experience; I didn’t know we were in one. We immediately give praise to the Lord for His watching over us. And I am especially thankful for all the prayers who have invited our Lord to protect me during my journey. Thank you to all!!!! The good news is that is a 20 minute fix and we are off again.

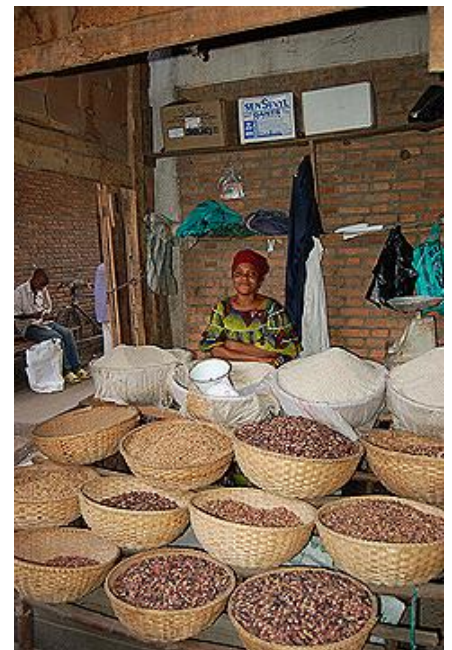
We arrive in Burundi about an hour late. No hassles getting into the country and Richard and LaCharite are there to greet me. We arrive at the new hotel I am staying at and this is nothing compared to the other ones I’ve experienced here in Burundi. It has a health club, wireless internet, a bathroom I can stand up in. It is brand new and overlooks the Congo Mountains. I rest there for an hour and then we are off to exchange money and get me some phone minutes.

We then head to Gatega, the local market where many of the women who have received loans from the ministry sell their goods. I meet Bella who has received a loan and has paid it back and is looking to expand and would like another one. Here is the greatest news of all, through her association with the ministry



she has received Jesus as Lord and Savior. Halleluiah!!! That is so exciting. She used to drink her profits away and now she wants to give them away to the needy and the church. She smiles the entire time we are with her. She

used the loan to buy rice as an extension to her product offering of different kind of beans. We were there for about 15 minutes when a couple of boys about 12 – 14 years of age told me to give them 100 francs. It was the tone he used and both LaCharite and I looked at each other and said, it’s time to go.



We end up meeting Bishop for dinner at a restaurant in town. Things have gotten expensive here in the past couple of years. Now it isn't truly expensive as we might think but a dinner for \$10.00 would have been a solid meal with meat and fixings but now it gets you one main dish. I wanted to treat everyone for dinner and we had 6 of us plus drinks and tip came to 90,000 francs or basically \$75.00. Not bad considering. It is good to see Bishop he is such a Godly man. He has a type of peach doesn't ever leave him. He is in charge of the Free Methodist church in 4 countries; Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda. He is also the Chancellor of Hope Africa University which in itself is a full time job.

Day 8 – It is a day of teaching at the college for the women. We are starting at 9:00 am. I've been putting some thought about how to present the information regarding basic business principles. As I was working out at the health club this morning I was asking the Lord what He thought and He revealed to me that we should do something regarding "play acting" a situation. I thought, perfect, but of course, so I decided to go for the different type of scenarios that they might get in and have one of them be the person who as doing the transaction. I have 3 hours to teach and with women who are not used to being in a classroom that will be a long time. The other thing I find out is that some of these women do not know how to write or read so doing writing on the board will be somewhat of a challenge. LaCharite will be doing the translating. She fluently speaks; English, French, Swahili and Kirundi. I don't have the right plug to do any ironing and my clothes will need to be pressed. I call down and they pick up my clothes and they'll be ready by the time I need to leave. The total cost is .30 for three items. Now that is a bargain.

