



*Disclaimer: Nothing written herein is intended to judge or disrespect any country or people. The spirit of the people we met and saw was positive, law-abiding, respectful, and welcoming. These countries we visited in Africa are recovering from internal wars and political instability, but they are progressing well and the future is bright!*

#### Thursday November 30

Everyone arrived at SeaTac on-time or early. Don S. flew in from Yakima and was at the Northwest Terminal (where we were going to meet) at 6:30am. We planned on meeting at 10:30am. We had considered coming to the airport the night before due to the unusual snow storm that hit the region, but we were all able to get through the snow and ice in the morning after all.

All check-in bags have a maximum weight restriction of 50 lbs, else there is a \$25 dollar fee imposed. Most of the guys had already checked their baggage, and by the time I got there and found my bags weighted too much (by 4-5 lbs, but rules are rules) we had to scramble to rearrange some of the remaining bags to accommodate the 50-lb rule. Doug followed me and he had one light bag and one heavy bag, so we promptly took some things out of the light bag and put it into the heavy bag (sort of like what the Keystone Cops would have done). Well, guess what, the bag was still too heavy so we had to repeat the drill under Alan's harassed eye. But we made it and all bags got checked and there were no additional fees. Putting up with "newbies" can be taxing at times... ☺

Next we got to the gate and Greg, Don D. and I headed to the family bathroom to divvy up the cash we were taking. I was given \$4000 in \$100 bills; Don had \$3800, and Greg had the rest (around \$4000). So into the money belt it went and I was packing a major wad of cash. The monies were to be used for meals, lodging, visa fees, ground transportation expenses, and whatever else was needed in Central Africa.

Before boarding for Amsterdam Greg led the team in a devotional. He shared from Ezekiel about "standing in the gap" and related it to our team going to the "least of the least" in the third-world prisons. He also shared that before we were good friends and Christian brothers, but now we're family. He then discussed that though this trip came up fast, that time reverses itself on the mission field and it will seem like we've been there for three weeks when we had barely been there or a week. We all took turns praying and then we rose up to board the plane.

The plane was a very roomy and comfortable Airbus A-330, a modern very large jet, for the 4868-mile trip that set out to cross over Greenland and the United Kingdom before landing, in the daytime, in Amsterdam.

On this flight I sat next to a young South African girl from Cape Town. She had been in the US for four months and worked at the YMCA in Seattle. She also worked at the YMCA in Cape Town, South Africa. We exchanged emails and I said my oldest daughters would love to visit her and she said they were welcome anytime, and could stay at the YMCA (my kids go to the YMCA at least twice a week). She gave me a pocket Bible in her native Afrikaans language and I gave her a Bible Study I had written. She is 19 and is a relatively new Christian.



#### Friday December 1

This first flight went very well. I got up often and walked around, watched a couple of stupid movies, did some reading, and chatted with many people during the trip. Before we knew it the 10-hour flight (which was delayed 45 minutes while a passenger was removed for health reasons and they had to find their luggage) was over and I was in Europe.

We then raced to the next gate where we waited for 90 minutes to board. This time we took a Boeing 777-200 longer range jet. It turned out to be not as comfortable as the Airbus, but it got the job done. A bit more cramped, and we were a bit more tired on this leg as well. As usual Northwest was delayed and we took off 45 minutes late. On this flight I did get some sleep, but not much. Watched another stupid movie and "presto" we had arrived. On this flight I took a shot of the Mediterranean Ocean and also of the Sahara Desert. We were now in Africa!



**The Mediterranean Ocean and Sahara Desert from 40,000 feet**

**Pastor Joseph and Team, Kenya**

We were greeted at the airport by Pastor Joseph. He took us to a Catholic Mission where we stayed the night. The Mission was very comfortable. They had a plaque that said it had been blessed by Pope John Paul II in 1985. The beds had mosquitoes netting which we used (as we did at most places we stayed in Africa). We only had 4 hours to sleep, and my roommate Don D. and I figured we got maybe one hour of sleep. Though we were tired we just couldn't get to sleep. Too excited I guess! Before going to bed we had team prayer. It was all good!

Saturday December 2

We rose early, cleaned up, packed up, and waited for 40 minutes as the van was late. We did get to the airport for a 90-minute, 500 mile flight to Kigali, Rwanda. The plane boarded 90 minutes late. There was a heavy rain. We didn't use the skyway but walked out onto the tarmac into a monsoon. They allowed people to board on the front and the back of the plane. So the fun began when the ones who boarded in back had seat 6A and the ones who boarded in front had seat 22C and no one was giving up much room but just squeezing back and forth with bags much larger than what I'm used to for carry on. At one point I looked at a lady and asked her where she was going and it was up front (she was coming from the back) and I asked (firmly) for the ones coming down from the front to STOP so this lady could get up front and then the lines could move more smoothly. Sheesh...

We had another uneventful flight (just how we like it) and landed in Kigali. Before landing we were served breakfast. I was asked if I wanted scrambled eggs or sausage, and I said "both." And after everyone was served she brought me back a second breakfast (I could have eaten four but I was making my moderation known to all men).

We were greeted by Pastor John, his wife, and some of his congregation. We got through the visa process and loaded up for the drive to the hotel. See [www.agasoromotel.itgo.com](http://www.agasoromotel.itgo.com). Not bad at all, though the shower water had a mind of its own. Hot and cold with no external input (that is, you didn't have to turn the knobs to get a change in water temperature).



**Pulling into the Agasoro Hotel, Rwanda**

**Roommates Bob and Don D. at the Hotel Rwanda**

We then gathered up and went to our first prison, the Nsinda Prison in Kigali, Rwanda. There are 10,200 inmates incarcerated there (including 400 women inmates). 9,400 of the inmates are there for the 1994 Genocide. Many were unwilling participants, others were not involved at all, but indeed many in that prison were willing participants. In the service there were easily 3000 persons who we could see; others were behind the hill or other building but they could hear us. Greg opened up the meeting and then brought up Alex to pray (in Russian) and then share his testimony. I shared my testimony after that. Then Alan preached the message from Luke 23 with an emphasis on "Remember Me" referring to the malefactors crucified with Jesus. Greg did the altar close. Probably in excess of 1000 persons responded to the invitation and so many came forward that the altar was six persons deep and 50 feet across, and many more were in the aisle, probably four across and another 20 feet deep. Most of the women came forward. We laid hands and prayed over as many

as we could reach. After that Alan called for those sick or in pain to come forward for prayer and again the altar flooded and we went around praying for as many as we could get to. It was a very moving time. These people were very friendly. They waved en masse to us coming in and going out. I probably shook hands with 100 people and they were all smiling and friendly. Walking through the front gates and seeing that many people was an experience. They had bunks 20 tall on posts lashed together and only covered with a tarp. Primitive. Hard to access. And they do this every day. We were in this prison for 1 hour and 45 minutes and they had an inmate choir (actually two) that could really, really sing and the congregation were singing right along. We learned that the lines to the song they were singing was "Preach the Gospel." Wow!

From the prison service, which took an hour to get in to due to some formalities that weren't working out, we went to Pastor John's church, which is called "The Love of Jesus Church." Their church was already in session, and they were worshipping with all they had. People kneeling on the platform, singing, music, it took over an hour! Pastor John is very dynamic; how he was at the prison was how he was at church. He has his act together!



**Pastor John Greeting the Team**

**Sunday Morning Church Service**

**Sunday Evening Prison Training**

At Pastor John's church that Saturday night Greg opened and had most of us share about our prison ministry experience. Then Alan taught on the subject of "Three Reasons We Go into Prisons," which are:

1. It's Biblical to visit the prisoners
2. Lives are changed
3. It's a mission field

It was raining hard by this time and we kept right on preaching and teaching and testifying as the lights would go completely out and then fade back in. It was a wonderful time with wonderful people.

We left the church after 8pm and went to a small place for dinner. We all ordered the same fish dish so as to expedite the process (it takes a loooooong time to get an order). When we sat down we were in good spirits but many of us, including me, began to fade fast due to a lack of sleep – running on emotion was catching up quickly. I think I actually fell asleep before the dinner came! But we had a good meal and then drove back to the hotel. Don D. and I each got back to our room, arranged the mosquito netting, took some sleeping medication aids, and hit the sack. It was 10:15pm and we didn't wake up until 5am (the usual time we each get up at home for work). We were both refreshed and ready for the new day!

### Sunday December 3

We gathered for breakfast at 8am and I did the devotions. I chose the subject of "Holiness" using a text from 1 Peter. We had a good chat on that subject around the table before and during the meal. It was all good.

