

# Rwanda Direct Newsletter

## October 2020



### Where is God?



What a question to ask at the start of this newsletter! Yet it is a question that is vital for all of us to ask as we continue through this season of Covid-19. That applies to us both here in the UK, and also in Rwanda. So much is being shaken, our very systems are under stress and our behaviours are reflecting that in the UK. In Rwanda the Church is in a desperate situation. The dioceses, have had to lay off most of their central staff as there is no income. Some dioceses have massive debts on items such as cathedrals that they cannot now pay off. Out in the parishes very few churches are open for use, as they cannot afford the expensive sanitary kit (hand wash- stands)

required to open legally. Giving to the parish churches can only be done via smart phones which few people own, so the pastors have no income. Some have faced food shortages, and for some their homes have been under threat as they cannot pay the rent. These factors have meant that there are reports of many people 'backsliding'. God's Church is being tested. However, now Rwanda is virtually free of Coronavirus, the number of cases is mostly in single figures with odd flare ups that are quickly dealt with. The government has done so well in managing the pandemic.

So where is God in all this?

2 Chronicles 7. 13 God speaks to Solomon and describes where we are.

1. When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, (droughts and floods - climate change)
2. or Command locusts to devour the land (diseases damaging our ecosystems e.g. ash dieback, banana Panama disease, oh and locusts are not far away in East Africa)
3. or Send a plague among my people (Covid-19).

Doesn't it describe the disasters that face the world? So, God tells Solomon what to do in verse 14, If my people, who are called by my name (that's us and our Christian friends in Rwanda)

1. Will Humble themselves (lament, submit ourselves to God, acknowledge our need, be broken)
2. And Pray (give God time, space and priority)
3. And Seek my face (seek the very character, presence, person of God – contemplate and learn)
4. And Turn from their wicked ways (repentance – metanoia, that change in will that leads to a radical reshaping of behaviour and belief)

Then God promises these 3 things will happen:

1. Then I will hear from Heaven
2. And I will forgive their sin
3. And will heal their land.

#### **That's what we need in Rwanda and in the UK!**

Here in the UK the Church is facing monumental challenges to its continuing existence. Prevailing attitudes in society have degraded our lives and understanding of God and creation. Likewise, around the world these assumptions have infected thinking and belief. The modernist and neo-liberal creed of competition driving progress and growth has infected Africa as well. Now we need to take heed of God's words and seek Him above all else: that seeking involves action by doing the work he calls us to do, as exemplified in Jesus's earthly ministry.

# God in Action

Rwanda Direct has indeed seen God in action through His people. So far this year we have seen income of over £56,000!! We have sent out over £48,000 and further grants are being prepared.

**God has been in action** Thank you for your generosity. In our last newsletter we shared some of the stories; since then we have continued to give to those most in need amongst our partners. We have a strong sense that we should not be holding reserves, and like the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17.7ff) trust God to refill our pots. Here are some of the things God has enabled in the last five months.

## **Scripture Union** - £8500 sent

Revd Canon Jean-Baptiste Bugiruwenda, the Director writes:

‘Warm greetings in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. On behalf of Scripture Union Rwanda Board and staff, we are very grateful for the support we received from Rwanda Direct during the current year. You have been very gracious to us, accompanying us during this critical time, when we are crossing the crisis due to COVID-19 pandemic. It was too hard for us, and you may remember that we have been forced to suspend 14 members of the staff attached to the SU guest house. The suspension was supposed to last 3 months. Now they are over, and the measures against the pandemic are tough.

We thank you very much for the support of US\$ 10,288.26 we got as a grant. From May up to July, this grant helped us to pay the salaries of the staff staying at work, but also it helped us to provide food to those who were suspended. We thought that we must look for another way of reaching the children, and up to now, we are using one of the local Christian broadcasting radio to preach the gospel to them. It has been successful and we would wish to continue, and even go further, by opening other radios, online channels like YouTube, Facebook. There are other miscellaneous expenses like water and electricity which have been covered.

We still need your prayers, as now we are forced to stop the contract with the guest house staff. The situation is bad, and we try to avoid any conflict which may lead us to the court in the future. Only people involved in SU mission will stay with us.’

## **Gahini Diocese** - £4500 sent



Bishop Manasseh Gahima writes:

‘Warm greetings in Christ's name. My prayers to you and all God's family in these rather hard times. The Church in Rwanda is still alive but running in very difficult times. Covid 19 has really hit the Church. Here, houses of worship were pronounced open early August but practically very few are open. It's hard to get the percentage. In our Diocese, we have 277 churches but only three are open. One is our Cathedral and two other parish Churches in Nyagatare. Even these that are open, offerings are strictly to be done online yet only a handful of our Christian's can be able to do

this. This period has been too long (over six months) that many Christian's have backslidden, it's only God to revive his Church.

On the welfare of Pastors, it is really hard. You know our Pastors are transferred regardless of their personal homes, and they depend on givings from Christians. These days are really harsh to our Pastors. Food is a problem and worse still, the months of October to early December are characterised by food insecurity in almost all families because planting starts in September and early yields are expected in December. Any help at this time would really be of great relief to our people. Again, we ask you to pray for us so that Covid pressure reduces otherwise the situation will get even worse. ‘

## **Kigeme Diocese** £4500 sent



Bishop Assiel Musabymana has just written to us: 'Greetings from Kigeme Diocese in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. I hope that you are still protected under the powerful hand of our Almighty God and you are still free of Covid 19. The Kigeme Diocese is so thankful to you all how you continue to stand with us during this Coronavirus Pandemic. May God continue to protect and bless you. As the normal time continue to come slowly by slowly, few churches have resumed their Sunday services. I realize that we are in need of quick training of our chapel leaders called Catechists. They are also most affected by Covid 19, some have stopped from working and those who remain they are in need of wakening and be revived.'

