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NAHIMANA'S NEWS

Dear Friends,

Oh, my life, where have the last 6 months gone??? At this point we had anticipated only having 6 weeks to go until we got on a plane to head back to England, for our biennial summer break and time visiting churches, family, friends, and supporters. Last summer we had thought that Coronavirus would be a thing of the past, by the time it came for us to return to the UK in 2021...little did we know! As things stand at the minute, Burundi remains on the British Government's Red List, and so none UK residents or those without the 'right of abode' (Honda and Abigail) are unable to enter the UK. Returning residents can enter but have to pay £1750/\$2350 per person to quarantine for 10 days (some discount if you share a room)! Ouch!!!

We have therefore made the decision to delay our visit to England. In an ideal world where we could set the schedule (ha, ha!), we would love to come over for Christmas – the last time we were in the UK for Christmas was 15 years ago and our kids would love to experience a cold one (Jos saw snow at a few days old in March 2008, but has no memory of it). But that is a desire we are holding onto lightly – it will only be possible if Burundi is removed from the Red List and the 10-day mandatory hotel quarantine is removed. So, as a family we hope to see you all at some point, but only God knows when that will be!

Restoration of Hope Rejoicing:

Christmas: Christmas with Restoration of Hope was a record breaker this year. The annual Christmas Eve neighbourhood outreach reached over 1200 of the poorest children living near to Hope House Mutakura, and was followed by a Christmas Day lunch for more than 240 people. How so many people heard about the meal, we will never know, but 'if you can find room in your heart, you will find room at your table'. Everyone ate and there was much rejoicing as family, friends, neighbours and various random people who just walked in, were fed.

Education: In January 136 children and young people were able to start the second term at school, and 11 continued at university, thanks to Hope in Burundi and the generosity of so many who give



towards educational support. Innocent finished High School last year and received his Diploma in March this year. Eric has graduated from university after completing a Bachelor's Degree in Automobile Insurance Claims Management. Two young men who we supported through Pastor Joel in Uvira, Congo, came to Burundi to study at university here, as the fees are much cheaper. They also recently graduated – Elias achieved a Bachelors in Entrepreneurship and Gervais now holds a Bachelors in Nursing Science. It is so good to see these young men, who used to live on the streets in abject poverty, being able to attain so much. These are the ones who will help to transform this country in the years to come.

New Life: Ami has worked with us for the last 16 years and heads up the Mutakura Hope House. In April, Ami's wife Claire gave birth to their second child – a beautiful baby boy, who they have called Jonathan.

Challenging times:

Kidnapping: In March we had a very difficult situation when one of our 'old boys', who is now married with 3 young sons, disappeared after getting a phone call asking him to go into work. His wife discovered that the bus he was riding on was stopped - he was taken off the bus and bundled into a pickup truck which then sped off. Bless her, having given birth only a couple of weeks before, his wife spent a week searching hospitals and police stations, trying to find him to no avail. We were extremely concerned – here people do go missing and are never seen again. Praise God, after a week, he was found to be being held by the Secret Police. Although we were relieved to know where he was, this was not a comforting thought and sent us all into serious prayer. Miraculously 3 days later he was released – unharmed. It was a case of mistaken identity - he had the same name as someone who had been passing government secrets to a foreign government... We thank God for his safe return to his wife and children.



Loss of staff member: Some sad news is that Anatole, one of our original RoH staff members who worked in the office, passed away on May 8th. Anatole, aged 57, wasn't married and had no children, so thankfully RoH was able to cover the cost of his funeral. Giving people dignity in death as well as life, is very important here.

Since March, Honda has attended 9 funerals, including that of his Grandma and a close friend from England, who was married to a Burundian and has 6 young children. Although some of these were through natural causes, Coronavirus was responsible for other deaths. Burundi is not taking part in the global vaccination campaign, which is very frustrating to see. Accurate statistics are not released, so it is very difficult to work out if we are in a second or third wave. I continue to wear a mask when out and about, which isn't the most awesome in this heat. Many Burundians also wear masks...but either on their chin, wrapped around their wrist or just over their mouths, so providing no protection to anyone! It is the grace of God that we remain strong and healthy!

