

MISSION RWANDA (CONT.)

joy of the Lord, and serve the Lord by serving others.

At the first Compassion Center we visited we were greeted by all the students and staff lining the road to the center – waving and cheering. It was a jubilant welcome of native song and dance and then praise & worship inside the church. Even the neighborhood kids know the words to the praise & worship songs. All village families have access to fresh water tank located at the Center. The work of God through Compassion Centers ripples throughout the local area.

Our second site visit was to a church that supports the Compassion Infant Survival Program. Once again we were greeted with a joyous, God-honoring welcome from the mothers and infants in the program. Mothers gave their testimony while babies nursed.

We then got to make a home-visit to a woman named Rose. She gave her testimony and explained that the girl she fosters, Kaleeyah, isn't even family; she is the daughter of her friends who died. Since they are not related, Rose depends on the kindness of others to support Kaleeyah. She trusts in the Lord to provide and He does. Before we arrived, she cleaned her floor,

set out her best bit of lace table cloth, and had to bring in more chairs and benches for us to sit. She was a gracious hostess with what she had.

Jill got to meet the children she sponsors, Kwizera and Diane, accompanied by Kwizera's Pastor and Diane's social worker, and a translator. The sponsors and children all met at an amusement park and enjoyed lunch, amusement rides, and a gift exchange. I got to be the photographer.

Our last visit was to a Child Development Center while classes were in session. Compassion centers are supported by local churches and provide holistic child development beginning with prenatal care, all the way through leadership development for qualified young adults. It is a long-term approach and goes beyond simple involvement in the lives of the children and families served by the Centers. All Compassion child development programs provide holistic development in four areas — spiritual, physical, social and economic. For Rwanda that includes teaching children that they are Rwandan, not any other ethnicity.

The last place we visited was a Reconciliation Village, where we received another

jubilant welcome with traditional dance and songs by a combined group of survivors and former offenders. Fredric and Jeanette spoke of their experiences during the genocide, and how they are now living side by side as friends and neighbors. Men work together in the fields, and women teach and work together to create small pieces of art which they sell at the market.

I had a few yarn crosses left that I gave to each of the elderly mothers there. One of them thanked me for the gift and wanted to give me a gift, it was Isaiah 54:10

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you. In turn, I was able to share with her our memory verse.

This trip was so amazing! Such a blessing! The providence of God throughout!

I read a post recently from John Piper in which he commented what God might say to us about His providence:

"You think you know what I am doing globally? You have no idea. I'm putting things in place exactly as I please."



Volume XXXI

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MISSION RWANDA

by Jerie-Ann Schewhem

Mwiriwe neza, good evening in Kinyarwanda. Murakoze, thank you for inviting me to speak to you about my trip to Rwanda with my sister, Jill.

This trip was a group tour with Compassion International, and the purpose was for my sister to visit her sponsored children there.

This report isn't about our escapades, or the long plane ride, or the nice hotel. It is a testament of the providence of God. The ways He has worked and is still working – in the events of history, in the lives of the African people, and in the hearts and minds of His people around the world.

Jill never in her life wanted to travel overseas. She preferred to keep to herself and avoid groups of strangers. My sister had endured many physical and spiritual changes in the past year. She lost over 100 lbs, and renewed her dedication to the Lord and to her new home church. She has always been very reserved and never cared to mingle with strangers.

But God took away those

qualms! Jill was granted two weeks off of work to take the trip, which is unheard of at the CDC where she works.

Last February, she off-handedly asked if I wanted to go, and I said, "NO." Thirteen hours on a plane is too much for me! Plus, I don't sponsor children so I didn't think it was appropriate that I go. I was excited for her to be going on such a big adventure and helped her gather supplies to take to her children and made 100 yarn crosses to take with her.

As the deadline to sign up for the trip approached, I was talking with Eric about how remarkable it was that Jill was going to Africa to meet her sponsor children, and about all of the changes I saw in my sister. She didn't need me to be her travel companion anymore. We used to take road trips all over the place, and I started thinking this might be the last time she and I would have an adventure together. I decided to go and filled out all the forms and submitted a payment. I

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I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2



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learned that 32 people were going, and I got the last available spot!

As the day of departure got closer, Jill became anxious about some details – malaria, ebola, travel details, overweight luggage, crispy cash to pay for a visa – all the details that you can't control. That morning I had prayed for a new scripture memory verse. Jill opened her KLOVE Verse of the Day and it was:

Deuteronomy 31:6

Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.

That became our scripture memory verse for this trip!

As part of the preparations for the trip, Compassion sends a trip guide that includes all the information you need to know to prepare for your visit. The trip guide for Rwanda included information about the genocide in 1994.

I was taken aback. Genocide?! In 1994?? This was 1994, not 1949! I didn't know about this event even though I was an adult at the time. I started wondering about what I was doing at that time and why hadn't I known about it. Some of the main headlines we were reading in 1994 dealt with things like, Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding, an earthquake in Los Angeles, OJ Simpson, and the war in

Bosnia and Herzegovin. CNN mentioned tribal unrest in Rwanda and that was about it.

Meanwhile, Rwanda was experiencing genocide. We finally heard about the genocide in August, but OJ still grabbed our attention.

European social and political culture, greed, power and racism fueled hatred between Tutsi and Hutu tribes. Perpetrators used clubs and machetes to beat and maul people to death. It wasn't a government army with tanks, bombs and machine guns. The government had the people do the dirty work to each other.

One perpetrator named Joseph-Desire said, "You will never see the source of a genocide. It is buried too deep in grudges, under an accumulation of misunderstandings that we were the last to inherit. We came of age at the worst moment in Rwanda's history: we were taught to obey absolutely, raised in hatred, stuffed with slogans. We are an unfortunate generation."

