

### *In the Shadow - #3*

I mentioned in a previous post that the pace of life is slower here than in the US and as most of you would expect, the standard of living is lower.

Deloris and I, with our young family moved to Fulton County PA in 1985. The move did not produce culture shock, but there was clearly a difference between the Philly suburbs and the mountain valleys of central PA. Since Deloris had grown up in a similar environment, the transition for her was easy. Even for me, it wasn't difficult. I hadn't been entirely comfortable with the faster pace and standard of living expectations of living in Chester County. Fulton County was a natural fit for me.

To a degree, my desire for a simpler, slower lifestyle has prepared me for Africa. But only to a degree. By African standards I live high on the hog. I have a house that's paid for. I have drawers and closets full of clothing. The fridge, the freezer, the cellar are all loaded with ample supplies of food. My cars and pickup are old by many peoples standards, but they run - and I have money for gas and repairs. I have tractors, tools and machines to make my work easier. I even have money in the bank. To my African friends, I am extremely wealthy.

This disparity doesn't send me on a guilt trip, but it does make me think. It makes me think about sharing and helping, about equality and justice. This brings all sorts of thoughts about the "dependency syndrome" - does my sharing truly help or does it create other problems? Does my desire for a just economy develop anger, jealousy, and greed? Are I simply imposing my American/Western materialistic values? Does my generosity only serve to make me feel good about myself? I think these really are important questions to be asking and discussing.

Also mentioned in a prior blog – I don't claim to have the answers. But I am thinking. Thinking about changing the world. Thinking about changing the Great Lakes region of Africa. Thinking about changing Rwanda. Thinking about changing a village on the Rwanda/Congo border. Thinking about changing myself. I have to start somewhere.

For the Master, Chris Elliott with the Church of the Brethren Rwanda

