

# Rwanda Direct Newsletter

## Spring 2024



Dear friends of Rwanda Direct,

We're back from Rwanda after a full and fruitful 3-week visit. Pippa, Glen and Cathrine joined Paul and Jean, and all had a wonderful time. Pippa summed up her thoughts after the visit:-

"I went to Rwanda with two hats on. Firstly, to be honest, I wanted to go 'home'. My parents were missionaries in Rwanda and Burundi over 50 years ago and I grew up there. It was moving to see my old home in Shyogwe and see the long remembered and beautiful country that I still consider my homeland.

Secondly, as a supporter of Rwanda Direct, I was interested to see what that support means in practice. It is easy to think of giving to a charity in monetary terms and yes, God has used and is using the money that is given in useful, moving and spiritually fruitful ways. But money is only part of the story. I felt that our interest and understanding and prayer were equally important to the people we met; the welcome we had and the generosity of those we spent time with was humbling. But there was more. One of the words that kept coming up over the three weeks is the word "holistic". This trip has helped me realize that our gospel has too often just preached redemption of our broken relationship with God. Wonderful though that is, Jesus, by His death and resurrection also made it possible for broken relationships between men and women, between man and the earth to be redeemed, mended, made new. I saw that happening in Rwanda and it made me hungry for more."



*The team outside Stephanies re-roofed house – Byumba, funded by Rwanda Direct Covid support grant.*

### Learning

It is four years since we visited in 2020 and Covid hit us and them. On this recent trip our relationships were renewed and Rwanda Direct's unique support was confirmed as important. As our Facebook post said - we had one simple question - what is the future of Rwanda Direct? One simple answer - **God still has a place for Rwanda Direct!** Why?

1. Because in Rwanda established **relationships** are so important, breaking them causes deep hurt.
2. The **value of the little** that Rwanda Direct gives does far more than we can ever imagine. This was made very clear by our partners.
3. Our focus on **prayer** is vital and has indeed led us throughout the 22 years since we started. This too is very much appreciated by our partners.
4. It now 30 years since the genocide. The underlying spiritual evil that enabled that through sin, is still there, and only the church united has the means to deal with it through a clear proclamation of the holistic gospel, in words and deeds. Further, there are new western evils infiltrating society, consumerism etc. We need to **stand together** as one universal Church to **fight the evils** that besiege their and our world.

## East African Christian College (EACC)

Has a new dynamic leader: Papias Musafiri Malimbe. He is a former Minister of Education, and Vice Chancellor of Rwanda University. He wants to help this relatively new college become a university. Already the new Nursing and Midwifery Faculty is deemed one of the best in Rwanda. 240 student midwives arrived while we were there, with government and US Aid scholarships. The Theological Faculty, that Rwanda Direct supports, is thriving and the Tearfund Country Director Emmanuel Murangira is teaching there to maintain and grow the holistic theology being taught.



## Scripture Union (SU) Rwanda

Appolinaire Hakizimana the General Secretary of SU has many plans. On site a 2-storey coffee shop has been built and is awaiting permission to open. This will provide more income generation in this wealthy part of Kigali. In the Covid period Rwanda Direct helped SU start employing a specialist Hospitality Manager. As a result the income from the Hall we helped build (started 2014) has paid dividends. The vast bank loan needed to finish building the hall will be cleared this June! Freedom! Praise the Lord!



Meanwhile the schools and colleges Christian Union work continues. Umusomyi Bible reading notes are now online as well as being printed, so can reach more people. A new project for very poor girls, is under way in two places, Muhanga and Kayonza. These girls are often forced into prostitution and then thrown out of home as they have a baby. SU is providing a home, care, teaching the Gospel and practical skills to some of the most marginalised. Other projects are in the pipeline. One in particular; a camp site with supporting buildings seems crucial for the growth in evangelism for the younger generations. Funds are very much needed!

## Kigeme Diocese

The last newsletter featured Kigeme. We saw much of what they reported in action. Due to the very large increase in giving to Rwanda Direct during the Covid period (annual giving over two years up from £15,000 to £60,000; praise the Lord!) we were able to support Bishop Assiel with a grant of £6000 for catechist training. What a difference that has made! We saw evidence of this in the parish of Gatere where Josephine had been trained. She described how the Catechist Training had helped her.

