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11<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## NAHIMANA'S NEWS

Dear Friends,

How does time fly by so quickly? They say time seems to speed up as we age, but at this rate by the time I hit my 60's a year will seemingly pass by in a matter of days. On Sunday Abi, Josiah and I will be boarding a plane to head back to the UK in order for Abigail to begin her A-level examinations. It doesn't seem 2 minutes since we left England, so heading back is a bit surreal, but life happens and I have to be willing to change and move accordingly (not something I like, as a definite creature of habit). This is a family trip rather than a ministry visit, but if anyone would like to catch up with us, please send me a message and I will see what can be arranged. Seeing friends and drinking tea are 2 of my favourite pastimes. Honda will be remaining in Burundi to oversee the work here.

### Restoration of Hope:

**Christmas Celebrations:** The Restoration of Hope Christmas started on December 24<sup>th</sup> with the annual Christmas Eve outreach 'Bless the Neighbourhood'. 1400 children received sweets, donuts and juice and had a fabulous time with the older boys from our Hope House in Mutakura.

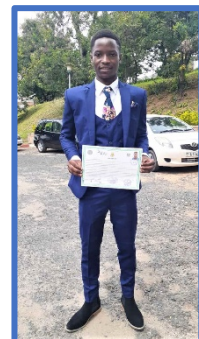


On Christmas Day 150 people gathered in Mutakura to share a wonderful Christmas meal, cooked by the staff and some of the boys from the Hope House. Celebrations also took place in Gitega, with Via in Kirundo and in Uvira with Pastor Joel. It is always a precious time to join together with friends, relatives, church members, and pastors from the churches we support through RoH.

**Via and the Kirundo family:** The children living with Via in Kirundo are doing well. They are all passing their exams at school, which is a fabulous achievement. Recently a number of the children have become ill with malaria, and some had to be hospitalized for a couple of weeks in order to receive intravenous medications, as they were too ill to take the tablets by mouth. Thankfully all have now returned home and are fully recovered.

**Uvira:** The children and young people we support who are living with Pastor Joel and members of his congregation in Uvira, DRC continue to make good strides forwards in both their education and life in general. One of the young men we support, Jodel, is about to finish a degree in Agricultural Engineering at university in the DRC.

**Education:** I am pleased to announce that Danny received high enough marks in the Y13 National Exam to enable him to go on to study at university. Vanessa, from our Hope House in Gitega is coming to the end of her final year at college and will qualify in the summer as a Veterinary Technician. Emery from our Mutakura Hope House, who I spoke of in our December newsletter applied for the position of Project Officer at an international NGO called 'Impunity Watch'. He passed the written test and interview, and is now on a 3-month trial, at the end of which he should be signing a contract – this is a phenomenal achievement in a country with such high levels of unemployment.



It is an honour to be able to finance those who had no hope of going to school to get even a basic primary education, get to the place where they are graduating with degrees in their chosen field and able to apply for jobs that will help transform both their own lives and the lives of those around them. Neither Honda nor I went to university (God had other plans!), so seeing so many of our Restoration of Hope family go further than we did is a real privilege.

**Spiritual impact:** As well as helping change lives through education, at RoH we recognise that God is the only one who can truly bring lasting change into hearts and lives in a way that will impact not only the individual, but also the nation. All of the children and young people at our Hope Houses are introduced to the King and His Kingdom values, and the majority have given their lives to Jesus as a result. We have 7 of our 'old boys' who are now in fulltime Christian ministry – 3 as Pastors in local churches, 2 as musicians in churches in Kenya, and 2 as evangelists both here in Burundi and in Canada. Many others take active roles in their church and community and are determined to live lives that make a difference.



It was wonderful to see one of our young boys, Mussa from the Gitega Hope House, getting baptized in January.

**The women's sewing project:** In March the first group of women graduated from our Women's Sewing Project in Mutakura and have now gone off to start their own small businesses. It is such a joy to see the difference in their countenance between when they started their training, as down-trodden women with no hope, and when they graduated - proud women equipped with the skills and resources to be able to provide for their family and work their way out of poverty.



