

Deaf Ministries International

www.deafmin.org

January 2008



Dear Friends and Supporters,

With this first letter for 2008 comes our best wishes to you for a very happy and blessed New Year.

Having spent 7 weeks in Africa prior to Christmas, when I visited 10 countries, you will understand that my mind is still full of the impressions, excitement, horrors and joys of the visit. There is so much to say but not enough paper in this letter to express it all, so over the next few letters I will share some of them with you.

Prayer Points

- Pray for protection of our people in Kenya and for peace to be restored
- Give thanks for the new school building in Kenya
- Pray for the deaf children & their future schooling in Kenya
- Pray for the DMI conference in Egypt - October 2008
- Pray for new employment for David van Namen on his return to Australia
- Pray for acceptance of Deaf Action's vision within the wider Australian community



New - Immanuel School for the Deaf, Kenya

One of the main reasons for returning to Kenya this time was because of some issues we had at the school in Oyugis. When I left, our folk there were in the process of relocating and setting up the school ready to start again in early January in a new location.



Dedicated staff from the Kenya deaf school

What is happening in Kenya as I write though might put a dampener on our lofty plans and makes our problems so insignificant in comparison. Actually we heard after starting to write this letter, that 27 children turned up the first day, registered, then went home again due to the political uncertainty. They, and a lot more, will be back as soon as things quieten down. Kenya is in chaos, on the brink of civil war and, there is talk of genocide. It fills us with horror. Some of our workers are trapped and cannot get out of their homes, food is scarce, the banks are closed and our downtown church in Nairobi, is unreachable so is not operating at the moment.



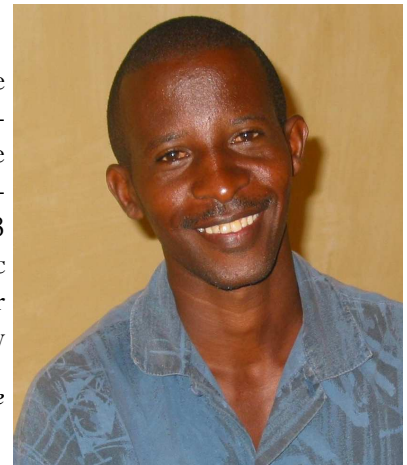
Daniel, serving as a missionary in **Tanzania**, is a Kikuyu whose tribe is the brunt of the wrath at the moment. Some of his family are sheltering in a police station, others are trapped in their houses and a nephew is in critical condition from machete wounds in hospital. The borders are closed so no way to get in or out and roads are blocked, so movement is very difficult. We hear of conflicts in far flung places and become a bit immune to it all but when it involves people we know and love it is much more real.

We have opened a special fund to help some of our deaf people in Kenya who have been displaced; have lost homes and livelihood, and some who have lost family members in the killings. The deaf are particularly vulnerable as they do not hear what is going on, cannot hear radio broadcasts and tend to innocently walk into danger unaware. If you would like to help with this extra-special need at this time you can send funds in the usual way designated for Kenya Relief or go to our home page at www.deafmin.org and donate on line.

I wrote some of this in our Christmas letter so if you think you have heard this before you are right. In this letter however, we have included a photo. Although I have been to Rwanda many times, this time the stories of the genocide and its effects, even today, have disturbed me greatly. The absolute depravity that man can reach is terrifying. Most of our deaf believers have suffered so much yet remain faithful, and joyful, in their service to Jesus.

Congo

Damascene is a DMI evangelist serving in the remote town of Cyangugu on the **Congo** border. We took a bus 6 hours over the mountains and through the jungle to reach him there. He still suffers flash backs and nightmares of his genocide experience. He has a scar across his back where he was hit by a machete wielding killer. His family was wiped out and his home destroyed. He hid for 3 months in the forest living on roots and water from streams or pools. A Catholic nun took him in and cared for him until the killings were over and he headed for Kigali. He was 16 at the time and has survived alone until now, yet is faithfully serving Christ in this isolated place.



Damascene

Jacob (middle) & Kasifha



My African experience was not all horror and I came away encouraged and uplifted by the faithfulness of DMI's workers and staff. 12 graduated from Bible School and have gone back to serve the Lord in the Congo, Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda. What a wonderful group of young people they are who were taught by a faithful, loving staff. I can't speak more highly of them. Our Burundian leaders too have such faith and vision starting workshops, churches, a Bible school and supporting a struggling school in the Congo and planting churches there also.