At this time we split up the team with Alan, me, and both Dons going to another church where Alan was to preach, and Greg, Doug, and Alex went to Pastor John's church.

Well, the church service began at 9am and was still in progress when we left at 1pm. We arrived at 10am and the congregation of 250 men, women, and children were in full worship. This was an extraordinary day of church, to say the least. There were four different choirs; one was the children who sang like unto angels. One choir was four boys who the month before had been street kids but became Christians and were now serving God with fervor. Another choir was five men who danced and sang. The regular choir sang throughout the service, including during the taking of not one but two offerings. They all came forward and put their money in the central basket. It was another worship time!

Alan introduced our team and each of us had an opportunity to share for a couple minutes. Alan gave me five minutes and I used them! They really enjoyed hearing that I had eight children - they said I must be African!

Alan preached on "Peace" and hit a home run. Very strong message that took 30 minutes with an interpreter. All of our interpreters have been excellent and today was no exception. These people at the church were all love and kindness. Halfway through the service one of the ladies brought us some cold bottle water! Wow, what an attitude.

There are no shy, bashful, quiet African preachers. They all blast out "hallelujah" and everyone responds just as enthusiastically. All of us were blessed beyond words watching a church like this. Very emotional, very demonstrative, very uplifting! That is not the culture of the American church, but it is a very real culture here in Rwanda.

We gathered back at Pastor John's house and Alan, Greg and I each prayed over Pastor and his wife and four children and his home. He asked if we could do that and we were only too happy to accommodate! We then went back to the hotel and had lunch and an hour of down time.

We gathered at 4:30pm to go back to the Pastor John's church to complete the scheduled prison ministry training. We had another good season of worship - with much dancing before the Lord. Guess what, when you dance before the Lord in Africa wearing a necktie the sweat starts coming real fast - but it was worth it!

Greg starting the teaching session by speaking on "How to Start a Prison Ministry." The 6-part teaching included:

1. Pray for direction
2. Research what jails and prisons are in your district.
3. Pray and fast for God's favor.
4. Obtain permission by coordinating with the officer in charge at the institution about starting a service.
5. Recruit others to come with you.
6. Have a vision for growing the ministry.

I then taught on "How to Grow the Ministry." The 6-part teaching included:

1. Pray for the vision to expand to other institutions.
2. Seek counsel from your spouse, your godly advisors, mentors and counselors.
3. Submit your plans to the Lord.
4. Pray for the harvesters!
5. Be committed to training and equipping your people.
6. Have a kingdom perspective.

Greg returned and taught on the four divisions of PFC using the *Life VEST* model:

1. Life in Christ denotes his Lordship and centrality to our message.
2. V-Visitation (where we recommend everyone start - in-prison direct ministry - emphasis is evangelism)
3. E-Equipping (disciplining inmates and also training volunteers)
4. S-Support (reaching out to the inmate family community)
5. T-Transition (preparing inmates for return to society - emphasis is on Aftercare)

I then came back and taught on the "Three Different Types of PFC Programs" within the Visitation division of PFC:

1. Church Services (the PFC Trademark and centerpiece of the Visitation division)
2. Bible Studies
3. Crusades and Musical Concerts

Alan concluded the training session by teaching on teamwork and Christian unity. He had a strong closing, inviting persons who believed they are called into prison work to come forward for prayer. All of the volunteers came forward to assist in praying for the many that came forward.

In all there were over 10 different pastors attending the training from area churches. We worked well with our interpreters and bonded with the native Rwandans. The service lasted from 5pm to 7:30pm. Afterward we fellowshiped with the saints for another few minutes then walked back to the hotel for dinner and to bed. Whereas the night before my roommate Don D. and I slept like a rock, this night we didn't get any sleep at all. Probably we were so keyed up over the events of the day. The strong church service followed by the afternoon/evening teaching session got us so excited we just couldn't sleep. Oh well... The next day the plan is to drive 5 hours to another prison in Rwanda, so maybe we'll catch some sleep on the bus!

A quick note on driving... When we went from the airport to the Mission in Nairobi the driver drove what I thought was

pretty fast. And in Kenya the steering wheel is on the right hand side of the vehicle, and they drive on the left-hand side of the road. There is a center line in the road, but it's mainly there for looks. Everyone passes everyone at what I consider to be high speeds. When we left the mission we were coming up on a curve and I could see another bus coming head-on. We were in the left lane but I was thinking we needed to be in the right lane and this other vehicle was coming on fast and for a moment I thought "Lord, I'm coming home" as the other bus sped by on our right. So I was now getting used to the fact that they drive on the left in Kenya.

Well, when we got to Kigali, Rwanda, they drive on the right hand side, but still many of the vehicles have steering wheels on the right side of the vehicle. And still everyone passes everyone driving at high speeds. Mopeds, scooters, motorcycles, cars, vans, buses, everyone passing everyone. Remember, Kigali is the largest city in Rwanda, and is the capital. Yet for all the driving we did there was not one stop sign or traffic light we saw. Intersections have roundabouts and everyone just seems to know what to do. (There were some traffic lights we saw later, but they were inoperative.)

Now, there were not any automobile dealerships I could see. No repair shops, and reasonably hard and fast driving is the norm. So guess what kind of vehicle was the dominant vehicle? I'd say 80% of all cars and vans and busses were Toyotas. I didn't see one American-made vehicle in Kigali or Nairobi. There were Mercedes-Benz, Subaru, Nissan, but that was about it. (By the end of the trip we still had not seen one American-made vehicle of any kind.)

Oh, for the meals we had today, the person who leads the devotional is the one who prays for all of the meals, so on this day I prayed for the meals. Tomorrow, someone else brings the devotional.

#### Monday December 4

Arose early to have breakfast and prepare for the 4-hour drive to Gisenyi Prison, on the far western border of Rwanda.

Doug Dixon brought the devotional and ministered on the "Grace of God." His perspective was that God's grace went beyond divine favor, but also included divine enablement. Sharing included some of Paul's trials and hardship, yet beginning most every epistle with a greeting that included a reference to God's grace.

The 4-hour trip was an adventure. We drove at what seemed like breakneck speeds, narrowly missing bicyclists, walkers, and even other vehicles. But everyone drives this way so it seems to be fine (except for the Americans who aren't used to this at all!).

Rwanda is known as the "Land of 1000 Hills." We drove up them and down them, climbing a few thousand feet for sure before descending. I don't know how long brakes and clutches work on these diesel vans, but ideally it will be for a while longer!



**Terraced Hillsides and Valleys in Rwanda, "The Land of 1000 Hills"**

It was particularly striking to me that whenever we waved to people on the side of the road or in the fields they always waved back and had big smiles. It was also striking that most everyone dresses well – the ladies have long colorful dresses and most men wear a tie and dress shoes. Seldom do you see anyone in jeans and tennis shoes.

Often along the way we'd pass through police checkpoints. We haven't been searched yet, but they have that right. There are usually two officers, one flagging cars down and the other one packing a machine gun. Even in the African prisons the guards walk around with machine guns. This is never done in the United States, but it appears to be commonplace in Africa.

|We took a quick sightseeing detour as we neared Gisenyi. We drove down a hill and had a panoramic view of Lake Kivu, an enormous lake that is part of the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. There were two islands and since most of the

region is farmed, the Islands looked manicured. Most of the hillsides in Rwanda were manicured as well. It was obvious that a lot of labor had gone into this effort. There are many banana trees, zillions of them. They have three harvests per year. In Lake Kivu we saw kids swimming. Not bad for a fresh water lake in early December!



**Majestic Lake Kivu at the Rwanda – DR Congo Border**

We then stopped for lunch which included some fried fish from Lake Kivu. This was the tastiest fish I've had in a long time, maybe ever. We then went to the prison. Earlier in the morning Greg gave us our assignments. Alan would open, Don S. and Don D. would give a testimony, Bob would preach a 7-10 minute message, Greg would preach the main message, and Alan would close. I preached from Acts 8, the account of Philip the Evangelist leading the Ethiopian (African) to Jesus; I brought application to those present. Greg followed up with a strong message that included the Demon Possessed man that Jesus Healed and he spoke about two different Old Testament Kings. Alan had a strong altar close and called those present forward for salvation. 75% of those present came forward and the team prayed for them as best we could; then, when they had returned to their seats Alan had another altar call for prayer for the sick. Probably 75 came forward for that and we laid hands on all of them. I was on the women's side and one lady I was praying for was convulsing and crying. I prayed hard for her, for the peace of God to overcome her, and kept with it. She did calm down, but it was obvious to me and Don D. that she was deeply troubled by something that was probably the reason she was in prison. When we had prayer for healing she came forward again and knelt down to receive prayer (this is not uncommon - the same thing happened in the church service we attended the day before). I felt led to address some issues during prayer for her and her burden seemed to lift. Because I couldn't speak her language I was unable to give her any instruction, but we did what we could do and that's how it works - God makes up the difference.