Prayer Points:

1. In the last newsletter I shared how 3 of the RoH family had become parents. Claude's wife Janine gave birth to their second son, Jo-Jesse, in November. Within a few weeks it became clear that Jo-Jesse had a misshapen head and he was later diagnosed with Hydrocephalus (water on the brain). We are so grateful to God for a team of American doctors who came to Burundi a number of years ago and have taken over a hospital in Kibuye, a 2.5-hour drive from the capital. In April, Jo-Jesse had surgery to fit a shunt which will allow the liquid in his skull to drain properly. He will return in a couple of weeks to check if the surgery has been successful. Please pray that the shunt does its job and that Jo-Jesse grows up strong and healthy with no on-going health problems.
2. At Christmas we had to move 2 of our boys from the Gitega Hope House, down to live in Mutakura. Japhet, 19 years, was expelled from boarding school due to getting into fights with other pupils. He is a lovely young man, but as the oldest in the home he got to the place where he felt the rules did not apply to him. Living in Mutakura, he now has almost 20 older 'brothers' who will help keep him in line! Japhet has transferred to a day school in the city. Christian, 18 years, is not academic and has struggled in school for many years. He has now enrolled as a trainee mechanic, as he is much more suited to hands-on learning than academic studies. Please pray for both of these young men to have success in their new schools and to make the most of the opportunity they are being given.
3. Pastor Joel in Uvira is having a really tough time at the moment. Whilst in hospital for an emergency hernia operation, his compound was broken into and thieves smashed his car windows and stole various parts off the car. Then the landlord of the church Joel pastors, said he needed his building back and so the church was evicted. This past week Pastor Joel has been back in hospital, seriously ill after being poisoned. So, all in all, he is quite discouraged and beaten down...all prayers gratefully received.



4. For the last 18 months Burundi has been experiencing heavier rainfall than usual, which is one of the major factors that has caused the surface level of Lake Tanganyika to rise by almost 4



metres, going from a surface level of 772.7 to 776.4 metres above sea level. This has proved disastrous - whole housing areas are now under



water as the lake has spread many metres towards town. More than 30,000 people have been displaced and hundreds of homes have collapsed. If the lake rises by another 60cm, the Port will become unusable as it will be totally flooded – this would be an

economic disaster, as much cargo enters via the Port, especially since Covid has closed the land borders for over a year. Major roads are now also impassable due to the destruction of bridges or collapse caused by rising water. Dry season is approaching – please pray for a miracle, for the flood waters to recede.

Nahimana Family News:

Having not seen Bethany for 18 months, we have bought her a ticket to fly home on June 19th for 2 months. She is so excited and already has a count-down app working on her phone. Genetically, Bethany may be half English, but when you are brought up in Africa, being away from this vibrant culture with its strong sense of community (and large amounts of sunshine), for long periods of time, is a huge challenge. I will be flying back to England with Bethany in August to get things organized and take her to university (there are some life experiences as a Mum, that you just don't feel right about missing – sending your daughter off to university is one of them). Bethany will be studying Nursing at either Nottingham or Birmingham University. So, I may get to catch up with some of you when we escape from hotel quarantine – I will have 3.5 none-quarantine weeks in England...



Due to Covid-19, Abigail will not be sitting her Sociology and Psychology GCSE's in England as anticipated. Bless her, she has been incredibly motivated and worked so hard over the last 10 months, so she anticipates good results from the Teacher Assessed work she has completed. Abigail is planning to continue on with online A-levels in both these subjects, but to return to The King's School part-time, to study for A-level Geography. She misses being with her peers, so hopefully this will be a good way to address that moving forward.

Josiah continues to grow like a weed. A new gym recently opened at the top of our road, and under 18's are allowed to attend with parental supervision. So, every Saturday morning we head off to work out – Jos is more enthusiastic than Abi, but she too is faithful in attending. At under £1 a session for them, it's a great way to get fit. Having not seen Josiah since September 2019, when he was 5ft 4, you might not recognize him when we finally do make it back...he is aiming to be taller than his Grandad by the time he returns to England!



Honda continues to work hard, whether that be with RoH, as Director and Dad to over 150 children and young people, or in his watch shop. Honda is always looking for potential business ventures – when you take care of so many people, the needs are endless and so being able to generate income in-country would be wonderful. Please pray that God guides him into God-Ideas that will be profitable, not just good-ideas. Thankfully at Easter Honda was able to travel to Rwanda to visit his family. Rwanda is taking Coronavirus more seriously than Burundi so it was a somewhat different trip, with a nightly curfew of 9pm in place and strict rules for mask wearing, but being away was a good break for him.