In April the second cohort of 10 women started, and we look forward to reporting on their progress in the months to come. Empowering women is an amazing thing as they are the ones who hold families together

and can make a huge change in the community. Women, especially those who are widows and orphans have a special place in God's heart and we really sense His smile over the sewing project.

**The soap-making factory:** The soap-making factory continues to hit further challenges. After being made redundant from his job at the port, we had hoped that Dieudonne would take over and run the project. He has however found a job in Nairobi, Kenya, and so yet again, we are on the hunt for a suitably skilled and responsible person who can take hold of this project and really run with it. We know that God's timings sometime differ from our own, and trust that at the right time it will become clear who He has to oversee this section of our work.

## Challenges:

Sadly, life continues to be very challenging for the majority of Burundians. The fluctuating dollar exchange rate has caused a huge hike in the cost of living - even basic food items grown in Burundi have increased in price by 40-100%. When you in the UK can buy a mango in your local Sainsbury's that has been grown in Brazil and travelled almost 9000km to there, cheaper than we can buy one in our local market, that has been grown 5km down the road, you know that there is something seriously wrong. Imposed taxes and the high cost of transporting goods make eating fresh fruit a luxury that most Burundians cannot afford.

Although the country is at peace, people say that their ability to feed their families is now worse than it was during the war! These truly are difficult days for this country, and we are grateful that God has strategically placed us here and blessed us with supporters whose generosity enables us to feed the hungry and make a difference to so many people who would otherwise starve.

## Prayer Points:

1. The petrol crisis continues here in Bujumbura for the 17<sup>th</sup> month. Petrol supply is sporadic – some weeks there is fuel, while during others there are lines of parked cars almost half a kilometre long which may sit for days waiting for fuel to arrive. This causes an increase in bus and taxi fares, that puts already financially stretched people into very difficult circumstances. Fights regularly break out at petrol stations because people are so desperate to get fuel. Please pray that the government manages to work out a long-term solution to help the country get through this challenge.
2. Please pray that Honda manages to find the right person to oversee the soap making project.
3. Pray for the financial situation in Burundi, that somehow the government would make decisions that would enable the economy to stabilize, so that families can once again feed their children.

## Answered Prayers:

Thank you so much for your prayers over the last 6 months – we serve a God who answers prayer:

- We finally managed to open a new charity bank account with Metro Bank in the UK – details of which are at the end of this letter. We are so grateful for all the hard work and effort it took by all our trustees, especially Vic Ford and Sarah Ballard, to make this happen. You are lifesavers and we pray God richly rewards you for all the work you do in the UK to make everything we do here possible!

- It is now possible for private owners to register to use their bicycles and motorbikes in the city centre. They are still not supposed to carry passengers and cannot be used for business, but at least this gives some people the ability to travel around.
- Alexis crusade went really well and 44 people gave their lives to Jesus, and 2 were healed as a result of this courageous young man stepping out in faith. Alexis has now returned to Canada where he is training with Christ for all Nations (CfaN) in Toronto. Please pray that Alexis continues to see God do mighty things as he walks in obedience to the call on his life.
- Thanks to the generosity of friends and supporting churches, even with increased prices, we are able to continue to support 137 children in school and university.



## Nahimana Family News:

The last 6 months have been quite a challenge in one way or another for the Nahimana family. Healthwise things haven't been the best for me. Just before Christmas I contracted Coronavirus again and was isolated in bed for a week. Praise God, it didn't affect me as badly as the first time I had it, but it did leave me struggling with exhaustion again for over a month, and the brain fog, which had been decreasing returned...joy, joy, joy!