We then presented the Bibles to persons who had already been identified by the superintendent as the inmate church leaders. There were two women and the rest men (maybe 25). The inmate choir then sang two songs and it sounded angelic. Excellent rhythm and a lot of enthusiasm.

It was amazing to see that of the two prisons we had been to, both superintendents greeting us, thanked us for being there, opened the service with prayer, and closed the service with prayer. I then thought that if the superintendent of an American prison did that he'd be sued, fired, and have multiple grievances filed against him. The superintendent of the Gisenyi prison said (through the interpreter) that it is good for the inmates to have the gospel preached to them because it helps them. We agreed! Seems Joyce Meyers ministries were there earlier in the year (they have a very strong presence in Central Africa). A highlight of this meeting was that a woman correctional officer in full uniform came forward for prayer to receive Christ. This has happened in the American prisons also – the officers who overhear our message also get touched by God's Holy Spirit. She came on the bus as Greg introduced her to all of us. We all wished her God's speed!

At the border we got out our passports and heading to the authorities. I knew we'd hit a poor section when the "restrooms" were nothing more than a hole in the concrete floor spanned by two concrete blocks. No light. At times like this it's good to be a man. ☺ On a serious note, this land has been hit hard by civil war and political instability, and the common people suffer because of it. But the land is rebuilding!

We were greeted by eight very well dressed Congo PFC volunteers, including their leader Pastor William. We got through the checkpoint and met the rest of the greeting party, about 20 more people. An adorable little girl wearing a lovely white dress presented Greg with a bouquet of flowers. How special!

We drove to the hotel, and the roads in Goma, DR Congo, were in very bad shape. Rwanda had well paved roads with a pothole here and there, but nothing like this. Here the roads were barely paved, if at all, with boulders in the way! Seems Goma had been severely hit by a Volcano that claimed many homes and left devastation over what little infrastructure they had left after the two Congo civil wars.



**Lava Field Devastation**



**Volcano with Steam Plum**



**Alan Teaching by Flashlight**

From the hotel we went to the church, a large warehouse with a dirt floor and a generator running two light bulbs and the sound system. Alan taught the first part of the seminar, again on "The Three Reasons We Go into Prisons." He used a small flashlight to see his notes. The assembly was thrilled to have us there and they were very gracious toward us.



**Caleb (Interpreter) in DR Congo**



**Pastor Fifi, DR Congo**



**Welcoming Team Greet Greg & Alan**

When we were done we went to a private home for dinner, again by lantern. For some reason, aside from our hotel, there were no electric lights working anywhere. We were served a sultan's dinner and I know we're all gaining weight. I was getting very tired by this point since I didn't sleep well the night before. I had no trouble sleep this night!

Thus far we have observed that the people of Central Africa are economically recovering, yet do their very best to dress very well. They struggle to survive, yet they are enthusiastic at church, give God continual praise, and are ministry-minded and passionate about prison ministry. They take notes during our training sessions and are highly hospitable. They serve us excellent meals, while malnutrition has a grip on their land. They sing songs by lanterns and do all they can to make us comfortable. Even the inmates are friendly, appreciate us, thank us, wave to us, and treat us with respect. Wow. God's good hand is on these people and for that we give Him praise!

Tuesday December 5

Both Don D. and I slept well, as did the rest of the team. Alex had a chill so I poured some Nyquil down him and hopefully that helped. He seemed back to normal today at breakfast. This hotel was our first time in Africa where we didn't have mosquito netting. Both Don D. and I sleep in shorts, so we sprayed each other with bug repellent. When that spray hits your back it's like someone throwing ice water on you. Very cold sensation!

Today looks to be the hottest day of the trip so far. It's only 8:30am yet it is getting toasty.

We drove to the prison and it was a rough ride. We drove over the lava beds formed four years earlier when the volcano [Mt. Nyiragongo](#) (11,380 feet tall) blew and poured out lava across Goma, and especially the small town of Munzenze where the prison is located. The road was therefore quite bumpy (lots of broken up lava rock). We saw burned out vehicles buried half in the solidified lava. The city of Goma is very, very economically depressed. Still, people dress as nice as they can, especially the women. Very colorful full length dresses are standard it seems. Attitudes are good. Children play and are happy. Very resilient and strong character people.

The prison held 400. It is old, dingy, and not at all inviting. We preached in the courtyard without a microphone for the first time. This is the first prison on this trip that we were allowed to take pictures inside.

Alan opened up, and then Doug shared a testimony followed by Don S. sharing his testimony. I shared a short sermon from Luke 22 and 23 about "I Find No Fault in Him" which dealt with Jesus being abandoned by his friends and the mob wanting him killed when earlier they were praising him, and how people can do things they wouldn't normally do, or that they regret doing, when Christ isn't the center of their lives and the power of God is not in their lives. Our hearts have evil in them and this evil can be overcome by power of God. Alan gave the main message, followed by Greg doing the altar close. 175 men and women came forward. We had prayer for the sick afterward and as usual they knelt on the ground to receive prayer. We laid hands on every one of them and prayed.

Before the service the inmate choir sang, and it was excellent. A visiting women's choir sang too and they were out of this world! Then one of the lieutenants, a correctional officer, in full dress uniform, sang a song a capella that brought down the house. Amazing, a guard singing the gospel before the inmates!

It was quite hot this day, and as usual they made us a place to sit in the shade. They are very accommodating to us, both administration and the inmates. And as usual women were in the prison too, some with babies. When we left we noted women and children sitting outside of the prison with children waiting to go inside to visit.

There are few paved roads in Goma; most are dirt, with potholes, and broken up lava rock everywhere. This is a poor city for sure, and most of it is due to the recent wars and political instability. Infrastructure is destroyed and it takes a while to rebuild it, but the people are doing just that – rebuilding.

We then went to the church to complete the prison training in DR Congo. We taught for 90 minutes, and then had church for another 2 hours and 15 minutes until it became too dark to see. There were no lights and the power to the musical instruments came from a generator.

We sang and sang and sang and sang and then Alan preached on "Unity of the Brethren" and then we sang some more. We are all convinced that in heaven the choir will be all African. These people sing sweet, and they sing fast, and they sing with high energy, and they sing for a long time! After the preaching we called up all of the volunteers and had a prayer line. Every American volunteer laid hands and prayed over each and every DR Congo volunteer. Wow, what an experience. The faith, humility, and service-mindedness of the peoples of both Rwanda and DR Congo gives me great hope that these countries will be on the road to recovery and prosperity as God's blessing is upon them.

After the service (3 hours and 45 minutes - just another mid-week church service in Africa!) we went to a swank hotel to wait (this is not where the team stayed overnight) before we went to where we were going to eat. This hotel had a large pool, hot tub, beautiful accommodations, luxurious lobby, huge patio area right on Lake Kivu, and there was even a yacht docked there. I observed a young white couple eating a meal by candlelight. What a stark contrast to the area we just came from, where there are potholes, poverty, lack, and no electricity. Seems Goma is a launching point for people going on Safari to see the gorillas. It's like two worlds separated by a few hundred yards.

The meal was another sultan's spread. All of the DR Congo prison volunteers were invited to a private home (same one we went to last night) for dinner. There were the seven Americans and another 25 volunteers. Again we ate by lantern light since again there was no power in this region (the swank hotel had power, as does the hotel we're staying at). We're all commenting that when we get home we'll have to get into the gym to lose some weight we knew we were gaining here!

Don S. leaned over to me on the bus ride and said "you know, I haven't seen one dog or one cat the whole time we've been over here." And neither had I come to think of it. We did ultimately see one traffic light in Rwanda. We finally tucked in around 11pm and got up at 5am raring to go for another day!

### Wednesday December 6

The day started early with breakfast at 7am. Don D. brought the devotion on the theme of "The Kingdom" and related when he was not a Christian and was in Vietnam participating in the darkness, and now he's in Africa as a Christian in the light.

We saddled up and crossed the border back into Rwanda and drove directly to the Genocide Memorial in Kigali. Very moving. It was clear from the Memorial presentations that the horror and suffering was unimaginable. It was like hell was let loose. It was a colonial and political error of the most extreme kind. UN Secretary Kofi Anan said he didn't do enough and was to blame; the Belgium president at that time took the blame as well; President Clinton said inaction on his part was the biggest regret of his administration. A series of events led to the majority tribe, Hutus, slaughtering the minority, but politically and economically favored Tutsi tribe members. We only had one hour there and could not see everything, but what we saw was enough. There are 250,000 person buried on the grounds at the Memorial, and more are being added to this day as they are found. In our visits to the three Rwandan prisons, we were in the prison with many, many persons who

precipitated in the Genocide.

