



March 2019

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is amazing how quickly things can change. In our last prayer letter, I shared about some amazing things that God is doing in Rwanda. In just a short time, however, a lot of things that have happened politically I feel it is important to share with you.

Uganda and Rwanda have a very interesting history. Most of the interaction from the past has been positive with the current leaders of each country sharing a friendship that goes back decades. Both countries are members of the East African Union, and travel between the two countries has been very easy for many people. However, over the last several months, numerous incidents have indicated that problems were on the horizon. About a month ago, Rwanda closed its borders with Uganda to all traffic. This is an unprecedented move that has caused great disruption in our area. Our house is located in the town of Kabale, about 20 minutes from one of the three borders. I cross this border very frequently and had just passed through the border several days before. There is a lot of construction that is being done there so the initial story was that the border had been closed to trucks for construction. Then reports began to come that Rwandan nationals were not being permitted to cross the border into Uganda. Just two weeks before this we had hosted a teaching week at our house attended by a dozen Rwandan men. Now they are no longer able to cross the border into Uganda. We are thankful that the border didn't close while they were here!

The reasons for this closure are many, and it is hard to get the truth – rumors of Rwandese nationals who are kidnapped and tortured in Uganda, restrictions on trade, Uganda's support of rebels to the Rwandese government, etc. The story seems to change every few days so it is hard to know what to believe. One thing is for sure, the peace that has been in this region for some time is now gone. Our town was a thriving area due to many people traveling through. Now much of the area is empty and many have lost their work.

Last week I traveled to Rwanda to be with a former missionary who had come to Rwanda to visit. I was able to pass the border with no issues because I am a foreigner, but I have never seen the border so empty. I am used to waiting in lines of hundreds of people, and I was one of a handful who was passing. Ugandans are able to pass freely, but many are not because they are unsure of how they will be treated in Rwanda. I am thankful that I had no problems passing, but I realize that this is a huge problem that could affect our continued ministry in the future. We are now a month on and nothing has changed. Due to international and regional pressure, it is very unlikely that things will escalate to open war, but there seems to be no rush to fix the situation. We now seem to be settling into a new normal. Currently I am able to cross the border for free, but this could end at any time. Please pray that I will continue to be able to travel freely and that this situation will resolve itself for the sake of those who are very seriously affected.

On a positive note, I was able to baptize eight more people out in Nyagatare. We also hope to finish reconstructing a house in the coming weeks. Once this is complete, we can then begin to spend the night at the church to begin to teach the new believers there. We are thankful that this border dispute has not affected our churches in any way so please pray that this will continue. In spite of all these issues, God is in control and we trust that He can and will work all these situations for His good.

In Christ,

David, Talia, Hope, Joy, Josiah, and Abigail Ruley

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