- Helped her to understand how going out to the families and community (not staying in the church) is a better way to help people to receive Jesus Christ.
- Learnt about good governance for the church – can now act as an advocate for the church with the local government.
- Increased respect for herself and for others.
- Learnt how to teach the bible, preach sermons.
- To encourage the use of Umusomyi bible reading notes and to pray.
- Calls people to prayer and to the healing ministry. “Everyone should pray and read”.
- Ministry of Social affairs – teaching care of families, good health, encourage use of toilets etc.
- Capacity building and resilience.
- Learn about giving to the church too.
- Climate change – majority are farmers. Being taught how to adapt methods so still be able to earn and support families.



Much of this is delivered through 6 Grassroots churches of about 12 families each. Holistic Theology in practise! The Church of God is growing and making a difference in people's lives in a big lasting way! Oh, and we didn't get a good picture of Josephine as she was always serving, caring, looking after everyone else, a great example of godly servant leadership.



*Welcome at Gatare, led by Josephine*



*Walk led by Josephine to site of new church*

## Gahini Diocese

The immense challenges that Bishop Manasseh faced when he took over are diminishing as the clergy and Christians now work together in love. Again, Rwanda Direct's support through the time of Covid made a fantastic difference. The clergy are now motivated and in a good relationship with the Bishop and Diocese. Most of the core Diocesan staff have been able to do a Postgraduate Diploma in Theology, using grants from Rwanda Direct. They bring a wide range of skills to their work.

A trip with the Bishop to the parish of Karama near the border with Uganda, saw a large confirmation service with more than 200 being confirmed. Over 70 people responded to the sermon, coming forward for prayer and release from fear and evil spirits. The Gospel is alive and powerful, and still needed so much in this land of suffering and hope.



## The Visit and Outcomes

This visit allowed us time to have good conversations with all our partner Bishops and the leaders of SU and EACC as well as some national Christian leaders such as Archbishop Mbanda and Emmanuel Murangira, Director of Tearfund Rwanda. There are great advances being made in Rwanda; there is increased wealth and Christians are clearly being generous. However, there is also great poverty and potentially increased marginalisation, particularly of large groups of young people. Drug use is going up. Marriages are failing. Unemployment and hopelessness in the young are increasing. The girls are particularly vulnerable, and we heard this not just from SU, but also in Kigeme, Byumba and elsewhere. Holistic Theological Education at all levels is still the number one priority, followed by effective holistic evangelism that engages at all levels.

Archbishop Mbanda reiterated his priorities: -

1. Equipping Leaders
2. Evangelism and Discipleship
3. Early Childhood Care
4. Youth
5. Literacy, Management, accountability at lower levels
6. Sustainability



## The Challenge

Can Rwanda Direct, with God's help, respond to these needs by increasing our support? Here are some of the current needs expressed during our time in Rwanda:-

- Scholarships for Pastors, particularly in Gahini Diocese using the Postgraduate Diploma in Theology route. Need from £3000
- Follow on Catechist Training in Kigeme seen as vital to further develop the grass roots growth of the Church. Need from £6000
- The evangelistic outreach of SU to the young, from the marginalised through to the university students. They have a big vision. To buy the land for the campsite alone need £45,000
- Byumba Diocese and their care for the poorest children in the Hannah Project. Increase to £10,000/annum.
- Scholarships at EACC, particularly for the poorer dioceses, for the three-year Bachelor of Theology course. £2500 per scholarship

We will report further on this visit in the next newsletter. There is so much to share!

## Praise and Pray

- Praise God for the fulfilling of so much at Scripture Union – pray now for their resources to increase both at home and from overseas to meet the Gospel needs, particularly for young people in Rwanda.
- Praise God for the transformation in Gahini Diocese. Pray for the resources for more Pastors with a degree qualification.
- Praise God for growth at EACC and the scholarships that RD has been able to give. Pray for new Principal Papias, and for Godliness to be at the centre of all that is taught and lived on campus.
- Praise God for the impact of the Catechist Training in Kigeme. Pray for more so that the Kingdom of God can advance!
- Praise God for what has been achieved by Him through Rwanda Direct. We simply pray for More!

## PRAYER TIME

Do join our **Zoom prayer meetings** most 1<sup>st</sup> Friday evenings of the month at 8.00pm. We hope to have Rwandan Partners join us from time to time so that we can hear directly from them.

Barbara Willingham will send you the Zoom details and dates, once you have told us you are interested! Contact email details below.

## Newsletter Circulation – Spread the News Further!

If you know of others who may be interested in helping the Church in Rwanda, do share this Newsletter with them and suggest they get in contact with us as below.

All data is stored with due regard to GDPR legislation, so we will not share contact details with anyone without permission.

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