We arrive at Hope Africa University where we will be holding the training and the women are already there in their seats

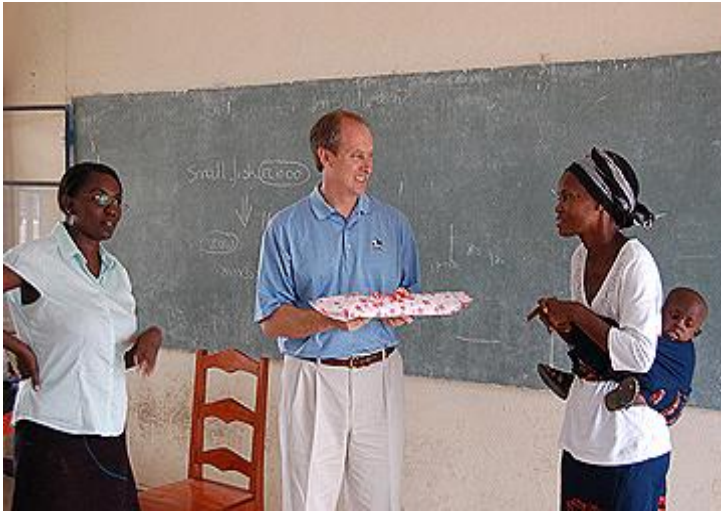


and singing praises to our Lord. Praise songs in African can happen at any moment. I begin my teaching with helping them get some of the basic concepts of buying and selling. The differences between what the buyer is doing and what the seller is thinking. It is easy for them because they almost all have to buy their goods from a wholesaler in town. We talk about the types of products they offer; maze, oil, clothes, green bananas, donuts, onions, tomatoes. How do they differentiate them from their competition? We start to talk about quality, price and location. But now we start the fun part; cost and profit.

I have one of the women who has been communicative so far and put her in a chair in the front of the class. She sells donuts and I begin to ask her how much for 3 donuts. She tells me 100 francs each and I tell her that I'll take 4 at that price. She says no and I say that ok, I'll give you 200 for 3. She said yes. Perfect we now have a situation we can dissect to determine if she made a good deal. We come to find out that it costs her 70 francs and we just do some basic math. The interesting thing they do is consider their inventory at a cost and will not bargain against that. They will stick to their price and whenever they get to the breakeven cost then they look at whatever they sell as profit. I explain that they have to be sharp and know their cost or they will be in trouble.

The next one we do is to consider spoilage from a vegetable. I put a simple offer on the board; 50 tomatoes for 2,500 francs is the asking price. I counter with 2250 francs for the 50 tomatoes. We consider 10% spoilage and the cost per tomato is 30 francs. Again I didn't get into too many questions about figuring costs based on weights or pieces but we are progressing. The waste factor on average is 10% so I ask them to let me know if we should take the deal or not. One woman says she knows the answer; Yes because money in my hand is better than not having any. This is a typical thought process here and we tell her she may be right but at this point we don't know. Finally a women comes to the

board and lays out the profit for each tomato; Asking price profit after spoilage; 17 francs. Offer price profit 15 francs. She says she would sell them because the 2 franc difference might be eaten up by spoilage if we don't sell. I agree with her. We go through a couple more of these examples and LaCharite has to translate it all of it so it takes some time. We are finished at 12:00 pm and they are planning a lunch for us.



Before we go to lunch, one of the women from last time comes to me with a wrapped present. She has a baby strapped to her back as she gives me the gift. It is a Burundi shield to protect me on my journeys here and abroad. I am touched by their thoughtfulness. We sit down and we all have lunch; beans, rice and bananas. The women have a large plate that is filled and they have 6 forks so they can dig in. They don't have enough plates so this is the best way for everyone to eat. One of the women from last time is there, Kamangi. She is the one who wanted to expand her donut offering into two places in the market. She had a horrible situation happen to her. She took in an orphan teenager and after

he lived there for about a month, he stole everything she had. Her pots and pans, clothing and whatever else she had. I tell her not to worry but that we would help her start her donut business again and if she needs anything at all to contact LaCharite.

After lunch I head back to the hotel for a little R&R. I didn't sleep very well the night before so I take a short nap. I awake and begin to answer some emails. This place has been wonderful with its wireless internet that has allowed me to Skype the last 2 nights. I spend about 45 minutes on Skype which is easy because of the ability to see everyone through video. Olivia likes to walk me around the house and show me the dogs. On Tuesday she showed me the snow that had fallen. It is an awesome technology that is free and helps connect people from long distances.

We then head back out to visit women who have received loans. We first to the downtown market which is unbelievably congested and narrow through the aisles. The woman isn't going to be there but we'll be able to see her but we'll be able to get a feel for the operation. She is in fabric section of the market and there are about 30 different people in the area selling basically the same thing. I would love to do a study on the buying behaviors of people in markets. What makes them buy from one or the other? I'm sure it goes back to the very basics that we learned in our marketing course on the 4 P's, Price, Place, Product, Promotion.

