

Rema

Helping Burundians



Registered Charity Number 1118650

Gervais, Felibien, Frederic, Francois, Theo, Valentine, Isaac, Sally, Steve

(photo from June 2009 visit)

Nyembuye clinic officially open!

As trailed in our Spring 2009 issue of Rema News, the clinic at Nyembuye was officially opened on Friday 26th June at a ceremony attended by so many villagers that there were police (a little bizarrely) with machine guns, controlling the kids in the crowd. Burundi is famous for its drumming tradition, and the crowd was entertained by a lively and rhythmical troupe of drummers, one of which also demonstrated his dancing skills on his hands (since he didn't have the use of his legs). It was a joyous occasion, punctuated by another fine Burundian tradition—speechifying!

I lost count of the number of speakers the poor villagers had to endure in blazing sun, having already had to put up with the equally poor efforts at the Kirundi language from Sally and myself. After some hours it was time to leave them for a reception a few miles up the road and some food and drink. Oh, and some more speeches...



The really exciting part was the fact that we were able to see the staff at work, giving vital vaccinations to some toddlers. The first one we saw on the Thursday didn't even make a sound, and Diane and I were wondering if our own kids were a little bit soft, but the next one screamed the place down, which was a rather more familiar experience!

The "**Sharing Life Rema Clinic**" (named after the two main sponsor charities) is already the best equipped in the region, and people are walking up to 20 miles from all directions to receive treatment. Now we have to ensure that the staff are properly housed (more about this to come) and the dispensary is adequately resourced. The staff (Janvier and Japhet) are absolute stars and we are so fortunate to have them.

Steve Eyre

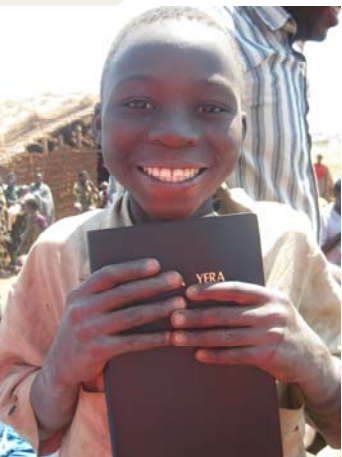
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"Give me a Bible!"



'Give me a bible' said a young boy, pushing forward in the crowd surrounding the pick up truck. We were unloading Kirundi Bibles. We were visiting the Mushara resettlement camp in southern Burundi close to the Tanzanian border. A consignment of 2027 bibles had been donated to Rema Ministries via supporters back in the UK,

to distribute to support repatriation and peace building work.

'Give me a bible' he asked persistently. 'You speak English?' I said, 'Yes' he replied. 'Can you read?' I asked? 'Yes' he replied. 'The bibles are in Kirundi – can you read Kirundi?' Again 'yes' was the reply. Turning to Felibien, director of Rema, I asked 'Can you see if he can read'. A Kirundi bible was opened and the attempt was encouraging. I gave him a bible and clutching it he just beamed!



The camp is for returnees being repatriated from refugee camps in Tanzania. They are brought here by the UN from camps in Tanzania before being moved on to their 'home' areas, but for many they don't know where that is, so they remain at the camp indefinitely.

As we gave out bibles, people came with the torn and tatty portions, the remnants of well-read bibles that had survived fleeing into exile, and many years (some since 1972) in refugee camps.

We went on into the small church, bulging with people praising and singing, a regular event though it was Saturday.



Thanks and praise were given for the new bibles, and the pastor told us a collection would be taken tomorrow for the Bible Society in recognition of their joy!

We gave out about 50 bibles that day, mainly to pastors, catechists, Sunday School teachers and those leading groups. Others were left with the pastor to establish those in greatest need, who could read and use the bibles. Many others have since been distributed mainly to returnees at conventions and evangelistic events across Burundi.

