

In the Shadow - #8

Late last year, a young woman whom I will call “Amina” came to faith in Christ. She was baptized on Christmas Day and is now a member of the Gisenyi Church of the Brethren. Along with her two sons (a 2 and a 12 year old), Amina is faithfully attending and growing in her faith. She and her husband are both from a Muslim background. Once Amina professed faith in Jesus, he abandoned her and the boys. Her in-laws will likewise have nothing to do with them. Thankfully, her mother and step-father, though still Muslim, have taken them in.

Just recently, Amina gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. The delivery took place at the local women’s clinic/birthing center. Since Mama Timo doesn’t drive, I took her to the clinic for us to bring Amina and the baby home.

We met her in a room with three other new mothers, clinic staff and numerous family members there as support. Amina’s two sons and an aunt were there as well. I love this sense of community! We loaded everyone, along with the bedding and new baby supplies into the LandCruiser for the bumpy ride to her parents house.



We walked the path from the car to the house, passing neighbors’ houses and gardens, warmly greeted by everyone along the way. It is a very nice house in a growing “suburb” of Gisenyi, not far from where the church is located. Mama Timo happily carried the new baby as we entered the house and proceeded to Amina’s bedroom. I was asked to offer a prayer of blessing for the child and

family. It was, for me, a rather emotional moment and I managed to choke out a few words to the Heavenly Father before Mama Timo, Grace and I went back to the car.

At mealtime I asked Papa Timo about the birthing center’s charge for delivering a baby. He apparently thought that I wanted to help with the bill, as he assured me it was all taken care of (I’m pretty sure that he had paid it himself). I told him that I was simply nosy. Grace and my jaws dropped open when he said 15,000 Rwandan francs (\$15). His and Mama Timo’s jaws dropped open when I said that in the US it would probably cost \$15,000.

In telling this story it is not my intent to evoke sympathy for Amina and her family, nor to make it sound like life is so tough for Rwandans. My desire is to highlight the uniqueness of their experience. Life in Africa is indeed different than America. But regardless of where anyone lives, life has its challenges. When we face those challenges in the light of Jesus Christ, it is His Spirit that moves and strengthens us.

For the Master, Chris Elliott with the Church of the Brethren Rwanda.