## **Byumba Diocese and Hannah Ministry** £6500 sent to Hannah, £6500 to Diocese

Robert Tayebwa, Bishop Emmanuel's Executive Secretary writes:

'We are however grateful to write to you today presenting to you the activities that were done using the support that you extended to us since April. A total of sixty three Reverend Pastors together with their wives received support in two shifts, King Salomon Academy staff also received their social assistance during the entire lockdown, Staff of KICTC a technical school for the diocese also received the social assistance at-least once and then the Diocesan Administrative workers who had been temporarily dismissed due to inadequate money as the Diocese.

Due to the heavy rains of April and May, some of the people became homeless due to floods that washed away their homes, in a process of finding a way to assist them regain their homesteads, the diocese firstly offered them shelter in the diocesan schools and they were after provided with iron sheets to help them in the re construction of their homes. (this from Rwanda Direct funds - Ed)

Regarding with Hannah Ministry, the children are just fair because we had got a challenge ever since COVID-19 where the children would take the meals provided to be prepared from their respective homes however sometimes they would be irresponsible and would not prepare them in a way that would favour their diet though some of them stay with their guardians who don't really care about their health. We are however negotiating with the local authorities so that they may permit us to resume with preparing their meals from the Hannah Ministry Center. The meals that were provided under your support have really done a very good work and we assure you that there is indeed a testimony from Hannah Ministry Children.



## **Rwanda Direct Finances 2019**

As we reported this time last year for 2018, we thought you might like to see a summary from our 2019 end of year accounts showing how the money you give is used:

**Income in 2019** £15,316 plus £15355 brought forward

**Outgoings to Rwanda** £17,349.

Thus, we had a surplus at the end of the year of £13,322 which was just as well. We didn't know that Covid-19 was coming!

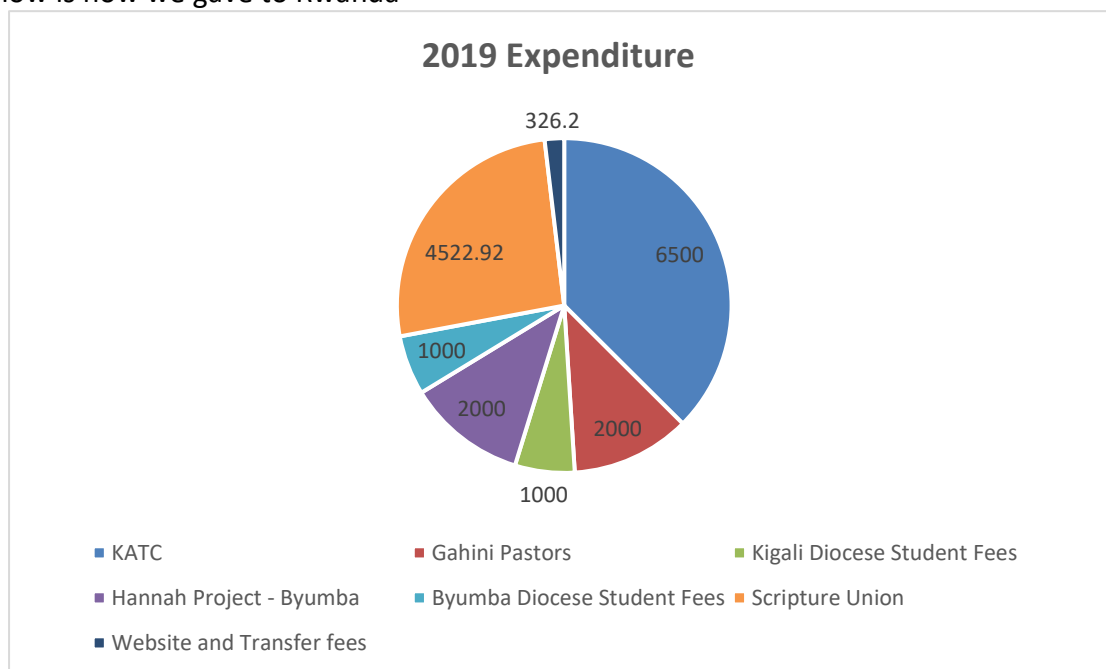
**Restricted Giving** donations are always sent on to the specified recipient.

**Gift Aid** is claimed on all eligible donations.

We sometimes act as a channel for funds to Rwanda from other organisations so in 2019 £2000 was forwarded in this way and shows in Rwanda Direct accounts.

**Admin Costs** specifically covered by a donor – only £326, covering the fees for the website and Bank Transfer fees. Thus, 100% of your donations go direct to the Church in Rwanda.

So below is how we gave to Rwanda



## PLEASE CONTINUE TO GIVE AND PRAY

**We appeal to you to go on in your acts of love**

Please contact us through the website ('Pray Give Visit' tab), email, phone, PayPal donations on Facebook if you feel God is calling you to help. 100% of donations go direct to the Church in Rwanda. Admin costs are covered by trustees.

Bank details for gifts:

Lloyds Bank, Sort code 30-94-55, Account No. 69843168, Account Name - Rwanda Direct

### 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.

Website – [www.rwandadirect.org.uk](http://www.rwandadirect.org.uk)

Email – [info@rwandadirect.org.uk](mailto:info@rwandadirect.org.uk) or phone 07941 916205

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