

Postcard from Tanzania

May 21, 2008

The village names and language groups have been omitted for safety of all concerned.

Phil's Trip to Ki... and Ka...

The rains have finally subsided. On Friday morning Phil and Edson once more ventured up the mountain—this time with their own new generator, the portable PA system and the Jesus Film to the villages of Ki... and Ka...

The “Jesus” film we refer to is a Hollywood produced movie taken from the Bible (book of Luke). It has been professionally dubbed by local narrators who have carefully translated the original sound track into the L... language. For a dubbing to be successful, every utterance in the original film must be carefully studied and the syllable length of each word determined. (I'm sure you've seen dubbings of films, some good and some bad). A new script is written in the target language, using the appropriate number of syllables in each word. Next, auditions were held here in Morogoro to determine, of the people who speak the L... language, who has the best voice for which part. There are a number of qualified applicants and they are thrilled to have an opportunity to be part of the film. The voice actors are from the same group of locals who work with PBT on the written translation of the Bible book of Luke into the L... language, so they are very familiar with the text. Their work on the Jesus film is amazingly well done—it really looks like they are saying the words you hear.

Church family in Austin, you can be very pleased to have shared in this powerful project.

Having received prior approval from school administrators and parents, Phil and Edson took the film to the secondary school (like our high school) of the village of Ki... There were about 80 young people who saw the film, every available seat was filled. Other children looked in the windows, and when some had to leave during the 2 hour, 8 minute film, others came in and took their seats. The showing took place during regular school hours, with three teachers in attendance.



Students came out and carried the equipment up the hill for us.



Nearly all of the children were riveted to the screen. The film concludes with a short synopsis of the Gospel message. In other areas, it is normal to extend an invitation for people to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord, but not here. However, in an inspired moment when the film concluded, Edson asked the children, “How many of here would like to know for sure that all your sins are forgiven?” In the predominate religion in this part of Tanzania, there is no way to have such assurance, therefore the question of ones sin being forgiven is huge. Almost every hand was raised. Phil was then asked to pray. He asked God to speak to every heart

there, and grant to them the gift of assurance that when Jesus died on the cross, all of the sins of all mankind, for all time, were forgiven—including everyone in the room that day. Phil said it was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop—there was also some wiping of eyes.

He and Edson then drove back to the Ka... village and prepared for an evening showing of the film. They began setting up in an open soccer field, with gray skies threatening to provide a wet evening. Phil prayed for the rain and

wind to subside, and God honored that request. Phil and Edson finished setting up the equipment by flashlight after dark. Although the church members had previously known the film would be shown that day, they had no means of mass communication—only word of mouth, so they didn't know how many would show up to see the film.

After the film was ready Phil and Edson played a DVD Christian music video, turning up the volume to the speakers. Town folk began streaming in from all directions. Within minutes a crowd of about 300 had assembled. When the Jesus movie began, for the first time ever, these folks heard movie actors speaking in their mother tongue on the big screen! A ripple of amazed laughter ran through the audience: surprise and joy at hearing their very own language on the big screen instead of the trade language of *Swahili*! The new generator, portable sound and projection system worked flawlessly: There were many new contacts made there by the church members present. Everyone present heard the Good News of Jesus in their mother tongue. Phil and Edson said *It felt like the day of Pentecost!*



Phil and Edson spent the night in a local “guest home.” The “bathroom” was a little out-house with a curtain over the door, consisting of two planks over a hole in the ground. Beside it stood another little stall with two water buckets—one hot, one cold and a bar of soap... for his bath. He poured the water over himself and the run-off flowed out between the planks on the floor. Someone in the house watched out for his privacy. A curtain covered the entry to his bedroom. There was no electricity in the home, indeed they saw none in the village. Meals were simple but more than adequate, and were graciously served.

On Saturday he and Edson drove to the church and held an all-day workshop, attended by about 40 or 50 men and women. The 4 topics of the seminar were: (1) Man—the image of God; (2) The Image of Love. (3) Love is Relational (4) Faith or Fear—You Decide!

Phil presented the material verbally with Edson translating. The large group was asked to break out into smaller groups, where they discussed the lesson, with intensity, as you can see from the pictures. After group discussions one person from each group explained what their group gleaned from that passage of scripture. Phil talked about how uplifting it was to see how they studied



so intensely and understood the concepts.

The day was a huge success—Phil was so taken with the impact of the film and seminar he said, “I just don’t see how it could have gone any better.”

Both Phil and Edson stated without reservation, that all of the planning, work, and expense involved to bring the showing of the film and the seminar to these souls who are so spiritually hungry was worth it



all and even more.

At the end of the day the local minister, (very ceremoniously-with member participation) presented Phil and Edson with gifts from the attendees: Each man was given two pieces of lovely tie-dyed material, one for themselves and one for their wives—it was a very special moment! The materials are beautifully designed and I am looking forward to having them made into a shirt and a dress!

They returned home Saturday evening, exhausted, a bit muddy, and very exhilarated—grateful to God for such a safe and a fruitful trip.

In His Love, June, Mom and Grandmom