This is why we are taking humanitarian aid and the gospel to this country. The light of the gospel is a tangible blessing to any people. We have been joyfully received by administration and inmate alike. Every prison administration person has prayed with us, led the prayer at the service, and repeatedly thanked us for being there.



**Pas. John, Alan, Superintendent, Greg**



**Prison Detail**



**Aleksey by a UN Vehicle**

The team then traveled to the Kigali City Prison. There we met the assistant administrator, a lady, who was gracious to us and kind to us. We talked a bit, and our leaders asked if they could pray for her. She said through an interpreter that if we hadn't offered to pray for her she would have thrown us out of the prison! We all laughed, Greg asked me to lead the prayer, which I did with pleasure.

About this time it started to rain, and it came down in sheets. But after just a few minutes it quit, and we walked over to where the services would be conducted. This was our fourth prison, and first on where we and the inmates were all in a completely sheltered area. And it was a good thing, for the rains resumed, but because we were inside we could continue the service! There were 1100 men and women at the service. There were 5700 total in the institution, with over 3000 persons there for Genocide crimes. 300 of them were women! Greg and Alan instructed us that though we had just come from the Genocide Memorial and that people would be in this prison who were involved in the Genocide that we had to remain positive in our preaching and testifying, and to not mention at all our visit to the Memorial. And that's what we did.

Alan opened the service and invited Alex and Don D. to share a testimony. He then invited Don S. up to greet the inmates, and then he did the same for me. Alan has begun to introduce me as an "African" and he says for them to listen for the size of my family. So I greeted the people and when I got to the part about having eight children the place erupted in applause! This has happened whether in prison or when we're doing training with the church volunteers. It's always a fun time! Doug then shared a short message from the scriptures and then Greg preached the main message. Alan did another very strong altar close. We estimated 150 men and women came forward to receive Christ and we had a good season of prayer with them; after that, Alan gave another invitation for the sick to come forward for prayer, and this time even more men and women and women came forward. We laid hands on every one of them and prayed for them. It was a powerful time in the Lord.

Greg then handed out Bibles to select inmate leaders. As with the other prisons, there was a name list of persons to receive the Bibles. This name list was prepared by our local Prisoners For Christ teams who minister in the prisons and have identified the in-prison pastors and teachers. Greg and Alan dispersed the Bibles, laying hands on each recipient and praying over them as they received their Bible. We then closed the service with more songs, led by the inmate leadership.

The Superintendent actually arrived after our service and sat in there service. I remember bumping into him while he was seated near the front and excusing myself. He looked up and smiled (this was the altar time and I was moving about praying for inmates). Because some inmates where street clothes I thought he was an inmate, but when we went to the office and he was there I quickly realized he was NOT an inmate! He spoke English and our team listened as he discussed the history of the country and the history of his prison.

The Superintendent shared about how the prison was built in 1930 and has a capacity of 2500. Presently, because of the Genocide, there are 5700 in the prison. He said that half of those in prison for Genocide have confessed. He said they confessed because they had become Christians and wanted to make things right with God. Further, of those who had confessed over 20 had received the death sentence (which has yet to be carried out for anyone). The Genocide was not just murder, but it involved rape, torture, and sometimes a slow, painful death to a person. Perpetrators of crimes like this received the death sentence. Others who may have shot and killed someone might receive a life sentence. Everyone it seemed had at least a 15 year sentence for participating in the Genocide.

In the Memorial, and again with the Superintendent, we learned that the Catholic Church was involved with the government

for many years, and that when the Genocide started some priests actually participated in the Genocide, one even betraying his entire congregation and all people who sought refuge in his church were murdered in the church. Yet other priests did what they could to save people. It was an individual choice on the part of those priests who betrayed their people, but this has damaged the testimony of the Catholic Church as a whole. The Superintendent made the distinction between the Catholic Church, the Protestant Church, and the "Born Again" Church. He said that when foreign Christians come it is good because local Christians who come to minister may be ministering to someone who killed someone in their own family. Again, he was very grateful we had come.

With Pastor John all of the team laid hands on him and Don D., Greg, Bob, and Alan prayed out loud. So we have been to four prisons, and each one had a Christian Superintendent who greeted us, prayed during the service, was present for the entire service, and thanked us at the end of the service. What a great example!

We took one picture of him with Pastor John, Greg, and Alan. This is the first picture inside a prison we took in Rwanda; they don't allow it. We observed the "visiting room" is outside of the prison. There are two rows of benches spanning dozens of feet. The inmates sit on one bench and face the family who sit on the other bench. The bench cleared with the rains started but before that we saw a little boy running across to see his dad. That touched all of us (as it does in America also).

We then left for dinner and then back to the Agasoro Hotel in Kigali ("it was good to be back home"). We prepared our humanitarian aid suitcases to take with us to Burundi, where we were heading early the next morning.

Don D. and I are still rooming together so we split up what we brought to give away and put it in one suitcase. Alan came by later in the evening and took the suitcase to go and arrange the gifts with others who had also prepared a suitcase.

Don D. and I were feeling pretty grimy from all of the sunblocker and bug spray so we each took a (cold) shower before bed. I started typing the journal but at 8pm got tired and decided to rest my eyes a bit. Two hours later I woke up. Don D. was fast asleep, his note pad laying by the bed with the light blaring in his eyes. I shut off the light after putting the mosquito netting on and also went to sleep.

#### Thursday December 7

Don D. and I both got up around 3:30 wide awake. We laid in bed until 4:30 then got up and got busy. The plan was to eat a snack in our room before leaving at 7am for Burundi. There is one prison in Rwanda on the way to Burundi that we will be ministering at. Good thing we took a shower last night - there was no water pressure in the morning for showers!

We took off for Burundi but made our stop in Butare. There we located our interpreter Frank, who lives in Butare but had been assisting us in Rwanda. We arrived at the prison and went in to greet and present a gift to the Superintendent. This man, Patrick, was again a godly man who appreciated our coming to the prison. We again brought sugar, soap, and Bibles.

Greg opened the service and introduced both Alex and Don S., who each gave a testimony. I then brought a short sermon from John 6. My message was from all of the chapter, where it begins with Jesus feeding the 5000 and then at the end of the chapter many of his disciples leaving him because of being offended at a teaching. My point was that like Peter said in that chapter that there is no where for us to go back to (75% of the inmates were there for Genocide crimes). In this prison of almost 1100 inmates, I reinforced that the Great God Jesus Christ is a good God and even when we don't understand something to not turn back and forsake God. If he forgives someone, don't get offended. If he asks you to forgive, do it and don't get offended.

Alan then preached the message and he used John 5 as his text, the person who could not get to the pool for healing. It all went very well. Greg did the altar call and 100 men and 20 women came forward. We laid hands on them all and prayed, and then we had prayer for the sick and again many came forward and we again laid hands on them and prayed. We wrapped up by giving Bibles to select persons and laying hands on them as well.

Every time I get to speak the guys like to me say that I have eight children. The inmates always cheer! This time I held up one of the children who was visiting their father as I announced I had eight kids. This helps them to relate to us and assists in the work of the gospel!

We then drove to Frank's (our interpreter) house and met his wife and one month old daughter. We had an enormous lunch and after Alan and I prayed for their home (a blessing) we launched off to go to Burundi.

We went to the border and paid \$10US to keep from having our bags searched. Greg calls this "opportunity costs." (In the DR Congo we paid \$20US to be able to take pictures.)

For the next two hours we drove to the capital city of Bujumbura. Everyone we passed held out a hand for a handout. This country is very poor, but again when we got to the hotel there were 20 people, local prison ministry volunteers, waiting to greet us! These people had great joy and fawned all over us. We had a short meeting and then went to dinner in the hotel restaurant.

Alan recommended the fish, which is caught in nearby Lake Tanganyika. These fish are around four feet long and are excellent eating. Some guys had the spaghetti dish, which was also recommended, but I wanted some local food and was not disappointed.

Pastor Willie told us that two persons in the prison we were going to tomorrow died of hunger the day before. In this prison they do not feed the inmates, rather, the families of the inmates have to bring food. No family or friends, no food.

In Burundi we switched roommates and now I'm rooming with Greg. There's no mosquito netting here, but there are mosquitoes. I put on some spray and wore a long sleeve shirt to bed. Amazingly this hotel has air conditioning, so we have it cranked to maximum cold. We also have a refrigerator and so we put our bottled water in to get it cold as well. At dinner we had bottled soda (as usual) and it was COLD for the first time on the trip. Man, I had forgotten what something cold tasted like. Good timing on the A/C since it was the most humid evening of the trip (we are right next to a huge lake).