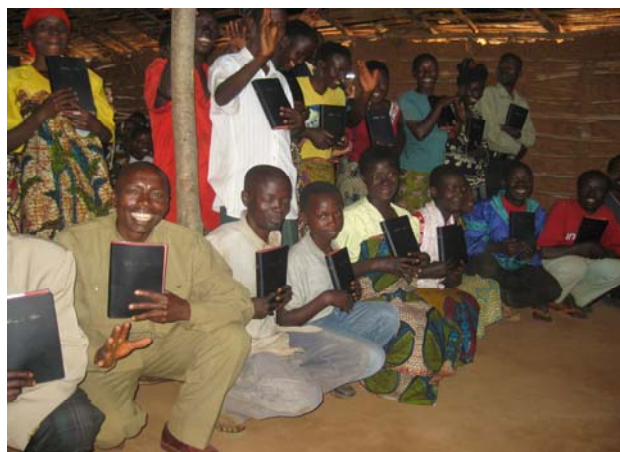
Sally Botteley

I have a complete bible

"God has visited me again, as I get this gift of a new Bible. I was not feeling comfortable as I was standing before people sharing the good news using a very torn bible. So many times, though I had no any other choice, I was feeling ashamed to use that bible. My torn and old bible was not complete. Now, look here I have a complete Word of God. It is amazing.

Thank you and thank you"

Pastor Nilela Sosten of the World Gospel Church.





The next phase of the clinic development at Nyembuye in Rutana province is well under way, with the site clearance for the much-needed staff accommodation. These amazing people are currently living in a converted tool shed from the clinic construction project, and we really need to get them some more suitable housing as soon as possible.



Power to the People

With no mains electrics, work at the clinic is restricted by daylight hours. One of our key objectives was to be able to install a generator which would provide light and power, not just for the clinic, but also for the staff houses as well.

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Honda (Europe), we have been able to ship a brand new unit in the container which left the UK in December [see separate story].

Although there are many suppliers of these items, it was really important to us that it had to be ultra reliable, and that left us with only one manufacturer.

So when we approached Honda in the UK a few months ago, we were quite delighted that they wanted to support this project.

A huge 'thank you' to Honda!

We'll be writing a piece for their in-house magazine in the spring of 2010.

Spring of living water

In conjunction with Mission International and Christian Engineers in Development Rema Ministries have been conducting a survey to explore the feasibility of exploiting a natural spring up on the hillside above the clinic.



This new source will not only supplement the stored rainwater from the clinic roof, but also supply the fast-growing adjacent

primary school and provide clean drinking water for the market area of the village as well.

According to the Consulting Engineers, the budget for this project is about £10,000.

More news to come on this later in the year...



Boxing Day came early to Sutton Coldfield this Christmas, as a mountain of items gathered over the year and stored in Sally's garage finally got boxed up and loaded into a 20ft container.

With help from Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church, piles of clothes, bedding, sports equipment, cooking utensils, educational books and stationary were loaded alongside some items for the clinic from Friends in Action International in Ireland, and a couple of dozen bicycles, a printer and the Honda generator. It's due to arrive in February.

Mercifully, rumours of several canoes to go in proved to be unfounded...

Clearing the garage

Phil hard at work



Website News

We're currently working on a new website, which will be for both Rema Ministries and Rema UK, which will be online early 2010.

This will help to simplify our internet presence, and will be a 'one-stop' site for anyone interested in what Rema is doing. We'll have features on the team, and news on current projects, with updates on visitors and photos to enhance our online identity.

Prayer Points

- For peace and security in Burundi.
- For the safety of the Rema team as they travel around the country.
- For wisdom for the Rema leadership as they plan the year ahead.
- For continued collaboration with other organisations, sharing resources of skills and funding for the benefit of the people of Burundi.
- For Rema's advocacy work over land issues with returnees and current occupants
- For resources for equipping the clinic and completion of the next phase of the building works.
- For a generous response to Felibien's visit in March 2010.
- For the safe arrival of the container.



Small, poor and with 8 million people Burundi lies in the heart of Africa, just south of the Equator. From Bujumbura on Lake Tanganyika, the land rises to fertile lands. Agriculture employs 90 percent of the people, with most being subsistence farmers. Since independence, Burundi has been plagued by ethnic conflict between the majority Hutus and the Tutsis. A cease-fire and new government in 2005 brought peace and the return of 500,000 refugees to their homeland.

All work and no play?



While some were straining every sinew to load the container...



...others were having a great time!

Stop Press!

Rema Ministries Director, Felibien Ndintore, is coming to the UK for four weeks from the 11th March, and we've put together a programme of visits to supporters, friends and colleagues around the country.

We know money's tight and times are hard, but they're a lot harder in Burundi than in the UK...