

### **Major Tragedy:**

We want to inform you about something tragic that has happened on our team and ask you to pray with us. On Friday, February 15 our teammate and friend was brutally raped. She had been in Soroti with us for two months to do some grass-root work for a new area of ministry our team desires to get involved in – counseling traumatized children. She was also here for the purpose of doing a vision trip to look at the ministry with hopes to come back and join our team in a year. She is a counselor and has a passion for helping traumatized children. We are extremely saddened by what has happened to her.

Since Friday our lives have been consumed with medical visits; police investigation; contacting International Teams, her home church and her insurance company; and caring for our friend. On Tuesday, Richard Ojola, the man who attacked our friend, was arrested. Our friend had to go and identify the man. She, along with us, is very concerned for the man as this is a high-profile capital case and he will most likely receive the death penalty. We have never faced something this hard. The whole thing has been terribly traumatic. Amazingly, our friend is doing fair.

Currently, Angie is accompanying our friend back home for two reasons: first, our friend is unable to function properly because of the side-effects of the anti-HIV drugs; and second, the trauma has not yet hit her and could at any time. At home, she will be able to have the care and support she needs. Her insurance company is covering all of the costs, including business-class airfare for both of them and Angie's hotel. It is very difficult for her to leave like this but we know it is best for her.

**A few things you should know.** First of all, WE ARE NOT IN DANGER! The attack happened at night and we do not go out at night. The people here have shared with us that it is dangerous being out after dark, which is why we stay in after dark. There is no danger in the day time; besides, we are almost always with other people. Secondly, we have been so thankful for the support of the other missionaries here, the medical help, the work and kindness of the police, our Ugandan co-workers, International Teams, her home church, her insurance company and the love of our neighbors and friends here.

### **Third, please pray with us:**

- for our friend and the healing she needs. Pray for peace as she says good bye to her friends here and as she faces everyone at home.
- that Richard is HIV negative and if he is positive that the medication our friend took will prevent her from getting HIV.
- for Angie and our friend's travels.
- for Richard Ojola. Although we know justice needs to take place, we also want to see this man forgiven by Christ. We hope to witness to him while he awaits the trial. We do know he was a child soldier and not right in his mind. This doesn't excuse him but it does make us sad. Jesus told us to pray for our enemies and that is what we need to do. Our friend was able to give him a note and The 4 Spiritual Laws in Ateso, and he did respond with a note requesting forgiveness from her and from God.

- for the future weeks as court matters need to be resolved (our friend may very well be summoned back to testify in court – they assured us her travel expenses would be paid for by the Ugandan government)
- for us as a team here: Josh and Mandy, Angie and myself, and our children. We have all been under a lot of stress. We are tired and weak emotionally and physically. In addition to this tragedy, our children have been sick. Grace now has dysentery. Avalien has been throwing up and keeping a fever. Our water was out, our power was out, our internet is in and out...these are all little things, but when we are already under this much stress it adds up. We are thankful we have each other.
- that the outcome of all this will be for the people of Soroti to come to Christ. We need to be a witness through this situation. The police thought we were crazy for not wanting him to die, for giving him a tract, and bringing him bread and water later that night after he was arrested. They wanted to know why we would do such things. They are amazed we want to share God's love with this bad man. We pray our witness in this difficult time will transform this community. God can do all things. We pray that His kingdom will penetrate this area to the point where nights will no longer be a time of danger, but of peace.

We know evil is in this world but it does not have the victory. God rules over all and is above all! He is here with us helping us and giving us peace. We are so grateful we can trust and believe in Him. We hope you do not over react from this letter, but we really thought you should know and be praying. Again, our friend is doing fair and we are safe. Thank you for all of your prayers,

(Our friend has read this and approved of all that is said.)

Please also pray for:

- Our students who are on a two-week mission trip in Karamoja, that people will come to Christ through their efforts and that the students may gain a greater passion for missions and for reaching the unreached
- God to raise up our friend to return or someone else to come to help mobilize the local church to counsel the many traumatized children and to bring about transformation in their lives
- An upcoming marriage course in March that we are organizing in which Paul Tameling is coming from America to teach local pastors and the Bethel Bible College students on effective communication in the Christ-centered home
- Bethel Bible College, that God will continue to provide the means for its continued growth and for godly wisdom among its leaders as I continues to grow

Praise God for:

- Basil and how God brought him out of Satan's grasp
- Our children – Moses is now crawling and loving it; Avalien is potty-trained and has given up her pacifier!
- All those who donated their cameras to help pastors and ministry workers earn money through photography – over 100 cameras were donated, including many SLR and

digital cameras! (please note that if you still have a camera that you would like to donate, hold on to it as there will be opportunity to do so in the near future)

· Bethel Bible College, for the vision and mission God has placed on the hearts of Francis, Patrick and John, for the students, and for how far God has already brought the college

Love, in Christ,

Tim & Angie Sliedrecht