

## BRUBAKERS PRAYER UPDATE – MARCH 2008

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### DEAR PRAYING FRIENDS –

One of MNC's Pastoral students is named *Ibintunimana*. The name literally says, "Things are God." For the longest time, I thought the name was a testimony to pantheism. But, the truth is that it means, "Things are God's." What a great name! And, that is why we are grateful for your prayers. We know that whatever good is accomplished, it is the work of God through your prayers. THANKS.

### NOTES OF PRAISE –

- (1) **Pastoral Training School:** February's session with fourth year students went very well. The students studied *The Kingdom of God*, and *Preaching* (see highlight below).
- (2) **MNC Library Project:** We are anticipating the delivery of a few hundred books at the end of this month, books donated by a church in Prescott, Arizona. The library team in Chicago is still working hard. And, Tim had a great conversation with an organization in Michigan about a donation of a few thousand books. So, we are thankful for progress in this project.
- (3) **MNC Leadership Retreat:** February 29 to March 2, MNC's leadership travelled to northern Rwanda for a weekend of prayer, Bible Study, and discussion about MNC's ministry. It was a great time of building unity and sharpening each other.
- (4) **Degree Program Brainstorming Meeting:** On February 22, we had a great meeting with four of MNC's leaders to request counsel regarding implementation of a higher level of leadership training. Though the meeting didn't offer any tangible solutions or concrete plans, it provided much more than that in a very probing analysis of the current state of the Rwandan church, as well as what is necessary to help the church function as it should to meet the challenges of tomorrow's Rwanda.

### ITEMS FOR PRAYER –

- (1) **Jessica:** Please pray for her health, as she has been sick for a few days with serious intestinal distress (not amebas). Actually, we are all sick in some way (all five of us), though Jessica has the worst of it.
- (2) **Pastoral Training School:** We currently have a class of fifteen pastors who are at MNC for their first three-week term of 2008. They will leave on Friday, March 21. They are studying Old Testament Historical Books, Bible Study Methods, Hermeneutics and English. Tim, Jean Baptiste and Laurie Scheer are the teachers. Please pray for good health for all and that what the students learn will have powerful impact upon their lives and churches.
- (3) **Pastors' Wives Program:** March 24-29 we will be holding our first of two annual weeks of training for pastors' wives. We could receive as many as fifty women. They will be studying the Old Testament, Women's Health and other topics. Please pray for good health, safety in travel, and for a great time of growth for each woman who participates.
- (4) **East Africa Spiritual Life Conference:** On Monday, March 24, we will be flying to Kenya for a week of meetings with our mission agency WorldVenture. We will stay a few extra days for personal vacation. Please pray for safety in travel, a good time of ministry, and for all the details of planning for the conference to come together well (Tim is responsible for many of those final details).

- (5) **Shepherd Leadership Conference:** MNC is part of a large team of organizations planning a conference to reach the top level of Rwanda's Christian leaders. The conference will be held April 21-25. Please pray for the speaker, in particular, named Jim Copeland (from our mission board, WorldVenture), as he prepares teaching material.
- (6) **MNC's Degree Program:** We are still praying for wisdom regarding the next steps for MNC's ministry of discipleship. There are many variables which will shape what that program looks like. So, please pray for wisdom and sensitivity to the Spirit's leading during this important stage of casting initial vision. We will be visiting two major schools in Nairobi in early April to glean more ideas of higher level theological education in East Africa.
- (7) **Katabirora:** The latest news on our imprisoned teacher is that he is standing strong despite false accusations and requests for bribes for his release. This is a huge answer to prayer. Please pray that he is given one more chance for his trial to be heard in a place that is not partial or in a court run by greedy judges.

#### **FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHT –**

*"Now I know that preparing a sermon requires more preparation than what I can write down on Sunday morning while I'm sitting in front of the church!"* That was one response after three weeks with fourth year pastoral students in February. Another pastor responded, *"If we preach like this, people will really listen!"* Our course on preaching focuses mostly on how to understand a biblical text and how to bridge the gap between that text and a modern audience. In general, almost everything that we taught was new. It was great to see the pastors hungry to put into practice the principles they had learned. But, indeed, the obstacles that they have to overcome are huge.

Consider these obstacles that they mentioned as prohibiting them from preaching well: (1) No time to prepare; (2) No quiet place to prepare; (3) Weariness from the long journey to preaching sites; (4) Lack of study materials; (5) Not knowing how to prepare a sermon; (6) Not knowing well enough the people that you are preparing to teach; (7) Being asked to preach on that very same day; (8) Being distracted by poverty and basic needs of life and family. Certainly many of these obstacles are unique to this context.

Please continue to pray for MNC's students that they will be radically shaped and changed by their studies so that they will then, in turn, radically shape and change those they oversee.

Thanks for praying with us to make a difference,

**TIM, JESSICA, THOMAS, MARTIN & CECILIA**