

Rwanda Direct Newsletter

Summer 2018



NEWS: the group of 7 who visited Rwanda in Feb/ March had a wonderful time; best to let some of them tell it their own way:

Tim Whitfield remembers -

One of the trips that sticks in my mind was when we went to a church not far from Kigali but a long way from a major road and very rural with few buildings of any kind, and quite isolated. When we finally got



there, two hours late, we found a group of around twenty waiting for us. They were of all ages and they were sitting on two or three benches outside their tiny church which had just been closed down by the government. They were the congregation, and their female pastor was there with them. They told us how their savings cooperative worked, how they had meetings every week where they each contributed a very small amount of money which would go towards enriching the community as a whole, livestock or a little patch of land to grow something on. A very old man told us that if anyone was late for the meeting they would be fined, and then went on to say

how much we owed them for our being late. He was joking; everyone laughed, everyone was together, all seemed contented though their poverty was obvious. Love was there and we were all blessed by God.

Hazel Notley wrote:-

The little children are endearing. Rwanda is densely populated and there is a baby boom. We encountered over a hundred 2-5 years olds crammed on benches in a small room. Somehow the teacher was moving between as the class chanted and sang in English (the language of education) to us. Then individual tiny tots stood up and counted to ten or sang a nursery ditty.

The rural churches are attempting to meet the needs of local communities, but resources are slender. £1 parental contribution per term per child provides a teacher, a shell of a building and a hot meal daily. No pencils, paper or books in evidence. Outside, their playground contains some broken clay bricks to build or place into patterns. But even this provision is under threat as the Government is demanding unrealistic standards in toilet facilities, sawn timber roof beams rather than the common practice of using tree trunks, a paved area for parking outside, kitchen facilities. Health and safety Rwandan style means these places are threatened with closure. (see below)



Denise said:-

One visit was a trip to Gahini, where Paul and Jean lived during their years in Rwanda. We stayed in a guest house beside beautiful Lake Muhazi. After the long journey we ventured up the hill to Gahini; on our way was the house that was built by Paul and where they lived as a family, now the home of the Bishop of Gahini. We were being typical tourists peeping over the fence, to see what it was like. When we passed the gateway the Bishop’s wife greeted us asking why we had been looking over the fence. After an explanation she invited us in and showed us around the house, a great joy for us all.

Whilst on our walk around the village we popped into the diocesan office to be greeted by the Assistant Bishop who could not believe that he was standing talking to Paul Daltry, a man he greatly admired and had always wanted to meet. It was a joy to behold.



The most remarkable part of the visit was for Jean and Paul to be reunited with one of their dearest friends, Marianne, now aged 92yrs who had been a great help to them whilst in Gahini. She is still a wonderful lady.

Paul and Jean say – Marianne Kajuga and Eustace her husband were like parents to us. They had been wonderful Christians through the time of revival. In the genocide Eustace and many of Marianne’s children were killed. With us is her daughter who survived. Marianne is still sharing her faith!

Kigali Anglican Theological College (KATC)

KATC is one of the key institutions Rwanda Direct helps fund. Recently retired Archbishop Rwaje and all the Bishops we speak with tell us that KATC is key for the growth and life of the Church.

Antoine Rutayisire has been Principal since 2010 and has had a tough job. The college was set up as an academic institution, training in English and intending to become a university. Antoine quickly realised that wasn’t working financially or practically. With very few resources he set about developing courses in Kinyarwanda that were both practical and affordable. Taking pastors away from their homes for a year at a time was very hard on their families, so he developed a modular course; one month in college/three in the parish putting learning into practise, then the next module and so on.



Staff Team at KATC – Antoine in orange shirt

During our visit the fruit of Antoine's leadership and wisdom became very apparent. Everywhere we went Pastors who had been to KATC (or are still studying there) told us of the impact which is so exciting! Church life being transformed, people becoming Christians, community fellowship and savings groups across denominations enabling transformation in people's quality of life. Everywhere we went the individual stories that people told showed what it meant to them. They are now able, with God's help, to improve their lives. It is truly thrilling.

After the years of struggle, Antoine said he was glad he went through these difficult years as they forced him to look for new approaches which are now paying dividends. He felt that with greater funding being available he would not have achieved all this. Rwanda Direct has stood by this vision and we are now seeing the fruit of what God laid on our hearts!

Isn't that something of the gospel? That which seems hopeless and dead has become hope and life. Thought for ourselves in the west – do we realise that loss maybe a gift?

PRAYER NEEDS:

Government Health and Safety Inspections of churches commenced during our visit. Modern toilets, cement floors, metal windows and doors, noise insulation, lightening conductors and properly surfaced parking are required. The vast majority of churches, especially out of the towns do not reach this standard; about 80% have been closed until at least some of this work is done. The church leadership understands the need for these measures (16 people died in a lightning strike on a church while we were there) but the difficulty for the churches is immense. They can meet in small Cell groups but not whole congregations together. PRAY for Christians to remain strong and that this issue can be resolved in a way that is manageable for poor churches.

Hygiene standards have also been set for Catering services. Scripture Union is very aware that providing good meals from their kitchens is an essential part of their hospitality ministry for conferences, camps, training sessions and visitors like us. An urgent upgrade is in progress. Please pray for adequate finance and for a benevolent inspector!

KATC still have need for more funds to finish their accommodation block. Since our last visit (2013) all the brick work has gone in and a few window frames. With it finished they will be able to welcome many more students from all denominations and become as a result more financially self-sufficient.

Hannah Project in Byumba Diocese is just about keeping going. The need for care and support vulnerable children, HIV positive women and single mothers remains very clear. We heard heart breaking stories from some of the volunteer staff, but they just don't have the resources to help all who come.





The full team in the game park



The opening ceremony for the new SU Prayer and Retreat Buildings. Rwanda Direct was the largest external donor!



It was good to meet Bishop Assiel Musabyimana of Kigeme Diocese in the south west of Rwanda.

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