**Nightly Accounting of Day's Expenses**

Greg is working on the books (he documents finances nightly). I did more typing in my journal. Seven guys all have cameras and we have a bazillion photos to share with each other. Should be a lot of documenting of the trip by the time we're back home!

I am not scheduled to share from the Bible tomorrow, but when pastor said people are starving at this prison I was mindful of Isaiah 53, the prophecy of the suffering Messiah. I will be meditating on this...

#### Friday December 8

The team gathered early for breakfast and Don S. led the devotion. He spoke from Isaiah.

We then gathered with the volunteer team for prayer and then to load up for the two hour drive. We had three big sacks of foodstuffs (100 kg each) in the aisle of the bus (we had used up all of the storage space with other sacks of food for the prisoners), and we crammed the seven Americans and then 23 more local PFC volunteers and with 30 of us crammed in the van we headed off for the two hour drive to Romunge prison in southern Burundi. The locals sang a good part of the way there and back, and the driver was playing African songs, some of which we could tell what they were by the tune, even though the words were foreign (Amazing Grace, It Is Well With My Soul, I Surrender All).

For the most part the roads were good but occasionally a section would be washed out and we'd have to carefully drive around it. The ride was along the great Lake Tanganyika, which stretches for miles and miles along the southwest border of Burundi (the Congo is on the other side of the lake, which we could see in the distance).

We saw some [fishermen](#) in long narrow boats paddling with one oar from the back of the boat. Children were swimming in the lake (in the middle of December!). We saw many villages along the way, and sadly the poverty is evident in these rural areas. There is no running water or electricity. We did see some Red Cross workers, including some nuns who were nurses assisting people. Every so often we'd pass a UN truck.

Today was a very hot day and this is the first day we sat directly in the sun during the service. Up to this point we were always in a covered area. Yet the team was full of enthusiasm and we not only conducted the service but showed over 20 local PFC volunteers how to do the same thing. Truly the "fruit will remain" as we not only ministered but trained out local teammates. Alan opened the service, Don S. and I gave a quick greeting (where again I said I had 8 children and they always enjoy hearing that), Don D. and Alex gave excellent testimonies, Doug shared from the scriptures on "Jesus, The Light Of the World" and did a marvelous job, and then Greg preached from the Prodigal Son. Alan followed up on Greg's excellent message and did a strong altar close, followed by a call for the sick to come forward for prayer. In all over 100 people came forward to receive Christ and as many to be prayed for regarding their illnesses. We laid hands on them all and prayed the prayer of faith, believing that God would have mercy on them. We closed the service by calling specific men forward to receive a Bible and prayer. Thanks to the Gideon's we had some New Testaments available, to go with the Bibles we brought. In all this was another very fine service. The Spirit of the Lord was in our midst.

We then drove to the prison administrator's home (he wasn't at this prison when we were) and at his home was also the head of all prisons in Burundi. So Alan, Greg, and the local pastors went in alone to meet them and provide to them gifts.

We then saddled up and drove back to Bujumbura. More singing and rejoicing. We had to stop at a couple of police checkpoints (which are all over all of the countries we have visited in Africa). While stopped local people bring up to the window fruit and vegetables for sale. If you leave your window open they shove it right in the window!

We returned to Bujumbura and immediately went to a meeting hall where lunch was ready to be served. Again, this was a hot, humid day and everyone was sweating up a storm. Mingle that with sunblocker, insect repellent, and dust and we were quite a sight (at least I was). After lunch we returned to our hotel and quickly got ready for the first training seminar with 35 local PFC volunteers. I had a time for a quick shower which saved my life (and drew the jealousy of Alan!).

Greg gave greetings from the America team and after prayer by Greg and Pastor Willie we entered into the teaching, the third time on this trip we taught our seminar. We taught from 5:30 to 8pm. Alan taught, Greg taught, and I taught. It went very well and was much appreciated by the native volunteers. We always pass out yellow tablets and pens for them to take notes with, which was a tremendous help and worthwhile investment!

We then freshened up a bit and then headed to dinner (no one was hungry, but we were invited by the chief of police so we went). For the first time the group got separated. It was pitch black outside, and they were taking us over in three cars. Greg, Alex, and I got in the lead car, with Pastor John and other native pastors following us, and Alan, Don S., Don D., and Doug trailing in the third car - which lost sight of the second car and missed the turn to the mission house. Alan quickly figured out what had happened, but the driver spoke zero English. Somehow he got the driver to return to the hotel. We sent a car to the hotel and found them, and shortly we were reunited.

The mission house provided a very nice dinner. We were in a meeting room that was hot and humid and we were all sweating. But the fellowship was marvelous. We have been treated kindly by everyone on the entire trip. Five ladies prepared and served the meal. African ladies dress very elegantly, with long gowns, shawls, and all very colorful. They ever gave all of us wrapped gift packages. We all received the same thing - a 500 gram vacuum sealed bag of Burundi coffee. Alex about jumped out of his chair when he saw it since he loves coffee! Burundi is one of the very most economically depressed countries on the planet, yet we have only seen generosity, kindness, and love since we arrived, and it's the same way in all of the countries we've visited. It is marvelous to behold the face of God, as it were, on these African brothers and sisters. They are living in a difficult place, but they have great joy, enthusiasm, and love for the brethren. This is a testimony to the love of God, the peace of God, and the hand of God. These people don't complain, they accept their condition and work through it and advance the kingdom of God and care one for another.



**Elegant Dress of the Burundi Ladies**

Greg and I returned to the room and got ready for bed. We didn't need to be anywhere the next morning until 10:30. I took another sleeping pill and off to laa laa land I went.

#### Saturday December 9

What a great night's sleep, my best and longest of the trip! Man do I feel better. Greg was already up by the time I got up. I read some good words in Isaiah and saw what was spoken by the prophet hundreds of years ago was being realized in Burundi. The sins of the leaders and the judgment that follows make life hard on everyone. We see little infrastructure here in the capital city of Bujumbura. War and conflict prevent anyone from gaining traction and making progress. This is the case in Burundi, DR Congo, and Rwanda. Most distressing, but as I've said before the good hand of the Lord is upon these people and I'm optimistic that the land can recover and will recover; the hard part is that it will take a long time and meanwhile people do suffer.

Many of us skipped breakfast (including me) and assembled at the hotel conference room around 10:30. The training began at 11am and Greg opened by teaching for 20 minutes on *Volunteer Commitment*. I followed for a 20 minute teaching on the *Code of Conduct for Prison Volunteers*. Alan closed out the teaching with 20 minutes on *Discipleship and Evangelism*. It was a good session. We gathered in the bus (it made two trips) to the lunch hall where we enjoyed another African meal. It was really getting humid and all of us were sweating big time while eating lunch.

Alan gave out the assignments for the prison ministry for that day. I was assigned to be the emcee and do the opening and

also introduce the various team members for their speaking roles. We crammed in the bus and made the short drive to the prison right there in the capital city of Bujumbura. We took in 32 volunteers, the seven Americans, Pastor John, our host minister from Rwanda, our interpreter Frank from Burundi, and 23 volunteers from Burundi and the DR Congo.

We got in and had to walk to the prison from the "gate" (a long branch stretched across the road held up by a "v" branch stuck into the ground). As usual we could hear the singing before we even got inside the walls. When we got in we waded through a sea of people and eventually got to the covered church area. After Pastor Willie introduced his team and all of the non-American volunteers, he turned the microphone over to me to open and introduce our team. After a short introduction where I shared a scripture from Psalm 23 I introduced Don S. who gave his testimony. After that Greg came up and greeted the people, followed by Don D. who did the same, and he was followed by Alan who gave his testimony, and then Doug shared some scriptures from the Bible. I then introduced Alan who preached a strong message from the account of Bacchus in Luke 19. God showed up and the anointing fell. Greg gave the altar close and the place flooded with people wanting to receive Christ. We prayed for all of them and then made the call for the sick to come for prayer. The Holy Ghost had his way and lives were touched. All of this was going on through interpreters and it was marvelous to behold. We concluded the service with passing out 12 Bibles to key men and women inmates. Alan, Greg, Doug, Don S., Alex, and I all laid hands on recipients of Bibles. Alex then prayed the final prayer in Russian (as he often does by request at these services). Much singing followed and we were escorted out of the prison. It was a tremendous time. The team was continuing to hit on all eight cylinders and it was a blessing to all.



