

from the

REGIONS BEYOND

Bruce & Becky McDonald

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AFRICA UPDATE: After being caught in the midst of a rebel Army attack in Bujumbura and the incredible journey into Sudan, our newsletter will be a little different this month. Next month I will give you some of the details about Sudan which included being on a mine filled road, having our truck washed away in a raging river, using bullets for currency and bringing the gospel to a heathen area with hundreds saved and a new beachhead established. In this newsletter, I will attempt to describe the events of the rebel attack in Bujumbura, Burundi. We want to express a special appreciation to those who stood with us in prayer during these events.



Rebel Army Attack in Bujumbura: Anytime we go to Burundi, it is "normal" for there to be fighting and to hear a lot of gunfire and bombs. In the midst of civil war that has ensued for over ten years, there is a tremendous need for pastoral training and to encourage pastors who live in this difficult situation day after day. Regions Beyond Director and Tallahassee Pastor, Tom Cabell and I traveled to Bujumbura to minister to pastors. Fighting began the day the pastor's conference started but was contained in the outskirts of Bujumbura. While this may seem odd to those that have not experienced this type of situation, contained fighting in Burundi does not present undue risk to us provided we stay in the "secure" zone in the central part of the city.

For four days we heard virtually constant gunfire, bombs and artillery both day and night. Although contained on the outskirts of the city it became apparent the rebels were advancing on the city. At this point we were unable to get a flight out of Bujumbura and I began to make tentative security plans as we realize that the US Embassy is not always able to respond. We always contact the US Embassy upon arrival and normally discover we are the only Americans known of in the country other than the skeleton embassy staff. The only other major embassy is the Belgian Embassy and I additionally advised them of our location and they agreed to help if possible.

The pastor's conference concluded Saturday at noon and we released the pastors to return home. During the week of fighting, the safest place for the pastors was to remain in the bible school building and wait for peace. On Thursday rebel soldiers bombed the electric transmission facilities and the entire city of Bujumbura was plunged into darkness. The fighting subsided late Friday night and the entire city was relatively quiet on Saturday. Early Saturday evening electricity was restored to the city and an eerie calm ensued.



Sunday morning at 3:00 AM I was awakened by the start of a very intense offensive into the central part of Bujumbura. Rebel soldiers had infiltrated the city during the darkness. The attack was intense and heavily concentrated with rockets, artillery, machine guns and mortars. Within an hour the rebels had advanced to positions just outside the small hotel we were in. At that point fighting was taking place all around us.

Genocide and War Have Decimated Ranks of Pastors and Leaders

"Our desire is to preach the gospel in the regions beyond" 2 Corinthians 10:16

Rebel Attack Continued: I travel with a set of two way radios so Enos and I can communicate and just after the attack started I called Enos, who was in his room. I asked Enos to meet me in the courtyard of the hotel. We then moved to a somewhat more secure room on the bottom floor so we would at least have some protection from the attack. By the time daylight came there was continuous fire within meters of where we were.

Around 5:00 AM I called the US Embassy on my satellite phone but they were helpless to come to the rescue with their very limited security force. Although we were only three or four very long blocks from the US Embassy, we were completely cut off as the main rebel force had seized the area between the hotel and the Embassy with the fiercest part of the fighting in this area.

I made the decision to make a run for the airport as we may not have been able to continue surviving where we were. We went out in the midst of the attack, got a taxi and took off through the streets at well over 100 MPH. It was amazing that we could even find transportation in the midst of everything, but where there is an economic opportunity there is someone willing to take a chance.

On the way to the airport, we essentially got into a small convoy of vehicles filled with expatriates and all going as fast as they could to the airport. We arrived at the airport which had been secured and immediately got through immigration to wait on a plane to carry us out of the country. Although the plane was delayed, it did arrive to a very relieved group of people.

"You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you....He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation." Psalm 91:5-10,15-16.

THE REGIONS BEYOND. . . Africa Children's Home . . . The new orphanage was opened on July 15. So far we have accepted seven children, several who were abandoned at the gate. If you would like to help financially with the orphanage, we could definitely use some additional assistance.
Sudan . . . The journey into Sudan was perhaps the most challenging trip we have ever undertaken. We will provide more information on this incredible ministry event in the next newsletter.
DR Congo . . . Please pray for the crusade in DR Congo. The crusade is in a remote yet heavily populated area. Bruce will preach the crusade which will result in the establishment of new churches. Becky will teach a seminar for women each morning. Additionally we will minister in Pygmy villages.



Overlooking Central Bujumbura From Hotel



Bruce McDonald & Tom Cabell with Pastors

Prayer Updates

If you would like to receive our prayer updates and "breaking" news, either visit our website to sign up for ministry news or send us your e-mail address.

www.regionsbeyond.org

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SOME ASPECTS OF THIS NEWSLETTER HAVE BEEN CHANGED FOR SECURITY PURPOSES