I have also been having many struggles with diabetes. As a type 1 diabetic for 28 years, life is never easy, but over the last few months I have struggled more than usual to keep my blood sugars stable, for no obvious reason. Thankfully when I get to see my Doctor in the UK, I will be able to discuss getting the glucose monitoring patches, which will hopefully enable me to gain better blood sugar control. Then I recently dislocated my toe and broke a bone in my foot, so have spent 5 weeks wearing a fleece-lined orthopaedic boot to give the bone an opportunity to heal. You can imagine how awesome that was in 34-degree heat. Praise Jesus the bone is now healing well, and I am back to wearing matching shoes. It's amazing the little things we take for granted! Me being me, I still continued to work out, but only upper body...and so my arms are now pretty strong! I'm looking forward to the day I can run and jump freely again.



At the beginning of last year, the government made new rules banning churches from meeting in schools or reception rooms because they were concerned about the number of non-registered churches springing up all over the city. Although fully registered, the church plant I am a part of leading had to move back into the main congregation's building whilst we searched for new premises. In April, after 10 months in the main church campus, we re-planted CLM

Muha out into a newly developing area on the outskirts of the city. It is exciting to be part of a new move of God, but there are also challenges. The road to get to our new campus is only 7km from our house, but depending on traffic and rain, it can take anything from 20 mins to almost an hour to get there. I am now a professional at dodging potholes and navigating along a road with water filled craters large enough to ground the car or hide a hippo! For now, our church meets in a tent, but the tangible presence of God

is such that I wouldn't swap it for a crystal cathedral, no matter what you could offer. Encountering His presence is all that matters!

**Bethany** is now coming to the end of her 2<sup>nd</sup> year at university. It has been almost 5 years since she left Burundi to head to England, so almost a quarter of her life has been spent living separately from us! As a parent it is wonderful to see your children growing into adults you are proud of. Bethany has just completed working her first night shifts at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham on her Critical Care placement. As someone who is very empathetic, dealing with the heart-breaking situations she encounters is not easy, but Bethany is learning to find her way through with God as her strength and song.



**Abigail** will begin her A-level exams in the UK on May 19<sup>th</sup>. She has 6 papers spread over almost a month and has been studying hard for last 2 years. I am amazed that Abi has managed to stay motivated with the on-line courses. Both she and I will be very relieved when these exams are over – thankfully Abigail is pretty chilled – I think I am probably more stressed than she is!

We are still waiting to see what doors God opens up for Abi to be able to attend university. Knowing that through our work with Restoration of Hope we have facilitated more than 15 young people to be able to attend university, we trust that our own daughter will not lack when it comes to needing funds for her studies. Please pray that we have wisdom to know which universities Abi should be to apply to, and in which country!

**Josiah** will have the joy of home-schooling for a month in the UK before sitting his end of year exams. He will then be travelling up to the Lake District to spend 2 weeks doing work experience at The Calvert Trust in Keswick, where my brother John is Head of Operations. The Calvert Centre 'enables people with disabilities to achieve their potential through the challenge of adventurous activities in the countryside' – this fits with Josiah's skill set as a caring, compassionate young man, who loves sport and adventure. My 3 nephews one aged 7, and twins aged 5 years are greatly looking forward to their big cousin's visit. I'm sure Jos will have a blast.



Honda is kept busy as usual overseeing Restoration of Hope, meeting with the poor and needy, and working in his businesses to try to make an income to supplement funds received. He is at present struggling with sciatica, but hopefully that will improve so he can get back to life as usual. Honda was recently awarded a Certificate of Honour by the local government for services rendered in the community of Mutakura where our main Hope House is based. We know we work for a heavenly reward, not the honour of man, but having his efforts recognised in a country where encouragement is not part of the culture, was a real blessing.

Thank you so much for all your prayers and financial support. We understand the financial struggles which are being felt all over the world, and do not take your generosity for granted. We are grateful to serve a

God whose name is Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides, and we trust Him to supply all your needs as you so generously sow into the needs here in Burundi.

May God richly bless you in every way and may He be your strength and song through whatever challenges you may be facing.

Much love,

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

**XXX**

If anyone would like to support the work of Restoration of Hope, our new charity bank account details are as follows:

Bank: Metro Bank

Sort Code: 23-05-80

Account Name: HOPE IN BURUNDI (HIB)

Account Number: 47530970