

JOURNALS POSTED ON MAY 21, 2018

Earthy Treasures



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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, SOUTH SUDAN

The city of Goma, on the volcanic border between Rwanda and Congo, is settled along the banks of Lake Kivu; a place of pristine beauty ... yet of abject poverty.

Many mornings we wake to the sound of fishermen on the lake just outside our door. They are out in the wee hours of the morning as the fog is rising from the lake, in their pirogues hollowed out from tree trunks and patched with plastic or metal. Many spend half their time scooping water from the bottom of their boats while waiting patiently for a tug on their hand-held spool of nylon line with a hand fashioned hook.

This morning as I walked out, I saw the old man who often fishes by our porch. It was cold ... he was on the water in short sleeves and a cap, fishing and scooping water.

I grew up fishing ... for fun ... with my dad. But this man fishes for survival. As I watched him bailing out his fragile boat, I pondered the dichotomy of how much money we invest in equipment back home to 'fish for sport' compared to this man's simple supplies and his quest to 'fish for survival'.



Last month I was challenged by a pastor couple at a church in New Hampshire to read the book "Radical". The book has caused me to contemplate the stark difference between my comfortable life and how most of the world lives. Here in the Democratic Republic of Congo the per capita income is \$440 (~ \$36 per month) which means the lower half the population of 75 million lives on less than a dollar a day!

How can a family survive on a dollar a day?



I greet the fisher... as he keeps throwing in his line and running it through his callused hands. The day passes. I've already finished my lesson plans for tomorrow and made a dent in my long list of overdue letters when I hear a call from outside. The fisherman has come to shore with a handful of small tilapia ... results of a long day of labor on the lake. A Congolese woman comes to buy them and he goes home 1,700 FC richer, the equivalent of just over a dollar for a day's work, barely enough to feed his family.

In the west we are subjected to a daily barrage of advertisements telling us what we need and how easily we can get it. Even in Goma I find myself putting items in my 'Amazon cart'. But Jesus reminds us that treasures on earth will fade and the only permanent treasures are those we store up in heaven (our acts of love and kindness that we render unto the Lord). I think of the fisherman and his daily wages ... and how much I want to invest more of myself and more of my time in storing up treasures above.

Luke 6:38 *Give, and it will be given to you; a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over—will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.*