We then head back to another market but this woman had to take her child in to the doctor and she has not been there the whole day. We do finally meet up with the last woman who is selling vegetables. She has already paid back her loan and is appreciative the confidence in her. She has had a tough life and this has given her the opportunity to gain some confidence and freedom from the burdens she was facing. She has quite a bit of inventory and I caution her to make sure that she doesn't over extend herself. She says that all of the items on her table will be sold within 2 days on average.

I get dropped off at Desire's house so we can visit. He is a great guy and his wife Lillian is pregnant. She is huge for 4 ½ months and I learn she is having twins which is exciting since this is their first child(ren). Desire is the CFO for



the college and he tells me that the original plan for Hope Africa University was that in 2010 they would have 800 students. They currently have 3,000 and growing still. They are opening another campus upcountry which I will see tomorrow.



Politics are always of interest since the US plays such a major part in the world's economy and social movements. He then tells me that Burundi has passed a law making homosexuality a crime. This was a major deal since the Ambassador from Belgium was gay and they are the country that colonized Burundi long ago. The President is a Christian and I find out that he sponsored a week long revival where different pastors from around Eastern Africa came and spoke. There were thousands there and hundreds were saved by the gospel. This was happening before the new Obama Ambassador to Burundi got here. She has indicated that she will have a problem with this. What was awesome here was that the religious leaders got together and presented their view to the President and he agreed with them. He understood this is a spiritual issue and it needed to be handled as such which is to use the word of God to make the decision. Desire said that many of the European countries wanted to pull their support because of this issue and the President said pull it. See the support they give is a loan and not free money so they know that they can other money from other places.

I couldn't image a US Senator or Congressman putting forth a bill to ban homosexuality. It would never happen because their political career would be over.

We have a great time visiting and I look forward to connecting with him before I leave. We then head off to a restaurant where I have eaten each time I've been here. It is a very good and you always see UN people there. But the UN's presence has been dramatically reduced since my first visit here in 2005. All of the soldiers are gone and the only thing left are infrastructure support teams. I remember on my first visit that the electricity would go out in the middle of the day and at times in the middle of the evening. Now I'm on wireless. Progress is a good thing.

Day 9 – I'll be teaching upcountry today and that means a 2 ½ hour drive up through Gitega and into Kibeyua. We were in this area last time and it is so beautifully scenic you feel like it is a place where you'd like to have another home to visit. Peaceful, lush, clean air, are the words that come to mind when viewing the landscape. Unfortunately it is in Burundi and the likely hood of that happening is remote. It is Bishop, LaCharite and Bishop's driver, Jeremy on the trip. We have to head up the tight mountain roads that follow extreme curves and where you barely can see oncoming traffic. So many potential accidents occur every minute.



Bishop is excited because Hope Africa University just launched their radio station on Monday. He is proud of it and well he should be. The vision of how the University will impact the Burundian people is being realized and the country will continue to grow stronger both in stability and economic growth. It is great to spend time with Bishop because he knows so much about what is going on and where they have come from. I ask about the percentage of the population as it relates to tribes and he answers; 15% Tutsi, 84% Hutu and 1% Pigmy. The government decided back in the last census that everyone who had a cow was a Tutsi. We'll you can image that that theory has flaws in it. Bishop believes that the percentage of Tutsi's is actually higher due to the information gathered during the war.

We visit Hope Mountain again which is where they are going to build another campus. I see all of the bricks that were made in our first endeavor back in 2005. They will be used to build the new campus which is encouraging. I do ask how that project is going and I get the same response as last time, nothing has been transferred over and it just sits idle. That is frustrating since during my first visit it was the initial enterprise we supported. Since it is land and the ground is good for bricks, it isn't a total waste in view of the future.

We arrive around 12:15 pm and we will be meeting in a room outside the Kibeyua Hospital. Children are playing in a courtyard between some buildings and it appears they are playing running bases. Wow, that is what I used to play as a child growing up. And they actually do what we would do at times and this throw the ball at the person who is running between the bases if it looks like they are going to be safe. Of course it doesn't work often and the ball goes past the catcher and everyone keeps on running. Simple fun! The women prepare lunch for us; rice, chicken, peas, chips and for dessert, pineapple. The pineapple is the sweetest I've ever tasted and it comes from one of the woman we meet before; Teresa. Teresa is such a humble and caring woman. She had asked last time for a large loan to buy a machine to better make the soap. LaCharite tells me that she had managed to save the \$300 of her half and we just gave the other \$300. She is bright and capable.



