

DEAR FRIENDS

JANUARY 2012

“If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way, first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.” Matthew 5:23-24



When I think of my favorite people in Rwanda I think of Simon Nziramakenga and Mezack Nkundabantu. They are godly men, good husbands and fathers, leaders in the church and community but something had come between them. When we would come to Rwanda to assist Simon I would ask about Mezack and always received the answer that Mezack had broken away and started his own church and wouldn't meet with us.

On November 23, Donna, our daughter Linda, and I headed to Rwanda, a central African country, to visit Paul, Jennifer, Kyle, Jake and Matthew and see their work with the primary school for orphans and children whose parents can't afford to send their kids to school. My highest priority (other than family) was to meet with these two men together and see their differences minimized or gone completely. We had many people praying and God supernaturally answered. The first 15 minutes were very awkward. After I broke the ice with prayer and sharing how much they both meant to our family and others, God took over. Both shared that it was others who had poisoned the relationship and they had gone along with it. Many hugs and tears followed with promises to get together regularly.

We celebrated Thanksgiving by barbecuing kabobs over an outdoor charcoal. It was delicious and could become a tradition. Hamburgers over charcoal also made my December 5th birthday very memorable with many friends, African and American.

While meeting with several pastors one evening the boys texted Jen that there were four little puppies abandoned outside the gate of their house. Their next question was, “can we keep them?” The rest of the evening was spent filling up the empty stomachs of 6 to 8 week old puppies who had never been away from their nursing mother. They have given two away and have promised the other two to friends when they leave Kigali later this summer.



Around midnight, two nights later, a six foot long spitting cobra looking for an easy meal crawled over the shoulder of their dozing night guard heading toward the yelping puppies. His yell woke everyone very quickly and an hour battle followed with Paul cutting off the snake's head with a panga. Sleep didn't come quickly for anyone. There have been several attempts by robbers climbing over their fence at night so every one hears noises. Robbers might be better than snakes.

Linda enjoyed visiting the homes and meeting the parents or relatives of some of the primary school students where Paul is the headmaster. Words alone cannot describe what the living conditions are like where the children live. Dirt floors, no electricity, no doors or windows, mud walls, and corrugated roofs. Sometimes several families live in a small 2 or 3 room house. It rained very hard 21 of the 22 days we were in Rwanda making some of the roads to these students impassable.

While visiting Rehema, a 14 year old girl that Linda sponsors, we learned that the father is a strict Muslim. He won't allow a Bible to be in the house but will let his children go to a Christian school. He knows this is the only way his children will ever receive an education. Right across the road we discovered a small village of "Twa" people. They are from a pygmy tribe, such a contrast to the tall Tutsi and Hutu people. We learned that no child in their village had ever been to school. We arranged that one of the mothers would register her child the next day and we would locate someone to be the child's sponsor.



We took two days to travel to Lake Kivu in Western Rwanda. We visited several families of friends who lost many family members during the genocide. Their homes are beautiful, very clean but very poor. Their countenance reflects God's love and forgiveness for what has been done to their loved ones. We were treated to bananas, ground nuts and warm sodas. They live in lush fertile surroundings, mountains and lakes around each curve of the road.

Paul will be turning over his position as headmaster to Jotham next week. They will be working together for the next six months to make a smooth transition.

We just received notice that a first grade student from Paul and Jen's school was killed yesterday when a hand grenade exploded in a village nearby. Please pray for the family. We don't know any more details.



We want to give thanks to you and the Lord for your partnership with us over the years. We love you very much.

Bill and Donna