



RWANDAN UPDATE

Tom MacGregor September 2007



Dear Friends,

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has written to me over the last few weeks. It is really encouraging to know that you are thinking about me and supporting me in prayer. As you will see from the rest of my update these prayers have made a real difference and I have no doubt that my time here without them would have been a lot more difficult.

The flight over from the UK was long but went without any difficulty or delay. As some of you know I was a little worried as I left the UK because I had a one way ticket to Rwanda but not all the correct paper work to go with it. I had visions of being held at immigration or worse deported on the next available flight to the UK. I am pleased to report however, that despite my fears I was the quickest through the check in collecting my bags in record timing. Also I have since heard that all of the missing paper work has been found and there is no requirement for me to leave the country whilst my visa and work permit are processed. I should have all the correct documentation within the next 4 weeks, Praise God!

I arrived at 7pm (it is already dark at this time as the daylight hours are between 6am and 6pm) and Kigali airport was a bustle with activity. The air was warm and dusty and as I pushed through the crowds of people I was greeted by a group of my new work colleagues and an old Rwandan friend Moses (he sends his greetings to all who know him). We spent a few brief moments catching up and then I was whisked off on a 10minute drive to the guesthouse to settle in.



After a refreshing nights sleep I was up and at the office for my first day of orientation. The hours they work here are 8am to 4.30pm and they start each day with a short time of bible reading, singing and praying for each other, which I have found to be very uplifting. After a day of meeting the different members of the FH team at head office I was invited on a two day tour of the Southern Province which was planned for the following day. This province is the area (once my training is complete) where I will be working and it basically stretches from just above Gitarama all the way down to the Rwanda/Burundi boarder. During this tour I met with a number of the FH staff who are already working on Micro Enterprise

Development in this region, we also had the opportunity to meet with a number of the small businesses that they are helping. Basically what they are trying to do in this region is to encourage the people within the rural areas to move away from subsistence farming, as the land can simply not continue to support this with the level of population, and to take up other more commercial activities. The type of businesses that we visited and who are currently being assisted included Bee Keeping, Leatherwork, Metalwork, Basket/Handbag Weaving, Carpentry, A Sculptor, Pottery and a group of ladies who did sewing. These new enterprises are benefiting from the advice and training from experienced advisors who help them set up, obtain loans and run their business efficiently. It is likely that once my language training is completed I will be involved in a research and development team who will be looking at different ways to market and sell all these new products.



Due to the fact that I would ultimately be working in the Southern Province and to assist with my language training it was agreed that I would be better served living in that region rather than Kigali. Therefore after just one week in the capital I moved about an hours drive southwest to another guesthouse, this time in the town of Gitarama, which has been my home since.

Currently my days are taken up almost totally with Language training with the rest of the time spent on orientation and chores such as washing my clothes by hand. For the language training I have a work book with exercises to complete in the morning and then I meet with a tutor in the afternoon to go through what I have done and practice conversation. I am making progress with the language which is a real answer to prayer because, as many of you know, I am not naturally talented when it comes to this type of thing. So as to give my life a bit of variation and to put into practice some of my newly acquired language skills I am to start work shortly on a small research project which will be mapping the current Micro Enterprises and looking for opportunities to link them together.

Coming up next Month



The guesthouse I am staying in is lovely and will be the stage for an intensive three week training course which starts on 9th September 2007. The training is not actually specific to my job but is about the biblical basis for our work and about adjusting to living in a different culture and dealing with the associated ups and downs. The training



course is not just for people in Rwanda but for all new international staff (I believe there are 14 of us for this session) and therefore there are people flying in from all over the world.

Prayer Points

As you have probably realised I believe that prayer does really make a difference and it is for that reason I note below a few points, which if you get a moment, I would appreciate prayers on:

1. That I will be able to learn and use the language to communicate effectively
2. That I will find a house to rent - at the right time and in the right place
3. That I will be able to build strong relationships with the members of my new community

Keeping in Touch

I plan on regularly sending back newsletters however during my time here I have taken a lot more photos than appear here, unfortunately I am unable to include them all. If you are interested in seeing the rest I have downloaded them onto Facebook. By using Facebook it means that only people who have been accepted as my friends can view the pictures and therefore it better protects the people in the photographs from any unwanted attention. To access the pictures you will need to register yourself at www.facebook.com and then search for me (I am under Tom MacGregor). Once you have found me simply click on "ask to be friends". After I have accepted you at this end my profile and all my pictures will be available for you to view.

If you want to contact me you can do so via email at thomasmacgregor@hotmail.com or alternatively you can send old fashioned mail to me at FH Rwanda PO Box 911, Kigali, Rwanda.

I trust that this all makes sense and I thank you once again for your interest, support and prayers. It is all really appreciated.

Many thanks,
Tom