The meeting starts with prayer as always. There are 8 women in a small room. The energy from the day before where we had 38 women is not to be found here. It could be the lunch we just ate because I'm feeling very sleepy as I begin the lesson. The basics are touched on again and cost is the major topic of conversation. It becomes obvious to me that I truly don't know or understand the environment in which they sell. The place we are in is in the country and yesterday's group was in the city which to me didn't seem like much of a change but it is. There is less competition in the country and the women don't have direct competitors near them. They have a slight advantage since the hospital

is right next to their market. All of my discussions regarding buying donuts from someone else fall dead. There is no one else selling donuts. So I discuss the maximizing of inventory turns and that isn't a problem for them because she sells the entire inventory in one day. Ah I got it, a sales strategy which she could try. I asked her how long donuts last, 4 days. Ok if she sells out every day and only makes one day's worth then she might be leaving sales on the table because she only has enough for that day. I draw a picture on the chalkboard of a plate with a lot of donuts on it or one with just a few. I ask which one would you want to buy from? They all answer the one with a lot of donuts. Good, she smiles and everyone is encouraged.

I then talk about the only 2 ways to grow is get new customers or have current customers buy more. Teresa is making soap but the woman next to her sells soap but not Teresa's because it is too expensive. She says she does not like the way Teresa's soap is cut. The good news is that Teresa's new machine will help with this. The woman currently has to go to town which is about 20 minutes away to get her soap. I explain that the time to travel to get the soap takes away time for her to sell. She says that doesn't matter because she always gets other things in the market. I'm trying to help Teresa because she is local and could deliver the soap. She said that would be nice and agrees if Teresa can get the price and cut right of the soap she would buy from her.



The time we spend here is less because Bishop has to head back. We join in prayer and ask the Lord to bless these women in their businesses and to prosper their family through wisdom and discernment. I do get a chance to see a couple of shops of the women who were in the meeting. Donuts and Sodas and both women are grateful that I visit their shops. We head back to Bujumbura and I just sit back and enjoy the beautiful landscape and the fact that I am in Africa doing what the Lord has called me to do!

In the evening I go over to LaCharite and Richard's house for dinner. I had been there last time when we had the meeting with the women. After dinner of chicken, spaghetti, chips, beef and bananas, I suggest we watch a movie. They had never heard of Evan Almighty and it is a good and funny movie without being stupid.

Unfortunately the DVD player they have isn't work well so we have to watch on my portable one. But we sit and enjoy the movie which is one of my favorite movies with a simple story about one Act of Random Kindness. After the movie they present me with gifts which is so sweet. I get a new African shirt which I like very much. Of course I had been talking with Chris about the fact I didn't pack any gifts for them earlier in the week. I had no time alone to get the children something so now I stand there empty handed. They also get Chris and Olivia something because their daughter's name is Olivia as well and they wanted to honor her. I explain that in my rush to leave I had forgotten to get them something but that Chris and I had discussed it earlier in the week and we would send them something. The good news is that Bishop and Joy will be arriving in the US next Tuesday and will be visiting their son in Chicago. We can get the gifts there so Bishop can take them back with them. The postal service in Burundi is questionable at best.



It was a good day and I enjoyed being able to go up country and speak to the women. I do realize that we are going to need to write a new workbook for the program that will include many of the topics we discussed this week. I've asked LaCharite to send me the current outline of the book they are using and we can start from there.

As I walk by the reception area of the hotel, which is outside, a familiar friend is outside, Peter. Peter is a monkey that I've been playing with since Tuesday. He is getting used to me so now I can pet him and he'll even grab onto my shirt. At the moment the local cat and him are having it out through the wicker chair in the lobby. It is fun to watch but the cat is really hissing and trying to get at his nose. Great entertainment in a 3rd world country.



Day 10 – My last day on the ground for the trip. Wow has time flown by. I have a light schedule today; meet with Aoci, head to Bishop's house for a meeting and tea and then to the airport. I meet Aoci on my first visit to Africa and we keep in touch via email. His wife Neema has finished university and he lets me know that she needs her tuition paid. I have committed to pay her fees and didn't know she had even finished. Neema and Aoci had a tragedy last year. She gave birth to a little girl and after they showed her it for just a moment they took the baby away to clean it up. The baby died before she ever saw her again. How unbelievably heart breaking. I wonder if she would have had the baby in a developed country would the baby had lived. She was divested. Aoci wrote me that she was in deep depression. When he spoke of her today she was doing well. But because she has these fees due she can't get the diploma. No worries, I'll instruct LaCharite to pay them out of the ministry fund and I'll reimburse it. He thanks me.