**Entering and then Leaving a Prison in Burundi**

We made the short drive back to the hotel and all of the volunteers (native and America) went right to the meeting room and we had prayer, singing, and then Greg and Alan exhorted the people with a strong word and invited those who felt called to ministry in the prisons to come through the prayer line. All seven American volunteers prayed for each person individually, both men and women. Pastor Willie then preached for 30 minutes, and then his team presented Alan and Greg with wrapped gifts, which were beautiful native shirts with the Burundi flag on the front and the French word for Peace above the flag and the word Burundi below the flag. They also presented another large wrapped gift which was other shirts that said Burundi and Bujumbura on them, again in the native Africa style. All seven Americans received one, and we gave one to Pastor John of Rwanda and one to Frank our interpreter. It was very precious of them to do this, and cost them a lot of money that we knew they didn't have a lot of. But God in Heaven must have been pleased by the giving of his people, and we sincerely appreciated it. A real highlight was when the African's began singing "How Great Thou Art" at the close of the night. We recognized the tune and began to sing it in English. Alex sang in Russian. Others of the African brothers sang in French. In all a few languages were being sang simultaneously and it was a blessing, a real blessing. It sounded great and was a lot of fun!

We all returned to our rooms at 7pm and grabbed a quick shower and met for dinner at 8pm. Greg and Alan were working on the budget and other arrangements for the other five of us ate dinner together and rejoiced over the good day we'd had ministering with the local brethren in the prisons. Tomorrow we go back to the DR Congo with the local ministry team to minister there with Pastor Kiza. It's 9:30pm as I complete this part of the journal.

### Sunday December 10

The team gathered at 8am for breakfast. I led the devotion on "The Moment of Truth" from Hebrews 11, with a reflection on the world leadership and how they dropped the ball during the Rwandan Genocide, and that we have to be vigilant, diligent, and aware at all times for when those few times come where strong leadership and action is required, that we too would not drop the ball. By 9am we were on our way to the Burundi-DR Congo border to head to our last prison of the project.

The day before the guys were joking around and we had Alex in stitches. We had been using the local expression for "praise the Lord" which is Bwana Asafewe (pronounced Bwana-sah-fee-way). Well, I put a spin on it and said I hope I

didn't say "Botswana Freeway." Somehow that hit Alex's funny-bone and we almost had to administer oxygen to calm him down he was laughing so long and hard. So he comes out this morning and meets us in the parking lot and he was laughing as he recalled the "Botswana Freeway" term. Well, just as he tells me that one of the local brothers comes up and I greet him with "Botswana-sah-fee-way," meaning I botched the first part! Alex then roars and I was embarrassed. Oh well, another day on the mission field!

There was an extra breakfast roll that the team took and gave to a man outside who was very grateful. We have given out lots of foodstuffs on this campaign and the receiver has always been very gracious in their thanks.

The trip to the border went well and we covered the distance in about 45 minutes driving along the north end of the great Lake Tanganyika. The border crossing took over an hour. For some unknown reason we took quite a while to get us all out of Burundi and into the DR Congo.

We then drove to a meeting hall in Congo and waited while Pastor Kiza and his associate took a motorcycle to get the humanitarian aid. After quite a wait they returned. In the meantime we fellowshipped together and Alex and Bob got pictures of themselves with a goat standing up against them eating a branch.

As has been our custom on our road travels we toss out individually wrapped candies out for the children to gather. Whether in the USA or in Africa kids seem to like running after candy tossed from vehicles.

We went to our last prison and met with over 100 inmates. We held the service under the shade of a Mango tree. Alan was the emcee for this prison. Don S. started off with a testimony then Don D. and Doug did a quick greeting. Alex shared his testimony and as always taught the inmates how to say "Praise the Lord" in Russia. He'd have them say "Slava Boh-goo." They always liked that. Then I shared from the scriptures out of Isaiah 53 of the suffering messiah and how he understood being despised and rejected of men. Greg then came and preached, with Alan doing the follow-up and altar close as he shared out of John 3 on "You Must Be Born Again." We prayed for people to be saved and again at the altar for the sick.

From the prison we went to the meeting hall and had a very nice lunch. I slathered on the hot sauce as usual and was glad I had ample water (Greg did the same thing). After prayer we drove to Pastor Kiza's home.

This was an experience. Pastor Kiza lives in a small abode among scores of other similar, closely spaced homes on a rocky dirt road. There were kids everywhere! They held my hands and walked me up the few blocks to pastor's home and often holding up a hand saying "Muzungo Bahmboe" which essentially means "Can I have some candy White Man?" Inside the home we gave gifts (shirts, ties, items for their kids). I was asked to pray the blessing over the home and I did it with pleasure.

From there we walked back the few blocks to the van and both Alex and I had kids hanging all over us. One kid held each of my fingers and thumbs and others were hanging onto my belt and laughing and smiling and being great hosts! Moms looked on and smiled. When we got to the van Alex began handing out candy and the kids went wild! It was a great time. The kids never seem to cry, though I never saw one with a doll or a toy (or a TV or a Nintendo machine...).

We then drove to a park on the north shore of Lake Tanganyika. The water was crashing in and the warm wind was blowing. We saw some animals in cages, including a baboon, a boa constrictor and some type of bottle-nosed alligator. As usual there were a lot of UN vehicles driving around doing who knows what (nothing obvious).



**North End of Lake Tanganyika**



**Pastor Willie and Bob in Pick-Up**



**Off-Present UN Vehicle**

We then drove to the hotel and freshened up to go to one of the prison volunteer's home for refreshments. This couple, who has six grown children, lived in a very spacious, well-decorated, gated home with an elegant lawn and grounds. The wife

("mamma") has a Christian radio broadcast. She loved me and my eight children and insisted I have seconds of the big dinner. Greg told me to have seconds so being the team player that I am I headed back in for another plate. She mounded it up, saying "you have eight children, you need your strength." So I obliged for the team and got the job done! As it was getting dark we watched a lot of bats flying overhead. They eat mosquitoes so I was cheering them on!

Our van had left after dropping us off so two vehicles drove us back to the hotel (10 minute drive). I jumped in the back of the pickup and with six other Africa brothers we blasted through the streets bouncing over potholes and having a whale of a good time. All too soon the day was over and we were back in the hotel, all of our prison ministry and volunteer training done. Tonight it's off to bed, and tomorrow it's on to Kigali, Rwanda for the night, then to Kenya the next night, then on the plane home after that. The team had a wonderful time and it's still not over!

### Monday December 11

Arose around 6am and began preparations for departure. While in Africa I have been studying the four countries we have visited and noted some weaknesses that have limited growth, stability, and human progress. These are all my own opinion.

- Languages - Africa has many native languages (hundreds), and some countries have more than one official language. This limits communication potential and is inefficient.
- Roads - many roads are either not paved or if they are they are in severe disrepair. This limits movement of goods and is inefficient. Some countries drive on the right hand side of the road, and some on the left further constraining efficiency by lack of standardization.
- Highways - There is no interstate system; all roads are two lanes and go through towns. Fastest speed is usually 45 mph.
- Currency - Every country has their own currency, which makes travel and commerce between countries tedious and inefficient.
- Government - Each country has their own government, and many are recovering from war and corruption (but it is being addressed). Laws vary from nation to nation.
- Plumbing - Plumbing is scarce. As a result there is disease and sickness that would otherwise not occur.
- Pollution - Litter is common in the cities. Wrappers and garbage is tossed out of moving vehicles continually. This was how the United States was in my lifetime, and it doesn't take long to correct when attention is paid to it.
- Education - Not all children can afford school leading to a perpetuation of the poverty. Literatures states that the literacy rate is 50%.
- Stability - Political regimes come and go and so do their Constitutions. As a result foreign investment is at best minimal, causing economic distress.
- Infrastructure - Electricity is scare, as is plumbing and roads. Human comforts are minimal.
- Law - Police presence is overt, with armed soldiers and policemen seen often, even in rural areas. Some corruption and bribery exists but what I saw was orderly, which is good.
- Entrepreneurialism - Virtually non-existent.
- Terrain - Many countries are landlocked and thus transporting goods from the sea is out of the question.
- Borders - Passing through a border takes at least 30 minutes, and usually an hour. Moving goods between countries is highly inefficient and is a harsh limitation on providing goods to consumers.
- Middle Class - In the countries we visited we saw very poor people and some people well off. The middle class does not have much representation.
- Investment - Due to all of the above, foreign investment is nil.
- Management - On a continent with much human and natural resources the impact of colonialism and internal mismanagement has led to pillaging of the land and a depressed economic outlook.