I have had quite a challenging 6 months. At short notice in December, I flew to Uganda to be with one of the young girls I had helped raise at CRIB, who was facing major liver surgery on Dec 22nd. Christmas Day was spent in the Intensive Care ward at the hospital – sleeping on the floor and taking care of the patient. Thankfully the Catholic Hospital was next door to a church, so I got to hear carols being sung...a real reminder that Christmas isn't about commercialism and gifts but about peace on earth and goodwill to all men. The surgery and biopsies revealed that the young lady had an aggressive form of liver cancer, and so the decision was made for us both to return home to Burundi, so she could be with family at CRIB.

We flew home and had to go straight into quarantine at a government-appointed hotel, where we were forbidden from leaving the room. It was a challenging time because the young lady was in intense pain and as the days progressed, she got weaker and weaker. After a particularly difficult day, just after midnight I had fallen asleep in the small lounge, but was awoken at 2am by her cries. As I went to the bedroom to attend to her, I noticed a previously locked door was wide open...and discovered that burglars had entered our room and stolen my handbag which contained all our passports, ID Cards, money, bank cards, telephones, medical documents and receipts, my diabetic tester kit and injection pens, my Kindle...everything of value that I owned!

What a night – we ended up with 26 policemen coming to the hotel, searching our room, the hotel grounds, the neighbour's property, and running down the road firing shots...craziness! Long story short, because of deteriorating health, we ended up not finishing the quarantine week but being taken to hospital in an ambulance sent by the Minister of Health, and spent a further week on the oncology ward before finally making it home after a month away.

Police investigations did not yield any results and so it seemed like I had no option but to cancel all documents and try to get replacements. My biggest concern was that Abi's UK visa is tied to my UK passport, so with that missing, she would no longer have a valid visa. I could cope with the loss of everything else, but not my UK passport. People stood in prayer with us and I was convinced the passport would be returned, but after 2 weeks it seemed like it wasn't going to happen. After visiting the girl who was still so ill, I decided to drive home to contact the British Embassy and report the loss of my passport and get it cancelled.

Just as I pulled out of the CRIB gate, I was flagged down by a woman who I had never met before, who proceeded to tell me that she thought she had something of mine...and then proceeded to pull my passport out of her bag!!! She had been driving round our neighbourhood trying to find me, and our paths just crossed right there. Not only did she have my UK passport, but both of our Burundi passports, Yellow Fever certificates, my handbag and the medical reports and receipts – her house worker had found them in the storm drain near the market. So much was stolen but the important things we got back. Hallelujah! I arrived home in tears, amazed at God's goodness, and 10 minutes later there was a knock at the door – someone else had found my drivers license and had come to return it! God is a miracle working God and His timing is perfect.



In 2021, I have spent many nights in the Oncology ward at our local hospital, and some days the situation looked hopeless, but here we are in May and for the last 8 weeks, we haven't had to go into hospital. My young friend is doing amazingly well – her appetite has returned, she is gaining weight, her hair is beginning to regrow and, whereas in March we thought she was heading for glory, last week she was refereeing a volleyball match and even played for a few minutes! We continue to pray for God to do what only he can do – His grace is sufficient, no matter what we go through.

So, life is never dull. It can be challenging, heartbreaking, frustrating, and enough to make you weep, but the one awesome thing that I hold on to, is that we never have to face it alone. Whatever we go through, we have a loving heavenly Father who promises He will never leave us nor forsake us. Some days, it has only been the knowledge of this Truth that has kept me going. I think for all of us, no matter where we are in the world, the last 18 months have been a challenge, but through it all, if we have walked it through with Jesus, we can look back and say “Thank you” to Him. We may not see His reasons in allowing all we have gone through, but we can know and declare Romans 8:28 with confidence:

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purposes”.

There are some things that we may not understand this side of Eternity, but we can rest assured that if God has allowed it, He can use it for our good and for His glory!

Thank you so much for your on-going prayers and financial support. Together we can change Burundi, one life at a time.

May God richly bless you and cause you to prosper in every good thing!

Much love

Honda, Libby, Bethany, Abigail, Josiah and all our extended RoH Family

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If anyone would like to support the work of Restoration of Hope this can be done via our UK registered charity, Hope in Burundi (charity number 1151062). The bank account details are as follows:

Bank: CAF Bank Ltd

Account Name: Hope in Burundi

Sort Code: 40-52-40

Account Number: 00024118

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