

KIBBUSE NEWS

Dear Friends and Family, greetings and much love in Christ:

We've just returned from a ten-day "whirl-wind" trip to Sewickley (Pittsburgh), Ashburn, Fairfax and Gaithersburg (Virginia and Maryland), Imperial (Pittsburgh) and Tavares (Orlando). We were blessed with wonderful weather for travel, both driving and flying, and really enjoyed wonderful visits with brothers and sisters-in-love on both sides of our families. We also enjoyed the fellowship and hospitality of a number of brothers and sisters in Christ other than immediate family. All were so gracious in sharing their homes, their food, their laughter and their encouragement. THANK YOU ALL!

Rejoice with us! My heels and hernia are healed! AND, this past week we confirmed reservations for our departure to Uganda! We will leave Grand Rapids on Tuesday, February 12 and arrive in Entebbe on the evening of the 13th. We'll stay the night in Entebbe. On the 14th we'll go to Kampala, where we'll do some shopping and spend an evening with friends. We may then spend a couple of days in Hoima, to get oriented and gather some essential materials for the school. After that, it's on to Nyamarwa and the KIBBUSE VOCATIONAL CENTER!

Today we were prayed for, along with other Madison missionaries, at each of the morning services. Tonight at 6 PM we will be formally commissioned, along with Troy and Faith Bierma, good friends who are on their way to serve in Bangladesh, at Madison's evening service. Thanks to all of you who join(ed) us for this special time.

We have postponed our departure two weeks to allow me to finish a Grand Application to the Federal Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs. A "faith-based initiatives" program, this particular grant provides a very exciting opportunity that could bring exchanges between Kibbuse students and faculty and the students and faculty of similar institutions right here in Grand Rapids (such as the Gerald Ford Job Corps or the Kent County Training Center). It could also engage the Christian Reformed Partners program, Ugandan entrepreneurs and local Christian businesses such as Fleetwood Manufacturing, a Holland school furnishings company that is already supporting our work.

Check out this part of the Grant Proposal prospectus: "The Bureau is especially interested in engaging socially and economically diverse groups that may not have had extensive contact with counterpart institutions in the United States and particularly seeks proposals that engage educators or other groups that directly influence youth in innovative ways." Many other descriptives have led me to decide to invest time in preparing this proposal.

I truly believe the grant could open a wide door of opportunity for students and faculty at Kibbuse Vocational Center to more clearly see hope for the future, while simultaneously helping American students and faculty to a fuller appreciation of the opportunities they already have. Please pray for God's favor and wisdom in this matter.

We are rejoicing and very thankful to all who have contributed to this mission. There is now nearly \$20,000 (beyond our personal support) available for our first year of work there. However, we have found that the price of diesel pickups is very high. Additionally, we can now see, with anticipated growth of the student body, that the school will have to install a modern septic system much sooner than we had originally anticipated. So, please, pray for God's provision for this and other needs as they come, in His timing, upon us.

FINALLY, many of you have been praying for us about what's to happen with our house on Home Street. Upon returning from our trip we were delighted to learn that Sean Baker , a third year Calvin Seminary Student who has been pursuing a vision for a community of seminarians who would live, study and minister in the inner city, held an open house while we were gone. Eighteen people, including two faculty members, came to check out the Home Street Home and pray about whether they would be interested in joining such a group! Another open house will be held this coming Saturday. Sean has created an application form and is asking interested people to submit applications for inclusion in this community of believers by January 31st.

Please pray for this exciting initiative. We would rejoice to know that in our absence the Home Street Home would continue to serve Southeast GR and our Madison community in such a wonderful way. In this and all evidences of God's blessing upon our lives and mission, we give hearty thanks to God and to you ALL, for your prayers, financial support and many expressions of encouragement.

Blessings and love,

Bob and Brenda