He then tells me that baby Christine who is now 3 had been poisoned with something called the African poison. How did she get poisoned I ask and he doesn't know. It isn't a disease or a rash but actually someone poisons you. LaCharite told me in that culture of the Congolese if someone is jealous because the family has had success they will try to bring about tragedy to the family. Pure evil. But that is something not uncommon in that part of Africa, voodoo and witch doctors who cast spells. This poison shuts down the internal organs that have to do with digestion. The good news is that she has received medicine and it has had a positive impact. Poor Neema, it's hard to image what she must be thinking regarding her recent trials. She is in need of prayer. Aoci and I say good bye. I promise that she'll have her diploma next week. He thanks me and invites me to Congo on my next visit for that is where he is from and where he is moving.

I head to Bishop's new house up in the mountain area. I would like to comment on the driving habits of the Burundi people; awful, anarchy, dangerous, scary. I have been in almost 50 near accidents here and I just want to thank the Lord for His watching over me during this visit and for the answer to the prayers of the saints at home who have kept me under their prayerful watch. There are no rules, signs or structure by which the drivers here operate. I did see a few stop signs but never saw anyone stop. Pedestrians are to be avoided if possible. Burundians drives on the right hand side but the buses are from Middle Eastern countries who drive on the left. Therefore the bus doors open into traffic. I must have closed my eyes 100 x's for certain that we were going to hit someone. If you want to drive on the left side because of pot holes, then feel free. 3 people making a left hand turn at the same time at an intersection, common. I look forward to getting back to signs and structure and common sense.

Bishop's new house is in the high rent district. There are houses being built now that are like mansions in the US. The ones I see are probably between 7,000-9,000sqft. Bishop's though is modest as I would expect. He now owns this one and it took him 6 years to build. The reason is no money, no building. Therefore he has this house debt free. It is very much like his other home with a comfortable living room where he greets people who visit and off from their a dining room. He is late for the appointment but no matter, he is always late. So much depends on him and his direction. When he arrives I commend him on his weight loss again. He jumps out of his chair and goes and gets the book by which he credits for the weight loss. I've heard of the concept but it is eating based on blood type. He asks me mine and I tell him B and he pulls up that chapter. Meats that are good for you; Lamb, Venison, Liver, Beef and Turkey. Meats I should avoid; Chicken, certain types of Fish, Pork. He says if you eat the good foods for you and avoid the bad ones you will see progress in weight loss. There are other categories that have good, neutral and bad. When I check out dairy products I get some bad news, ice cream is on the bad list. Ugh. I love ice cream but knowing it isn't good for me and my blood type is going to motivate me to stay away (at least cut back).

Our meeting is about a potential organization collaboration between Sister Connection and I AM Here For You. Sister Connection gets women in the US to sponsor women in the Burundi with \$30.00 a month. But they want to get the women off the support after 2 years. Perfect. I suggest that after the 2 years is over, then they women should be ready to start their own work and that is where I AM Here For You can educate them and give them a loan. Sister Connection was wanting to fund the woman's business loan but I explain that this would complicate things. Money always does. Just let us give them the loan and worry about the training. This way Sister Connection could keep the money and support more women. Bishop likes the idea and since he is going to Seattle next week for a board meeting for the Sister Connection, that is what he'll propose.



We have lunch and Bishop pulls out this round disk which he calls a bio disk. It is new technology. He pours his water over this disk and he tells me that it creates 6 x's the amount of Oxygen in the water. He also says it tastes better. Research was done around the world to find out why people with certain skin ailments had positive responses to washing in certain types of water. The water had more minerals in it which impacted the oxygen. I really don't understand it but I tried it and I did recognize that the taste was definitely different. I feel healthier already.