Yet in the midst of these severe and costly handicaps, the people are genuinely kind and gracious. They wave and are friendly where ever we go. Those with means are only too quick to share them, and those without are still cheerful and outgoing and they share what they have. The people dress very well (except where pockets of severe poverty exist). The ladies almost universally wear long, colorful gowns. Men very frequently wear ties and suit jackets. Their shoes are polished. The children are much behaved and enjoy playing together, much more so than what are considered normal in America.

What we haven't seen much of is people smoking (too expensive), children's toys and dolls (non-existent), tattoos (I've see two persons with tattoos, one on a lady's leg at a restaurant and one on a male inmate's arm), overweight people (the most common form of travel is walking and the people do a lot of that, plus food is mainly fruit and vegetables). Other scarcities are dogs and cats (we've seen only a couple of dogs) and traffic lights (we saw some in one intersection in Kigali, but it wasn't working). There are some stop signs, but they are completely ignored. In Central Africa the vehicle has the right of way and pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists have to watch out for themselves and get out of the way when a car, van,

or truck comes through.

The "Born Again" church is vibrant. Their services last 3-1/2 hours and they meet often. They sing like angels and they have multiple singers per service, that is, multiple choirs. They have dirt floors (like in the Congo) but seem unaffected. They dress for church and sing long and hard and praise God openly without reservation. Even the prison volunteers, who have their own survival to secure, still make time to minister to those in prison. Truly God has touched their hearts.

So what is the answer to the problems plaguing Africa? Every border official and prison superintendent and the assistant chief of police, all said to us that the preaching of the gospel is welcome and wanted and will be a help. We believe that's a good place to start. Then the long task of setting political stability in place is next. Corruption in high places has to be drastically reduced. Then management and planning with foreign investment is needed, together with a campaign to clean up the countries of both litter and polluted water. Hospitals, education, opportunity, vision. This all takes strong leadership. The "United States of Africa" could be modeled after the USA. Common roads, laws, language, currency - to name a few - would carry with it prosperity, healing, and lift the human condition. Can this happen? It hasn't yet. The internal wars and former (present?) animosity between warring tribes is a costly handicap and a heritage that is still a curse to this beautiful land. Yet the church can and should be the answer. The church I'm talking about is not an ecclesiastic organization, but an army of people whose lives and behavior has been changed, where purpose and vision leads to positive action. We're seeing this in a microcosm with the prison volunteers and to see it on a larger scale would begin change on a national level.

The natural resources of Africa are a drawing card for outside investors, so Africa has something to offer. It could be another India (computer programming) or China (manufacturing), specializing in an arena important to the global community. The governments in India and China made a conscious move in these directions. This all takes vision, leadership, planning, cooperation, and time. Africa must first set its house in order, and the global community will take note and follow that lead. I pray God that this, in some measure, would happen such that human suffering would abate and human progress would abound.

We left Bujumbura at 10am after saying our good byes, settling up with the hotel, and providing many gifts to Pastor Willie (7 shirts, pants, shoes, pens, candy, etc.). He was very grateful.

We drove almost three hours to the border, and got through in the breakneck speed of 45 minutes (a 30 minute improvement from the time to get into the Congo the day before). From there we drove a couple more hours to Franks home and had a light lunch and some refreshments. We admired their 1-month old baby Nard again and headed to Kigali.

We arrived in the capital city and back to our original rooms ("it's good to be home..."). I'm back rooming with Don D. and will also tomorrow night in Nairobi. Some of the guys gave Frank and Pastor John gifts when we arrived. Don D. and I took ours there from the hotel as we had dinner tonight at his home. As usual we had a fare fit for a sultan. Pastor John insisted I have seconds, so to be a good neighbor and Christian I did what the good pastor said!

Before the dinner Don D. and I took a mile walk before going to Pastor John's. Very pleasant evening. We stood out like a sore thumb of course, but everyone was friendly and smiled and waved as usual.

At Pastor John's the people gave us gifts, including a woven place mat and a singing Christmas card. Doug received a beautiful picture carving (some guys win all the hearts!). We had a good season of sharing and had closing prayer. We committed the work unto the Lord.

In all it took us seven hours to get from Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, to Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. Even though at the border the temperature was 90 degrees, it felt cool compared to the 100 degrees and humidity in Bujumbura. Man, I can't wait to get back into the cool, rainy Northwest!

Hard to believe that this is our last night in Rwanda, and our next-to-last night in Africa.

### Tuesday December 12

We had planned on getting up at 7am, but Don D. (my roommate now again) and I woke up early so by the time we showered and packed it was 7am. Breakfast was at 8am. We slept with the curtain open in our room (the room was at ground level) because we were quite warm. It cooled the room down enough to where we both got a good night's sleep. Everyone gathered for breakfast and Don D. brought the devotional.

Our original interpreter, Innocence, came to see us off (he was at Pastor John's last night too). He really blossomed with us and is an excellent brother. He worked hard, as did all of the interpreters. Most of our services were outdoors, and while we usually sat in the shade with the speaker at that time was in the sun, the interpreter was in the sun all of the time! I gave

Innocence my hiking boots and some other gifts, which he appreciated. He is 30 and wants to be married so we prayed to that end for him! We piled into the van and another small car and made the five-minute drive to Kigali airport.



**Innocence (interpreter) and Bob      Pastor John and Frank (Interpreter)      Kigali International Airport, Rwanda**

After saying our good-byes to Pastor John, Innocence, and Frank we checked in to the airport, right on time. We were seated in the terminal 50-minutes before the flight was scheduled to depart. That's when the schedule began to change...

We sat in the terminal for over an hour past our *scheduled* departure time. Then we finally boarded and we sat some more. They decided they had to change three of our landing wheels (don't ask me why this was a surprise to the airline, can't they see tires everytime the plane is on the ground?). After 45 minutes of that they couldn't get the power to stabilize. My guess is the APU (auxiliary power unit) was having issues. They worked on that while we baked. Then, they asked us to leave the plane and return to the terminal to wait. So we got our carry-on luggage and de-planed. We went back into the terminal, had our luggage scanned again, went through the metal detector again, and got to our seats. I opened a book and read two paragraphs and they said we could return to the plane. So we got back on the plane. And four hours and 15 minutes after we were scheduled to take off, we left Kigali for the 70-minute flight to Nairobi, Kenya.

We passed over [Lake Victoria](#), the largest lake in all of Africa. It borders Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. It is huge. We flew quite a while to cross it.

We arrived and Pastor Joseph had been waiting some five hours for us. But we loaded in the van and took off for the Passionist House Mission Retreat facility. We had a fine dinner and settled into our original rooms we had on our first night in Africa.

We had planned to shop today, but the plane delay mixed that. We will fit it in tomorrow after the Safari. Alan and Greg will forgo the safari (they have been on it before) and will meet with local ministry to discuss future plans.

We are back in text message range here in Nairobi. We had zip text messaging in Rwanda, infrequent text messaging in Burundi, and good text messaging in the Congo (where we stayed the least amount of time). When I get back to Amsterdam I will have email again, and will occupy some of the scheduled six-hour layover answering email. At least I'll have that caught up before getting home (I hope).

The air is still and though it's quiet it is very warm. Don D. and I are in our shorts trying to beat the heat one more time!

By the way, today is the 42nd anniversary of Kenya's independence from British rule. The British did a much better job with the legacy of their colonization than the French and Belgians did in the Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi. Roads are vastly superior here in Kenya versus the other nations. Still not what we're used to in America, but a big improvement. It will be a long time before Rwanda, Burundi, and DR Congo are up to speed in this area, but they are trying and with the blessing of the Almighty that day is coming. If the country can secure good leadership and stable government, the people will benefit.

On this trip I've taken a lot of digital pictures and short videos. The entire team of seven guys has taken zillions of combined pictures, which we'll share with each other ASAP.

It's been a great season of ministry. We had no ill health, no meltdowns, no panics, no emergencies, no arguments, and no problems! All of the brothers are experienced, mature prison ministry veterans and we know how to work together. It's been a good trip. Tonight is my last night in a foreign bed. Tomorrow night at 10:45pm the plane leaves for Amsterdam. My plan is to take a pill and zonk out on that 8-hour flight and be awake in Amsterdam and the flight from Amsterdam to Seattle, which after 10 hours lands at 2:30pm Seattle time. If I can stay awake until 8pm, then maybe I can dodge jet lag. We shall see...

Wednesday December 13

As usual Don D. and I arose early, but we both had plenty of rest. We saw some mosquitoes for the first time, but then figured out that we had left the bathroom light on, and the window there had no screen. Oh well...

