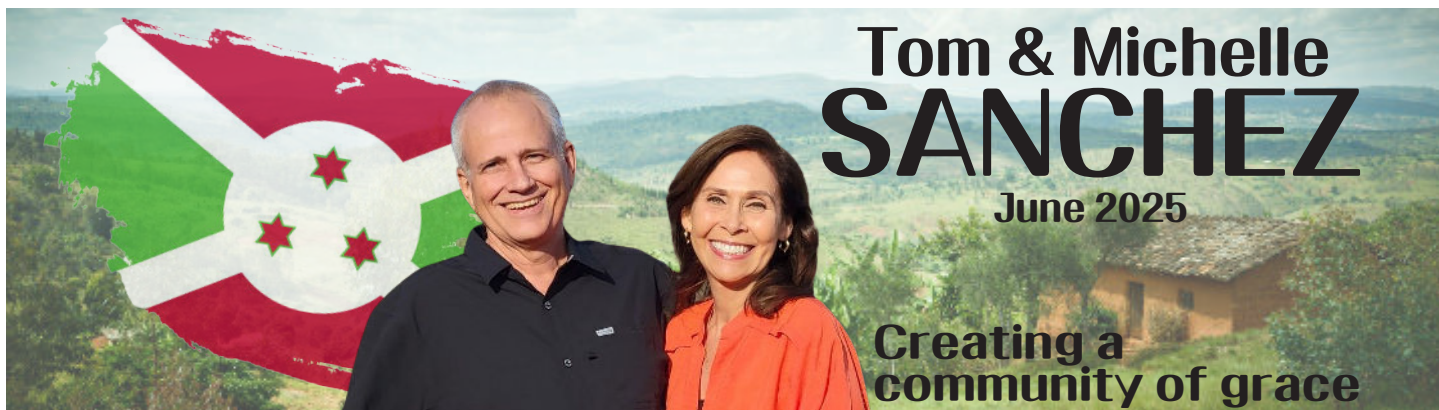




Greetings Prayer Partners!

Our current two-year cycle has come to an end, and as we write this, we left Burundi on June 1 for our US assignment. We are currently passing through Thailand to spend some time with Samara and Phil, and then to the Philippines for a visit with Simeon and Myra before continuing on around this side of the globe to the US. We haven't been with either of these couples for two years.

As you may recall from our previous letters, our main ministry thrust is theological education/discipleship. Since our last letter, we have completed the second and third modules of 1-credit courses of **Burundi Grace Bible Institute (BGBI)** in Bujumbura in February and May. In April, we held the first module in a new location at Nyanza Lac, a second teaching site in the southwest of Burundi. Nyanza Lac is a beach town that, like Bujumbura, borders Lake Tanganyika. It is a 4-6 hour drive south (depending on weather) on a rain-soaked, mostly mud & gravel road that is slowly being washed into Lake Tanganyika in certain parts. Waves splash against the roadside cliffs until cracks form, and with little warning, more of the roadway falls into the water below. We just pray as we go and try to stay to the inside of the cracks we can see. Traffic is down to a single lane for a few stretches on a winding mountainous section of the road, making it extra dangerous when there is oncoming traffic. We are thankful that due to the condition of the road, traffic is light. Perhaps this will help you visualize what conditions are like as you pray for our **protection** and **safety** as we travel.

The strategy of having the instructors travel to regional (rented) training facilities is intentional and allows the students from nearby churches to participate without the additional barrier of the cost of transportation over long distances. Students come from a variety of existing denominations and ministries to grow in their understanding of sound biblical doctrine at BGBI so that they can take back what they learn to "teach others also." As they study at BGBI, students often realize that what they previously believed to be correct and biblical was not biblical at all. Taking what they learn at BGBI, they can then persuade other leaders from the Scriptures, without pride or other attitudes that may hurt relationships. Our final discussions with students at the wrap-up were around evidencing the fruits of the Spirit of gentleness, kindness, goodness, and patience, as they do what they can to gently introduce better theology and practice in their home churches.

Guillain, who is a new and top-performing student, was concerned that he may need to find a church that accepts his new and improved theology if church leaders become belligerent and ask him to leave. Paul's example of shaking the dust off his sandals after receiving firm and threatening refusals to listen came to mind. Something Guillain had previously been taught is that if he does not speak in tongues, it is a sign that he may not be born again. His home church defines tongues as a heavenly language that members are encouraged to pray for and learn in special classes. Please pray for Guillain as he grows in his faith and for the strength to introduce better theology in his local church.



May Module 3 BGBI students in Bujumbura.



Preaching at Be Holy Church that participates in BCF outreach and sends members to BGBI Bujumbura.



Visiting and exploring collaboration with former Congolese colleagues.

Our hallway 'free medical clinic' continues to grow with more and more patients. The clinic workday begins between 6:30 and 7 a.m. every day except Sunday and typically ends in late morning. We have become known for the effective care of chronic wounds that people live with for months or even years. What began as treatment of neighborhood day-laborers is expanding to those who live a few hours away, who come by bus and on foot. Some come from distant villages up in the mountains for help with illnesses or wounds that have not resolved on their own or been successfully treated elsewhere.

Tom has hired his old friend and co-worker from our DR (Democratic Republic of) Congo days, Kitoka Luyuba, to take over the bulk of this time-consuming medical work. Tom does one day per week, the after-hours cases, and consults on complex or uncertain diagnoses when Kitoka is unsure what to do. We have contemplated opening a "registered" clinic in the neighborhood at a different site, away from our apartment hallway at our front door, but we need government approval with its onerous permissions and conditions. We are unsure whether we should try to tackle that after our return from home assignment without a larger vision for long-term continuity and sustainability.

Fuel is hard to come by at the pump... and yes, 'there's an app for that,' even in Burundi. Hours-long lines are the norm. Our partner missionaries, the Mwendapoles, are not allowed to buy fuel at all in Burundi because their vehicle has Tanzanian registration. We are still blessed through Tom's employee health work with Amazi Water, where they allow him to purchase a monthly allotment to split between our car and motorcycle. We remind ourselves that God is aware of every concern and uncertainty we face, and He has a purpose in it. He seems to want us to focus on BCF and BGBI outreach in the metro area of Bujumbura rather than extending too quickly into less populated rural provinces.

Michelle continues to teach academic writing at the Great Lakes School of Theology and Leadership (GLST). Their vision is to become an English curriculum, degree-granting institution, but they have a long way to go. Plagiarism has been an issue at both GLST and Hope Africa University, now that students are becoming familiar with AI and the use of ChatGPT to write research papers. Pray for this issue with AI as its use becomes more common among the student population and hampers true progress.

Prayer Requests:

1. Please pray for Kitoka Luyuba, asking the Lord to give him discernment as he treats and diagnoses new patients with some help from Tom, at a distance.
2. Pray for peace and stability in eastern DR Congo, where we had hoped for and planned more cooperation in ministry.
3. Pray that the BGBI students will review and retain what they've learned in class and will effectively teach what they have learned in their local churches.
4. Pray for us as we reconnect with friends and family, and build new connections as we travel to visit churches and take part in missions conferences during our US assignment.

We hope to see many of you in the coming months and share what the Lord is accomplishing through your prayers and sacrificial gifts to sustain us in ministry in Burundi. Thank you for partnering with us!

Tom & Michelle

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FACEBOOK: Join the group "Team Burundi"



Patients line up for the morning baraza clinic.



Scan QR Code to stay in touch!