

Baird Journal #5 – Water, Water Everywhere and Not a Drop to Drink

Yes, if you count Kivu Lake, water is everywhere, but there is very little water coming into most homes now and the lake water should not be drunk without much boiling and filtering, which people cannot do. Ed and Brenda have had no water for almost a week. They have been bringing 5 gallon jerry cans to our house to get water for them and one of those containers is for a family who would have no water at all without their help. Last night, our water did not come on until 2:20am; both Bob and I were still awake waiting for the water to come on. YIKES! I started a load of Brenda's laundry, then went to bed and FINALLY got to sleep. Bob stayed up to fill up the four barrels (we bought 2 months ago to prepare for this) that were half used.. He then washed most of the dirty dishes, then put a 2nd load of Brenda's clothes in and got to bed about 4am. He was just up for about a half an hour and has gone back to bed; I pray he sleeps for another couple hours. From several nights of this, he now has deep dark circles under his eyes, and I'm kind of tired too.

Normally, this kind of water rationing does not start until August, and lasts only 4 to 6 weeks. This year, in the poorest areas of Bukavu, it began in May and it finally hit us about a week ago. However, the water was coming on by around 9 or 10pm. One of the Regideso (name of the water company) guys who was out reading meters was beat half to death yesterday, had to be rescued by the police, then taken to the hospital – don't know if he lived or died. The people are so angry. All day long we see lines of mostly children (some women – but mothers have several children they cannot leave or they sell stuff in the markets) walking to wherever there may be a water spout with the valve open and running. Everyday fights break out because people try to cut in line. They are getting pretty desperate and have decided to have a demonstration downtown today – we pray it does not break out into violence.

We are going to town today – after the demonstration and if it is peaceful – to see if we can buy anymore cases of bottled water – we can only go to places where we are sure they are honestly selling clean water. Only the “rich” can afford to do this. Our guards drink water here while they work and drink either tea or marakuja juice and get a good meal. I have also begun to send some food home with our workers to help out, like a bag of beans or a loaf of bread, or some of the greens that grow in our yard that we would definitely not eat. They practically cry out of appreciation. This really helps out their families – those who have jobs must be able to keep working, which is hard enough during what is considered to be normal times.

Please pray for the following:

- 1. That God would deliver the people of Congo living in the Bukavu area by giving them good drinking water.**
- 2. That God would protect us ALL from the terrible dust cloud we live in day and night.**

For the Lion of Judah,

Bob, Dawn and Elizabeth

PS We are all well now and have been for more than a week! YEAH!!!