Greg and Alan stayed behind to take care of some administrative business, but the other five of us (Don D., Don S., Alex, Doug, Bob) all went on a safari. [The Nairobi National Park](#) is huge. We departed after a light breakfast snack and were in the park by 7:20am. We roamed in our van for 3-1/2 hours. We used windbreaker for the first time on the trip (glad I packed it!).

The top of the van popped up and we could stand up and take pictures. It rained once and we had to close the top for a bit. The roads were not paved after the entrance and the deep red clay can get muddy. We avoided some potentially sticky areas somehow and never did get stuck (we only had two-wheel drive).

We saw giraffe, water buffalo, monkeys, orangutan, a rhino (from a distance), many birds, impalas, and much flora and fauna. We walked along the river bank where the hippo pools are, but we saw none. The escort at the hippo pool station led us along the path, which was wet from raining the night before and also from a shower while we were in the park. He had a bolt-action rifle so I stayed close to him. He was prepared to shoot a charging hippo, alligator, or anything else he needed to shoot. We did see a turtle in the middle of the silty, muddy river, and a large vulture in the tree along with many monkeys, but nothing bigger. The grass was tall in the fields and lions, being predatory, stay low so we didn't see any of them. We did see a dead snake by the roadside. We headed back to camp after a very enjoyable time.



**Giraffe**



**Water Buffalo**



**Impala**

Back at camp we went to a bead shop, which has an international reputation. We saw the workers making them and we bought many for the wives, moms, daughters, and other ladies in our lives. We came back to camp for lunch then went shopping in Kenya.

We were warned in advance about the "negotiating" stores. Some guys don't like haggling, and others love it. So we went to the first shop that had many beautiful wood and soapstone carvings, paintings, beads, etc. I bought some smaller stuff at the non-negotiating store.

We then went to the negotiating store and it was like a zoo. Many merchants horning in to take you away from another customer. If you are not prepared, it can be intimidating. Yet Greg prepared us so we knew what to do. It's not considered rude to simply ignore the merchants, or just tell them "NO!" It's part of the process. It doesn't seem too Christian to behave that way, but "when in the Kenyan markets..."

We all obtained lots of stuff, and made some pretty good deals in the process (according to Greg). This was a lot of fun and we all returned to pack up for the trip home. I obtained many beads for the women in my life: wife, daughters, aunts, cousins, sisters-in-law, mom, mother in law. Check out [www.kiziri.com](http://www.kiziri.com).

We arranged to have dinner at a local site where the Kenyan PFC volunteers would meet us. They had been trained over the past few years and are thoroughly up to speed. They came by so we could all fellowship and it was a great joy. A team led by Chaplain Rob Brown from Chicago's [Chaplains For Christ](#) came by invitation also. They were excellent brothers who do what we do, that is, go on international prison campaigns, train local ministry, and do it worldwide. I made a good friend in Pastor Willie (the third Pastor Willie of the trip!) who has a website, [www.firesideministry.com](http://www.firesideministry.com) I will write to him.



**Chicago's Pastor Willie**

We had excellent fellowship with the local and Chicago ministry teams, prayed for them, blessed them, and then hustled off to the airport. It was a humid night and Alex had bought a wooden giraffe that was easily four feet tall, maybe a bit more. Thanks to Alan's skill and grace, and our prayers, he was able to get our entire luggage accepted (we exceeded the weight in some cases with all of the wooden items we purchased and packed) and of course Alex's monster had to be checked in. We had no extra charges even though we exceeded the weight and the number of items allowed (thanks Lord!).

We went right to the ticket counter after checking our luggage. Things are not as efficient in Africa as they are in America. We showed our passport for the zillionth time and boarded the plane, which boarded on time (yeah!) but was delayed a bit as a passenger wasn't on board who was supposed to be, so they had to remove (or at least check for) any luggage he may have had checked and loaded. But we did take off and most of us got at least four to five hours of sleep on the eight hour flight. The flight left after 11pm local time so we were all ready or some shut-eye.

#### Thursday, December 14

The plane landed at 5am local time in Amsterdam. My Blackberry once again had email and I downloaded 370 personal and work emails (ugh!). My plan was to really go through them and redeem the time. But I quickly got sick of looking at them so instead I squander the time and will check them in detail later. I just don't have the gas to get it done...

Greg had a "ceremony" for the guys on the team. He and Alan commented that this trip went very well and how pleased they were with how the "newbies" performed. No arguments, no issues, all on board and ready to do whatever was asked of us, all pulling for the team and the other guy. The four new guys (Don D., Don S., Doug, me) are all promoted to "guppy" or "newbie second class." Alex received a nice engraved plaque for being on his third trip. Alan received a five-trip award (belatedly). It was a nice trophy (even though this was his seventh trip he got the award now). It was swell of Greg to pack all that hardware around for two weeks just to be able to give it away on the way home! Anyway, it was a good time for all of us. The guys put together an offering in Africa so we could get Alan a gift, which Greg did obtain. Alan worked his backside off and really knows his way around the international scene!



**Aleksey with 3-Trip Award**



**Alan's 5-Trip Award**



**Greg presenting Guppy 1-Trip Award**

We have a six hour layover, so we're catching up on our journals, emails, football scores, and generally entering back into our life in America. The layover wasn't too bad. We had a lunch at McDonald's and that was our first taste of home!

The flight from Amsterdam to Seattle was turbulent in the beginning (which upset my stomach) and was turbulent enough at the end to where I had air sickness bag out and ready to go (only the second time flying I've ever gotten the bag ready). But we had a good trip and landed without incident just before a huge rain/wind storm that knocked power out to over a million homes in Washington and would also knock power out at some areas of SeaTac before the evening was over. I for one enjoyed the blast of cool, wet air I got when leaving the plane. Seattle was in the mid 40's and raining. This is the weather I like!



**Greg (l) and Alan on the last leg**



**Sunrise over Greenland**



**Greg and wife Rhonda at SeaTac**

Partially due to the advance training, and also due to the chemistry and maturity of the group, the leadership (Greg and Alan) commended us for being a very good team to work with. They were pleased with how we did, and we were all pleased with how it went. Like I said, we all will be looking to go on another international trip in the future! The bug has bit!!

As I write these last words from the passenger pickup area (Leslie is stuck in very bad Seattle traffic) it's raining very, very hard. Wind is blowing. Power is predicted to go out. Stormy weather. I LOVE IT!!! What I didn't love was the long commute home. This storm dumped one inch of rain in a one hour period and there was deep standing water everywhere. Parts of Interstate-5 were closed down, as were many other surface streets. We waded home, arriving at 7pm when we should have been home by 6pm. Don S. was flying his last leg to Yakima and after long delays his flight was actually cancelled! His wife Dee had to drive from Yakima to SeaTac (over the mountain pass) and pick him up and make the return trip home. He got home at 9am the following day!

So we had an unusual snow storm before we left and an unusual rain/wind storm when we came back. Nothing like going and coming in with a bang! Had our plane landed even a couple hours later, we may well have been diverted. We made it just under the wire.

*What I Never Saw:*

- A train or train tracks
- Curbside Waste Cans
- Traffic Lights (except in Kenya)
- Children playing with dolls/toys
- Babies crying
- Small children misbehaving
- Fathers with small children (it was always the mother with the children)
- Obviously pregnant women
- Cats
- "For Sale" sign on any property
- Franchise restaurants (KFC, McDonalds, Taco Time, etc.)
- American-made vehicles of any kind
- Kids fighting
- Diet soft drinks or any canned beverages
- Baby strollers

*What I Seldom Saw:*

- Women driving vehicles
- Dogs (saw less than six in 4 countries)
- Tattoos (one man and one lady only)
- Senior citizens (60+ years or older)
- Private ownership of a car (except in Kenya)
- Persons wearing jeans (maybe six persons the entire trip)
- Anyone overweight (maybe six in all; they walk a lot and have a lean diet so everyone is trim)

*What I Saw A Lot:*

- Christians with the joy of the Lord
- Mosquito nets over the bed (three of the five places we stayed had them)
- Kids hauling water containers home
- Women dressed in long colorful gowns
- Men wearing slacks, ties, suits, dress shoes
- Locals traveling by foot, bicycle, motorcycle (taxi) or van (taxi)
- Everyone used horns to announce their presence, not to tell the other guy to get out of the way
- Friendly people virtually everywhere, waving and smiling as we drove or walked by

*Travel Miles:*

By Plane: 20,000 miles

- Round trip: Seattle to Amsterdam; Amsterdam to Nairobi; Nairobi to Kigali

By Bus/Van/Car: 600 miles

- Round trip: Kigali, Rwanda to Goma, DR Congo; Kigali to Bujumbura, Burundi; Bujumbura to Romunge; Bujumbura to Uvira, DR Congo