We head to the airport and I have a concern upon leaving the country. When I arrived I asked for a 3 day visa and based on the dates it is 4 days. I arrived on Tuesday afternoon at 3:00 pm and I am leaving Burundi at 2:00 pm on Friday, 3 twenty-four day periods. The difference in cost was \$60.00. Bishop says not to worry that this argument makes sense and I should have no problem getting through. I get through the first check and then get my bags checked. I say good bye to Bishop as he was the only one they would allow in the airport with me. I then have a slight discussion with another official and he says 4 days and I say no its only 3 and he doesn't argue with me just sends me on my way. When I get to the guy who is stamping my exit visa, he says no, 4 days. I try to explain my view of this and he gets up and calls for a supervisor. Ok I'm thinking if this doesn't go the way I want I'll have to pay the \$60 and a \$15 fine. The supervisor comes over and says no, 4 days and you have to pay; \$10 and 15,000 francs which is about \$12.00. I give him the money and then he disappears. I start to wonder as people in line behind me look at me as if 'I'm one of those people from the National Geographic program Locked Up Abroad. Those people always have problems leaving a country and here I am in a little bit of trouble. When 5 minutes turns to 10 I start to have those thoughts that this guy could keep me here as long as he wants. Patience is not one of my strong suits so I just start praying and resting in the Lord. What confidence there is in that, resting in God. A minute later he arrives with a smile on his face. He gives me back \$90.00 and 5,000 francs and 2 new visas. God is good!!

Flight is delayed but that is to be expected. Once on board I find out that we are going to Rwanda. It seems this airline route takes you from Nairobi to Bujumbura to Kigali. As I pass over the small towns I think about the genocide. What a horrific situation it must have been if you were a Tutsi and were considered a cockroach and needed to be hunted and killed. I look at the streets that at one time would have been covered with bodies that were hacked to death by machetes. The countryside is hilly and green. I have heard that the President is going to try to stay in control past the time that is stated by the established government. The difference between Burundi and Rwanda is that in Burundi the president has sought the people to reconcile and become one. In Rwanda they have sought to just move on and forget it. Some predict that without the reconciliation this problem will gain rear its ugly head for these issues run deep.

I'm now on my way to Nairobi and we fly over Lake Victoria which is beautiful and large. The reason I type this is because I look out the window and see the most beautiful blue sky and clouds that it takes my breath away. I like to

think of myself as the #1 fan of the Lord's sky creations. I sometimes will just stand in awe of them. He does such an amazing job of adding the right colors to give the perfect effect. On one morning I was outside my favorite breakfast establishment Panera when I looked up to the morning sky full of orange, yellow, purple and gray. A magnificent spectacle of beauty that I just had to thank Him for it. He simply said, I knew you would like it. And boy did I.

I arrive about an hour late into Nairobi and Tom, Dorcus and John are waiting for me. I go through customs again and am officially back in Kenya. We head to an outdoor café for dinner and I get to hear about Tom's safari. He had a great time and got to experience the big 6; lion, cape buffalo, leopard, rhino, elephant, giraffe. Of course has taken a ton of photos which I look forward to seeing. Towards the end of our dinner I wanted to let John and Dorcus know that I did not like how I spent my time with them this visit. I did not sow any seed into their lives and I felt all we did was take. I commit to them that this will not happen again during my other visits and that I am 100% committed to them regarding their ministries. They appreciated all that I have done for them in the past and even now. I consider them my dearest friends and want to help them in any way possible. There are some complications that are creating some difficulty in communicating that I hope will be rectified soon. We say our goodbyes with strong embraces and prayer and off we go into the Nairobi airport for our 11:45 departure. It is amazing that in this area of the world there is no air conditioning in any public spaces. So there we sit with over 300 people at the gate preparing for a 9 hour flight with no air movement in about 80% humidity at 80 degrees. Of course you have to sit there for about an hour before we leave and I thought I was smart by buying a new t-shirt so I could be somewhat fresh for the journey. Now it is basically sticking to my body. We board the plane and as I am walking to my seat I say a prayer asking the Lord to allow me to be used on this leg of the journey to further His Kingdom. I find my seat. Tom is sitting at the window, I'm on the aisle and Neela, an Indian woman is sitting in between us. Is this another answer to prayer?

Day 11 – Day 11 starts pretty much at 12:00 am since there is no way I'll be sleeping through this whole flight. Neela and I begin to talk just about things. She has just come from a month's stay with her daughter in South Africa where she got to spend time with her grandchild. She is heading home to London where her husband and her run a pharmacy in the NW part of London. She tells me that she grew up in Eldoret, Kenya which is a place that I am familiar with. She still has family in Nairobi but hasn't been to Eldoret in some time. She describes the Eldoret she remembers with lush grass fields, and a quiet calm atmosphere. Unfortunately that is not the Eldoret of today with its dirty streets and noisy congested streets. People congregating in market areas with garbage strewn all over the place. She hasn't been in a while and she says she'll keep her memories instead of taking a trip back.

