

SCHEERS' NOVEMBER UPDATE

Dear Friends,

Other Side of Life

Wednesday we closed the office at NCM and went to the funeral of Joseph's wife (Joseph is one of our maintenance workers). The experience brought to the fore 3 realities of life here:

- 1) Medical problems that are treatable bring death here -- Joseph's wife developed toxemia in pregnancy. It was not diagnosed or treated and she died in childbirth, along with the baby.
- 2) Death is much more closely experienced here. The body is picked up at the morgue by loved ones, who themselves wash it, dress it and place it in the casket. The grave is dug by friends and neighbors. 8 young men lower the casket into the grave -- 4 jumping down into the grave to receive the casket and place it, four outside the grave lowering it to them. All then take turns shoveling the dirt over the grave. Finally women press flowers into the soft dirt over the grave.
- 3) Life is lived in community. A couple hundred people put aside what they were doing for the whole day (funerals here are not 45 minute events) to participate in the funeral. Joseph is left with 3 young children. But in the community of extended family he has ways for them to be cared for.

Good Happenings of Praise

1) We had told you that the government official who was holding up the final approval of our New Creation Ministries' registration was removed from his office. His replacement signed our documents yesterday! We still have some formalities to finalize, but that was the BIG STEP -- it's behind us now!



2) Two weeks ago I talked with Jean-Baptiste Tuyishimire and he has agreed to work with us! He was the fellow who we thought had been taken by another organization. He could get a much larger salary working elsewhere, but he loves what NCM is doing. He's already proving to be an excellent addition to our team.

3) The 600 Club -- we now have 66 people contributing at least \$600 per year to subsidize the study of one pastoral student! We have just finished going through all our financial statements for 2007 gathering the names of all who have given and we were astounded at the number. September was a huge month with over \$14,000 coming in that month alone. We have people contributing so far from 15 of our 23 supporting churches, along with a number of friends, family and acquaintances. But a special HATS OFF to First Baptist Church in Durango -- 13 people have contributed from that church alone!

Some have told us that they could only make a one-time gift to the cause, and that's OK. But we're hoping that many will make it a regular commitment into the years to come.

We mentioned in our last UPDATE that we wanted to upgrade our salaries a bit for the full-time Rwandese staff. We're able to do that now.

4) We already have 29 candidates for the new class of Pastoral Training School students we'll accept in January 2008! Normally we accept between 30 and 35. There are still a number of churches that want to send us people but haven't gotten back to us yet. We're praying that we get really quality people.

Take These to the Throne

- 1) Hard to imagine a transition more extreme than going from the middle of Sudan to the middle of Silicon Valley! Our son, Andrew, is now back in the States after his 5 months in Sudan with Samaritan's Purse. Pray for him as he decides what his next step will be:
 - staying in California (Bay Area) and getting a job in engineering?
 - signing on with Samaritan's Purse to go back to Sudan, this time as a contracted staff?
 - something else that God may have up His sleeve for him?

2) In our recent field meetings, along with doing some crazy, fun stuff, we set ourselves on a new, exciting and difficult course. We want to start a bachelor's level program to train Christian leaders for Rwanda -- leaders not just for the church but for the community, business and government. We've been talking about it informally for this last year. We have officially set ourselves on that course. We've also given ourselves 30 days (until December 5) to pray about this and see what God might be saying to confirm or question or modify this new direction. This is so huge we don't want to move without Him going before us. Be praying with us during these days.



Wisdom from Rwanda

-- Agaharawe gatera agahara. Agaharurutswe gahabwa agahini. --
-- A highly favored one will get bald. When he is rejected he will get a club. --

Interesting! This is a cynical proverb about the patron-client system of relationships that's so strong in Rwanda. First, traditionally Rwandese saw baldness coming from two reasons -- getting old or becoming well off. So to be highly favored causes a person to have good life, to be well-off and live long. Or so he thinks -- he thinks his prospects are good because he's favored by this big powerful "boss man".

BUT the second half of the proverb pictures a guy taken behind a building and being hit over the head with a club! The reality is that it's likely that someday you will fall out of favor, and then you're just as likely to get killed or "stabbed in the back".

So the wise man never sits back and relaxes in his favored position. He prepares for the day he will fall from favor, and he always watches his back. The very ones who brought him favor and well-being could be the source of his demise.

I hope none of you have relationships like this! BUT this proverb could easily be applied to this world and its attractive trappings that promise so much. And indeed, one may receive from it well being and long life, but in the end, one way or another, its favor ends -- how foolish we are to live as though it will never end! The wise man, therefore, prepares well for the day the club hits, knowing it will come. Read Jesus' proverb in Luke 16:1-9 -- it has the same point.

Partners in Him,
Gary and Laurie Scheer