

12 June 2018

Alison writes: We are delighted to announce the birth of our beautiful daughter, Grace Geraldine Ruhamah on Monday 4th June at 17.59h, weighing 10lb 7oz (4.72 Kg).

Living in Africa, has taught us that the meaning of names is very important. For us, *Grace* ultimately reflects the heart of God towards us—His paying the price for our sin for which we should have been condemned. We are also inspired by the life of Grace Grattan Guinness (the second wife, after he was widowed, of the famous revivalist preacher and missionary educator, Henry Grattan Guinness who is a very distant relative of Paul's. Coming from a non Christian family myself, I am inspired by the generations who have gone before Paul in the Guinness family. Grace, in many ways led an unconventional life—being brought up



in the Plymouth Brethren, both valuing and rejecting aspects of that upbringing in her own walk with Jesus. She was a feminist who accompanied her husband in his final world preaching tours before she was widowed. She then brought up her two sons alone, went out to work and was a thinker, writer and speaker.

We also give thanks for Grace Guillebaud, who reached out and befriended Jeremy when we moved back to Burundi. We will miss having her and the Guillebaud family as our neighbours dearly.

Geraldine was the elder daughter from Henry's first marriage who went out to China as a single missionary. Her father had been friends with James Hudson Taylor, the pioneer missionary to China. She later married Taylor's son, Howard and they spent most of their life as missionaries in China. She was a dynamic woman in leadership who wrote many books about the China Inland Mission and spoke widely. She was particularly loving and supportive to her step mother, Grace.



Ruhamah—Paul felt God speak to him from Hosea 2:23 where God says, "I will show my love [ruhamah] to the one I called 'Not my loved one. I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'." In Romans 9:25 this verse is quoted referring to the Gentiles, similarly in 1 Peter 2:10. Paul feels it's a very beautiful poetic statement that the hard times and judgement of God is changed into a blessing. It is also a prayer for what we are about—that African people, who may think they are not loved or important, will be part of 'my people' who are loved, and we trust in bringing in God's final harvest.

Our rather traumatic week

Paul writes: Driving home from our 5 days' in hospital, Alison reflected that it had been a maturing experience. The moment of hope and joy had been mixed with disconcerting setbacks. The pain of labouring till 9 cm dilation, still leading to an emergency caesarean section were at least outcomes we knew might come. Having our baby whisked away to be observed in the special care unit was not as disconcerting as when Jeremy was born. What shook us was the unexpected. In the small hours of the morning, Alison's growing nausea became vomiting, though she had nothing to bring up. Roused from a deep sleep, curled up on the floor, I felt helpless, desperately knowing that Alison shouldn't be retching with stitches in her stomach. The midwives did their best but without knowing what was happening it was easy to imagine the worst. That was when we needed faith – in the medical system but also in God's overruling. The next day was a long one but it was easier once we knew from the doctors what was happening. Alison's bowel had gone into shock – on strike (paralytic ileus) – liquid that could not go down had to come up and exit through the mouth. Having our baby back and watching her feeding so calmly and easily where Jeremy had struggled brought our joy back. The next morning with Alison recovered, I left to take Jeremy swimming. He had managed so well his first time of being away from

both of us for so long. At the same time, Alison suddenly took a turn for the worse. Headache, back / neck ache and hearing loss – all this much worse when she stood up. Sitting alone in a wheelchair waiting for a hearing test that didn't make sense, Alison felt overwhelmed. By the time I returned, things were clearer. These were all classic symptoms we were told of a rare epidural complication – a post dura leak. The epidural given when Alison was in the last throws of labour contractions had slightly missed its mark. The hole was now causing spinal fluid to leak. Now we were being offered what seemed like a strange solution – another epidural but this time putting some of Alison's own blood into the space. Alison's medical network assured us that this was a reliable procedure

and so it turned out. Within seconds of the procedure, Alison's hearing returned and her head and neck ache subsided. Dr Gowrie, we were told was a world leader in this procedure and the hearing test which he had developed to diagnose it. Not for the first time we reflected that we were glad this was not happening to us in Burundi. It was not just the medical and physical dangers that caused concern but the sense of uncertainty in the face of seemingly unconnected setbacks. Our faith in God, I can testify, is strengthened by its exercise and normally not in a manner of our choosing. Marriage is strengthened as much by the perils faced together as by the joys of bringing up a new life. *Please pray for Alison's complete healing and restoration.*

alison.paul@swissmail.org

WhatsApp AG: +44 7979 553436; PG: +44 7708 901817

UK address till end of August: 40 Thele Avenue, Stanstead Abbots, Ware, Herts SG12 8JD UK