She asks me about what I've been doing in Burundi and Kenya so I explain it to her. I tell her that as a Christian it is my joy to be involved in helping others and I've been blessed to be given these opportunities. The conversation has a nice flow and she is easy to talk with. We discuss politics and world situations. The impact the Muslim population expansion in England will do in a generation. Then something exciting happens, she asks me to explain if possible the relationship between the Jewish people and the Muslims as it relates to Abraham.

I go back and describe that the reason why the Muslim world hates the Jewish people is because they are the offspring of Ishmael who was an illegitimate child of Abraham through Hagar. Isaac was the righteous heir to the lineage of Abraham through Sarah. I explain to her that Jesus is born under Abraham's righteous lineage and since He died on the cross for us all, He is now the righteousness of God for all mankind. He reconciles all men to the Father through the shedding of His blood; Muslim, Jews, Gentiles, Hindus, etc. I do my best to explain sin and that because by nature we are sinful we need a savior. I then go into the bible and show where hundreds of years before the scriptures revealed Jesus. I go to Isaiah Ch 7:14 about the birth through a virgin, Ch 53 regarding the explanation of the Passion. She is engaged and I can tell she is really thinking about this. I give her my testimony and how Jesus changed my life. I talk about the love He has for us and how He wants a relationship with us not a religious experience.

I keep praying during the breaks in conversation that the Holy Spirit speak through me to her heart. I bind all the attempts of the enemy of stealing the precious Word of God. I then give her my bible. She says thank you so very much. I explain to start at John and just read each word as God's voice. Know that all the words of scripture are true. I explain what the red letters mean and tell her all of the letters are the word of God not just what Jesus says. Fortunately this is a study bible and I show her where she can get additional insights to the passages written. I also tell her to email me if she has questions and to go to the internet to bible.com if more references. I give some of the testimonies of my life and those of others. She doesn't look as if she doubts me which is good.

I am so happy about this divine appointment I can barely stand it. As the plane turns the lights off so everyone can sleep I just keep praying for her. I did fall asleep here and there and eventually get about 2 hours in a row. After the breakfast is served she says to me that as she was sitting there trying to fall asleep she was thinking about all that we talked about and she is looking forward to reading more. I am elated!

We get to London about 6:30 which is 45 minutes later than expected. After getting off the plane Neela is gone through the crowd as she heads to customs. I will be praying for her. In Burundi it is 8:30 am and in Nairobi it is 9:30 am. Tom and I head to get something to eat and rest up for the next part of the journey which is an 8 hour flight from London to Chicago. I get about 20 minutes of sleep and I'm awake again. There will be plenty of time to sleep tonight.

Africa Journal 6 is now complete and it is a time to reflect on this awesome trip that started 11 days ago. I can attest to the power of prayer as all along the way I can sense the Lord's provisions guiding my every step. I had questioned earlier in the journal on Day 1 what might be the reason for us going through London; now we know Lynn and Neela. Glory be to the name of the Lord!! He is always working to grow His Kingdom. I have a renewed passion for the work of the Lord and I can no longer take any of the precious gifts of my life for granted; my family, work, and especially the ministry in Kenya and Burundi. There is real work to be done and I need to set forth on a path directed by His hand into greater and greater support for those in need. How blessed do I feel that He has given me the opportunity to be His hands, feet and voice in area of need. It is amazing that He allows us to be a part of this work since it would be so much easier for Him to do it Himself but then we would miss out on the blessings today and in the future. He always wants the best for us and this is another example of it.

I am extremely appreciative of the people who work day and night to do the Lord's work and are humble in their position. The church body in Ogembo who sought out help for the orphans and were prayerful and committed to seeing the Lord's hand move. Phoebe and all the work she is doing for the entire well being (spirit, mind and body) of the children of Salem Orphanage. Lynn and her team for helping out in the worst poverty I've ever seen in a manner of love and kindness. Jackton in Mbita who has a full time job but wants to see the children educated and provided for so



they can have a better life. There is also LaCharite who is making an impact on the lives of the widows in Burundi by teaching and ministering to them with vision and commitment. Tremendous people of God who seek to love others as Jesus love them. They shine when you are around them and for good reason, it is where the glory of God is allowed to shine through the power of the Holy Spirit. Peace be with You!