God spared a leader to rise up and end the genocide. Paul Kagame was a Tutsi refugee forced to flee the country after a government overthrow in 1959. Kagame was trained by the Ugandan army and formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) that fought to gain control in Rwanda and end the genocide in July 1994. If General Kagame's family had

not fled to Uganda, he would not have organized the Rwandan Patriotic Front, regained peace and control of the country, and been elected President of Rwanda. He is serving his now 3rd term in office. The new government instituted the Five Pillars of social, political and economic transformation of Rwanda.

Pillar 1: Unity, peace, and reconciliation.

Pillar 2: Safety and security.

Pillar 3: Hope for today and excitement for the future.

Pillar 4: Steady economic growth.

Pillar 5: Sustainable development.

A few months ago, Pastor Oldham preached from Ecclesiastes, and he could have been telling about the Rwandan genocide when he stated, "Even in the midst of the most dark, futile [feudal] places, Jesus is there in the shadows."

Ecclesiastes 4:1-3

Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them. And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive. But better than both is he who has not yet been and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.

Eighteen years before the

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genocide, Prison Fellowship was founded by Chuck Colson. He served time in a federal prison camp where he felt led by God to honor a promise he made to remember prisoners and their families. That promise grew into the world's largest family of prison ministries. Later, Prison Fellowship Rwanda, founded Jan 7, 1995. Representatives went to the prisons and preached the Gospel to the perpetrators. At first the prisoners did not trust the Prison Fellowship pastors, but the Spirit of God prevailed and moved over the prisons and the inmates repented and sought forgiveness from God.

Then, the prisoners wanted to seek forgiveness from the victims! Prison Fellowship appealed to the victims to see if they would be willing to meet the murderers. The Holy Spirit moved again and victims desired to forgive the perpetrators!

Former offenders were willing to tell the truth about their wrongdoing during genocide. Rwanda faced the problem of reintegrating these self-proclaimed offenders into the Rwandan community and figuring out how they would live in peace with the victims they had harmed. Prison Fellowship Rwanda undertook the process of bringing together former perpetrators and survivors in order to find an innovative

way of restoring their relationship. Ultimately, the survivors learned forgiveness while former offenders learned to acknowledge their responsibility by confessing and making reparations according to the principle of restorative justice approach.

Both sides faced the problems of poverty and lack of shelter, so Prison Fellowship Rwanda aided former perpetrators and survivors who needed shelter in building houses for themselves. According to the views of the leaders of Prison Fellowship Rwanda, practical reconciliation can be fostered through social and economic development. It is important to remember that most of former offenders and survivors lived together in the same villages before genocide. As these conflicting parties worked together for their own social and economic well-being in the past, they held the potential to do so again.

Prison Fellowship has established eight Restoration Villages throughout Rwanda where victims and perpetrators live peaceably together as an example and reminder to future generations. This is Frederic and Jeanette. Jeanette stated, "I came here because the killers apologized and we survivors, we also forgave them," "We want to live together, forget the past and focus on the future."

At the Genocide Memorial & Museum, we saw a plaque that read, "Ubumuntu," which means Greatness of Heart = humanity – goodness, kindness and generosity. A person who has Ubumuntu is someone who has greatness of heart. In the context of the Genocide against the Tutsi, Ubumuntu refers to those who selflessly risked their lives to rescue or help those who were persecuted. We can all be champions of humanity by standing against division wherever we live.

Tourism is now a leading economic industry. Rwanda's strong economic growth was accompanied by substantial improvements in living standards, with a two-thirds drop in child mortality and near-universal primary school enrollment. A strong focus on homegrown policies and initiatives has contributed to significant improvement in access to services and human development indicators. The poverty rate dropped from 44% in 2011 to 39% in 2014, while inequality stood at 0.45%.

After enduring colonization, ethnic division, civil wars, even genocide, Rwandans could have closed off their country. They could deny visitors or be bitter toward Westerners and religion. However, they are welcoming, friendly and hospitable. They chose forgiveness and humbleness. They have the



FEBRUARY 2
Kelli Ellsworth

FEBRUARY 11
Jennie Brasefield

FEBRUARY 11
Brook Eldridge

FEBRUARY 13
Mary Canady

FEBRUARY 13
Molly Rowden

FEBRUARY 20
Lisa Hilton

FEBRUARY 24
Shannon Mathes

FEBRUARY 26
Kristin MacMillan

FEBRUARY 26
Courtney Eudy

FEBRUARY 26
Ashley Teer

FEBRUARY 27
Teresa Naylor

FEBRUARY 28
Georgia Allen



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Adorned:

Living Out the Beauty
of the Gospel Together

Woman to Woman • Older and Younger • Life on Life

This is God's good and beautiful plan!

The Titus 2 model of older women living out the gospel and teaching younger women to do the same is vital. It's how we all thrive. It's how we adorn the gospel together. But some times we need help knowing what that looks like, to mentor, to invest in other women, to adorn the gospel of Christ in our own lives. This year the ladies of Grace will study *Adorned* - the Titus 2 study written by Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth and we will view *Adorned* through the Revive 17 Adorned conference. Each month you'll be hearing from a variety of speakers in different seasons of life as they unpack the message of Titus 2. This study will give you a road map to help you experience the kind of community and influence that God designed for Christian women to have. So, come and be encouraged to fulfil your God created purpose to adorn the gospel of Christ together with other women, step by step, the Titus 2 way.

**Ladies of Grace meetings: the first Wednesday
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