

BRUBAKERS PRAYER UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2005

HELLO PRAYING FRIENDS –

The heavy rains began recently. And, within days, the brown grass and dust covered trees returned to vibrant green. What a great metaphor of God's rejuvenating grace during life's dry spells. Thank you for your faithful prayers.

NOTES OF PRAISE –

God is providing meaningful friendships with Rwandese and other missionaries. Tim has begun attending a Rwandese/expatriate Bible study early on Wednesday mornings. Jessica is also developing various friendships. Grace, her language helper on Wednesday afternoons, has been an encouragement and fun person to get to know. And, she and a few other moms have started meeting every other Thursday morning for a children's play group.

Thank you for your prayers as we continue to navigate cultural stress. Sometimes it's hard to say which is a more difficult task – acclimating to the culture or learning the language. But, we praise God for His sustaining grace.

Jessica prepared and presented in Kinyarwanda a lesson comparing sewing to the Christian life. The ladies in the sewing group at our church were very encouraging in their response. This is a milestone for her. Thank you for continuing to lift us up in this task of learning the language.

ITEMS FOR PRAYER –

We are still waiting to hear about the final exoneration of our container. Please pray this would be settled soon, as we don't want any surprise penalties because of someone else's slowness!

Tim is preparing his first full-length sermon (thirty to forty minutes). The task of preparing, memorizing, and presenting for that length of time is a daunting but promising task. Please pray for sharp memories for both of us as we seek to retain new words and grammatical structures.

We have two opportunities to visit churches and preach this month. On Sunday, September 11, we will be driving to the prefect of Ruhengeri, to the town of Gatovu, tucked in the area's high mountains. Tim will be preaching a short sermon. Please pray for safety, as the drive is quite intense (on dirt roads, up and down mountains, three hours, etc...). On Sunday, September 25, we will be visiting another church in Kigali (the name of the area is Gakuriro). Again, Tim will be preaching a short sermon. Please pray that God would use these experiences to encourage the churches, as well as both of us (as we taste more of what we'll be doing in coming years).

AUGUST HIGHLIGHT –

As we mentioned above, it's hard to say which is a more difficult task – learning Kinyarwanda or learning Rwandese culture. We are realizing that the slow task of learning language is a gift, as it affords us time to slowly learn traditions and values. This month, I (Tim) learned about the importance of visiting sick friends. In America, our custom is to stay away from sick people, unless they are in the hospital or dying. If a person has a cold or a bad case of the flu, our "good sense" (or "culture") tells us to stay away and send a card so we don't get sick ourselves. And, what sick person wants visitors, right? Rwandan culture is exactly the opposite! There is a Rwandan man that we've known since we first moved here. He

works for our mission. He speaks no English. And, he lives in Gakuriro, tucked away on the side of a mountain, almost inaccessible by car. A few weeks ago, he developed a serious ear infection which turned out to be shingles. After he had missed work for two weeks, another worker encouraged me to visit him. So, Mugenzi (our worker), Silas (our language helper, also a pastor), and I made the trek to his house. The dirt roads were completely ruined. Many times we barely escaped bottoming out or landing a tire in a ditch or getting stuck in the mud. When we reached a decent area to leave the car, we continued our journey on foot, weaving through mud-brick homes until we reached the home of our sick friend. After greeting his wife, we were welcomed into his home. After a few minutes, out stumbled our friend. He looked terrible – the infected side of his face was purple. The bags under his eyes were hanging down to his nose. And, his mouth was swelled up like two hot dogs. He spoke only a few words, mostly just sitting and staring at the floor. He was obviously miserable. His wife told us that he hadn't eaten or slept in days because of the pain. Our sick friend is also HIV positive. So, his body is really struggling to recover. But, oddly, the other people in the sitting area talked and enjoyed each other's company, laughing, talking loudly, and even talking about death! And, all the while, I'm thinking about how opposite this is from our culture of visiting the sick! After an hour of sitting there, I mentioned that we should be going (I think they would have sat there all day), as I hadn't planned on a long visit. We prayed together for our sick friend, then left. So, what did we do? We brought a party to our sick friend's house and allowed him to just listen in, thus encouraging him and showing how much we miss his involvement in our lives. So, which culture has the "good sense?" Both do.

Thank you for your many prayers,

Tim, Jessica, Thomas and Martin