

MAINE2MITYANA MISSION
THE REV. CHARLES AND BETH BRADSHAW
Ascension Day ~ May 14, 2015

“I felt God was saying, If you do not go there and present the healing gospel, then the fate of Rwanda will be in the hands of those who carry guns. If God is the remedy and the solution, whom shall He use, if you don’t allow Him to use you? I knew that it all made sense, considering my background and history.” John Rucyahana, The Bishop of Rwanda: Finding Forgiveness Amidst a Pile of Bones (2007).

Dear Partners in Prayer and Mission,

Last Friday (the 8th) Beth and I returned to Mityana after a short trip to Rwanda. We had gone there to meet Christian, a 17 year old boy whom we sponsor through Compassion International; and Kampire, a young lady whom our sending congregation, the Church of Our Father, sponsored from 2004 until her 22nd birthday last February. As long as we were living in the country next door, it was important to us to meet both Rwandese children. We took the bus to Rwanda on Monday with our Ugandan friend and former student, Patrick.



Crossing the Border into Rwanda

On Tuesday we met up with our former neighbor in seminary student housing, Bishop John Rucyahana, and his daughter, Joy. John was an inspiring presence at Trinity. Along with other students, I considered going to Uganda to work with him, but it seemed far-fetched at the time. He was serving in the Church of Uganda in 1994 when the Rwanda genocide occurred. In 1997 he was appointed Bishop of Shyira Diocese in northern Rwanda. Since his retirement, Bishop John has been the Chairman of Rwanda’s National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.

On Wednesday morning, when we met Stephen, the Compassion representative in charge of our visit, and said we were from Namukozi, he said, “Namukozi? You mean Mityana?” He is an “Old Boy” of Mityana Secondary School. After his graduation his family returned to Rwanda. What were the chances of meeting someone with ties to our own neighborhood?



Reunion with Bishop John

We spent an hour with Christian and the Compassion project staff in the village of Nyacyonga, about a 30-minute drive north of Kigali, exchanging gifts and learning about the services provided to the sponsored children. From there we went to Christian’s home, high in the hills on a treacherous road a few miles beyond Nyacyonga. We then drove back to Kigali to meet the staff in the Compassion Rwanda office and Kampire. I had met her in 2009 in her village. It was good to see her now as an adult.

We arrived back in Kampala on Thursday night. Returning to Mityana on Friday, we were surprised with a Welcome Home supper prepared by the two young men who had house-sat for us while we were away. Saturday we were back to teaching at the College.



With Christian and his family

is the “pioneers” in our Bachelor of Education program. We will not form another class of Ordinands until a year from now.

Our negotiations with Ndejje University continue on the subject of affiliation with Ndejje for the purpose of offering the Bachelor of Education and other degree programs. So far it has felt to me like a card game where the dealer keeps changing the rules.

Next week I will go to Kampala for 2 weeks of immersion in the Luganda language. At 63 years old I believe my brain is still capable of learning, but I worry that it has become lazy. So far I can read Scripture lessons and parts of the Liturgy in Luganda. After 2 weeks of Luganda Camp I might not be ready to preach or lecture in the local language, but I hope to be able to communicate in my own words on the Sundays when I go to congregations “deep in the bush” that rarely see a priest.



Meeting Kampire— again



Beth and Patrick at the Kigali Genocide Memorial Museum

We are thanking the Lord for the rain, for keeping us safe in our travels, for our meetings with the Compassion children, our conscientious house-sitters, and your faithful support. Please pray for the affiliation process with Ndejje; for me to make great progress in the Luganda language in a short time; and for Beth as she stays by herself in Namukozzi. Also hold Burundi in your prayers—Rwanda’s unstable neighbor to the south. Yesterday it was reported that an army general has staged a coup to overthrow the president. It is not out of the question that other East African countries, including Uganda, might take sides and feel the need to send in soldiers of their own.

Faithfully,

Chris +

&

Beth