Hunger does not dampen their enthusiasm

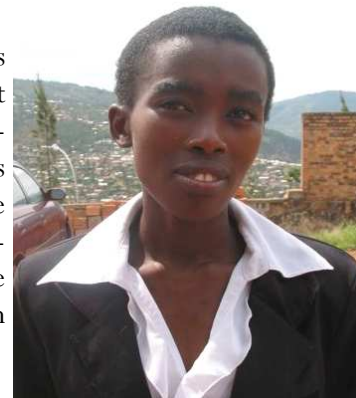
A team of 5 from Kampala, **Uganda** have been working in the Sudan in awful conditions and living with only one meal a day, to help the deaf there who have just come out of 21 years of war. I was humbled and flabbergasted as they had never told me of their needs nor what they were enduring until I saw it myself. I decided that I don't have time to get sick, or to die, as there is so much still to be done. Please stand with us during 2008 as we try to reach as many deaf people for Jesus as He allows us to.

Take a look at the PROJECT PAGE on the website too, as there are a few pressing issues that need to be met over the next few weeks. We urgently need about \$800 to get new beds for the Bible Training Centre in Bujumbura and more to help move the livelihood project to a better location.



Young (adult) Students

We talk all the time about sponsorship of schools and kids so that maybe, regular readers of our newsletters get a bit burned out of hearing it. Well I am sorry but, I will mention it again. We have quite a few young adult students who need our help. Some in Uganda are orphans of the Genocide - just little kids when their families were murdered. Now they need secondary education but, there are no family members to help. If you would like to take on one of these young adults then please let us know.



Evangelists

Likewise, we have young evangelists who need support such as those in the Sudan, Uganda and Congo, some of whom are working without pay or guaranteed regular support. Two of our Bible school graduates have just returned to the Congo, between them they need \$350 a month to live and work. Your help in supporting these wonderful people will be eternally appreciated.



*Raymond and his family are preparing to go as missionaries to the Sudan.
Would you like to be a part of their support team?*



*The new DMI work in Colombia, Sth America needs to raise \$700 per month to support the William Morda family.
This vibrant ministry to the deaf in Bogata is touching lives for Christ*

Although the work of DMI is growing very quickly and God is blessing it in many ways, there is still tremendous need. The US dollar exchange rate has dropped considerably so each county is actually getting less instead of more each month. No one has had a pay increase for over 2 or 3 years. We have 5 workers in Sudan with no regular support; 8 workers in Uganda with no salary but, still working; 6 in Rwanda with only pocket money; a school in Congo, with 45 kids, trying to operate on \$250 a month! Kids needing sponsors, buildings needing construction or repair, vehicles needed, equipment, teaching materials, and so the list goes on. And that is only Africa! We also have Asia, the Middle East and South America.

There are times when I am ready to freak out so need to be reminded constantly that this is God's work, not mine, and these are His people and that He will provide in His way. If you are part of His way in providing these needs then thank you for your response. We are so grateful.



Ntenda Church, Uganda

In November 2005, some of you gave money so that we could convert an old water tank into a church. It has been completed and is now in full use. The church is packed on Sundays and Wednesdays. Thanks to those who gave so much to make this a possibility. Fred, who pastors this church, sends his thanks also.

Uganda

HELP!!!! It is raining cement!! I walked through the dining room of our facility recently in Kampala to greet everyone sitting at the table eating lunch. Just after I passed through, the ceiling collapsed onto the table. Being overweight, every one blamed me for the collapse claiming that I shook the building as I walked through. Well, there might be some truth in it but, in actual fact, the place is falling down around our ears. Sparks shoot out from the wires, water pours through the roof and the garage, which is used for a Bible School class room, is now unusable when it rains.

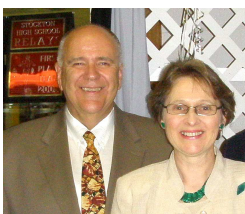
Recently the Berwick Church of Christ team, who visited Kampala, left over \$2000 to help with the repairs. A further \$2500 or so is still needed. If you can help towards this urgent need we would be so grateful.



It seems that all I have done in this letter is to talk about needs and finances and the like, which usually turns people off. Well we can't help it as our hearts burn to see the needs of deaf people met. Years ago when we first went to Korea to start what is now DMI, we were given some verses in Proverbs 31:8 and 9, which says "*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.*" I guess that is what we are trying to do, so hopefully you will not be offended but instead, catch the fire and the heart for this ministry.

Thank you to all who share in this work through your giving, prayers, encouragement and sacrifice. God Bless you all,

Neville and Lill



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