

Dispatches: An African journey begins

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Seven members of our team left DFW Airport at 1 p.m., and we've met up with another team member here at the airport in Chicago.

I enjoyed having the opportunity to visit with Lee Bush from Athens on the trip to Chicago. He heads Red Dot, a metal buildings systems manufacturing company that involves its employees in missions—largely through Buckner—with a goal of doing good, offering hope and transforming lives. The company's mission statement is "pleasing God by turning our success into lasting significance."

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Lee told me how Buckner had been a key venue through which the company has worked toward fulfilling that mission in the last few years. He and his wife, Susan, have made several trips with Buckner to Russia-where they adopted two children-and to Guatemala. They have sent several employees to Kenya to work there, but this is the Bushes' first trip to Africa.

The first leg of the trip was the easy one. It's 15 degrees outside here at Chicago, and there's snow on the ground, but it's a sunny day. The hard part of the journey is yet to come-8 hours to London, a couple of hours layover, and then another 8 hours to Nairobi. I'm eager to be there to see what God is doing through the Baptist Children's Center and the other ministries in which Buckner is involved. But at least the long trip gives me a chance to get acquainted with the other team members. Besides the Bushes, so far we have two Buckner employees-Margaret Elizabeth Perry and David Slover; two East Texas pastors, Jay Abernathy from Palestine and Tim Watson from Longview; and myself. We're meeting up with Carol McEntyre from Knoxville, Tenn., here at Chicago, and the rest of our crew will meet us in London.

I'm eager to have the plane rides behind me and to start seeing all the ministries-and all the needs-in Africa.