

Sharon's trip to Burundi May 11-24, 2011

I recently had the good fortune of traveling to Burundi for the second time. I had several new experiences and learned more about the language and the culture of the country. Despite some problems with Ethiopian Airlines, I was blessed in many ways. My bags in Honolulu were never weighed. I made it out of Germany on my way back before the airports closed because of the volcanic eruption. My lost bag was returned in tack the next day. Most importantly, various events worked together to open up new possibilities for ministry in Burundi. I want to thank those of you who supported the trip through your prayers and financial giving. I hope you will want to continue to support ministry in Burundi. I was pleased to see that the men are still using the bikes we bought for them two years ago and that the women and children are still wearing the shirts that we gave them on our last trip.



The church at Ndava, which the government had threatened to shut down because of its failure to meet building code, was finished and dedicated while we were there. It now has its required cement floor and metal roof as well as other interior furniture. Some people brought their own chair or bench for the worship service.



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We arrived in Kayanza on Monday afternoon and spent most of the rest of the week teaching the seminary students at the Elijah Bible school, the pastors and lay leaders at the church and the children at the orphanage. The team members brought many supplies as well as food and shoes for the children. I taught the children about Noah and the rainbow and incorporated some vocabulary words such as animals, colors and numbers into the lesson. I had also taken a “wordless to share the gospel message. The problem of orphans remains a major difficulty of raising now.



I also had the opportunity to share my testimony and the need to witness in the “10/40 Window” with the ladies and the men at the Bible school. I spoke briefly on the subject of being unequally yoked also. When we were not busy, we spent time playing with the village children. We thought more should be done to draw the village children into the church.



On our last Sunday in Kayanza, the four pastors baptized about 60 people, among them a few children. There was also a sermon and communion that Sunday as well as



presentations from several choirs so the service lasted approximately four and one half hours but the time passed quickly.

On Tuesday I was able to visit Barennyabo and Odilo, the two children that I sponsor through World Vision. The children live in the Muyinga/Gasowre area, which is located in the poorest areas of the country in one of the the country. The first family I visited lived quite a way back from the road so we had to walk probably a quarter mile to her house. The child was very shy and her mother stated that she had never seen a white woman before and was a bit taken back by my arrival. However the family was very friendly and grateful.



The second family lived several miles on a dirt road. The girl came running out of away. She was anxious to see me and to show me around. On the way to the area, I stopped at a goat market and bought each family a goat. The



right on the road but we had to travel full of potholes to reach her house. her house and took my hand right see me and to show me around. On stopped at a goat market and bought goats' bleating and smell added a

certain ambiance to the ride to Muyinga. I wondered why one of my children did not have a last name. I was told that children do not receive last names until the time of their christening. They do not assume the last names of their parents. They are given last names that denote a message such as God is Great or a characteristic of the child. I was able to present each family member with a yarn lei, the sponsored children with a bag of toys and school supplies and each family a goat. I talked to each family about Jesus and the fact that their children are gifts from God and that the parents had to treat them well even if the children misbehaved. We had an opportunity to pray together also. Each of the children presented me with gifts also. I told them that the gifts would have a prominent place in my home. One of the exciting things about World



Vision is the fact that they try to involve members of the community in the activities. Between visits to the two families, we went to a community activity where people were practicing the drums for an upcoming church service. The Muyinga project has about 3500 children. Only 2000 have sponsors so there is a great opportunity to share our blessings there. Many thanks to the World Vision staff who rose early and worked hard to make the trip a reality for me.



When I went to Muyinga I expected to see people living in cardboard boxes or at the most thatched structures. However, the buildings are made of brick and adobe mud and are actually quite adequate. What contributes to the status of Burundi being listed as one of the poorest countries in the world is its lack of amenities such as safe drinking water,

electricity, education, medical supplies and other infrastructure such as good roads within the cities and villages.

For several different reasons Burundi has a window of opportunity to develop and improve its situation. Burundi is now at peace. The president has started peace projects in which people from different tribes who were previously fighting each other live together and learn how to get along. Many other nations are pouring international aid into the country. The country is a Christian country. The President is himself an evangelistic Christian who has started many prayer groups. He wants to establish a prayer group in each province. The people affectionately call him "Pastor". The biggest challenge will be for people to be able to catch the vision and have the organizational skills necessary to make change happen.

Because of my connection with Muyinga, the head of our delegation in Burundi decided that it would be good to use the money raised in Hawaii to minister in that area. One of the churches there owns a small plot set back from the road. They have the opportunity to buy the land between them and the road. This will allow more visibility for the church and also allow them to expand. I was pleased to meet the pastor of this church. I am glad that we had enough money to buy the needed plot of land. The left over money will probably be used to begin a self-help association for the ladies of the area. The ladies learn how to run their own businesses. They also each contribute to a common savings account, which is used to loan money to members who need temporary help.

Ordering food remains an interesting experience. One is never quite sure what will be served. I still shy away from meat other than fish. I enjoyed the sandala fish which I had not tried on my last trip. I ate Makeke several times again. I discovered that it can be easily overcooked. I did try goat again and it was tasty but I got an upset stomach after eating it. I learned about the hot sauce called Piripiri. A little goes a long way. Spaghetti and vegetables remained the sure bets.

There was time for a little sightseeing. One of the team members, Margo, enjoys walking so one day we walked to the brick factory. We had to leap over several canals of water to get there. The village women enjoyed seeing me struggling to get there. They really liked it the time I did not quit make it. It was all worth it. On Saturday we went to see the electric plant that produces most of the electricity for the country. I asked the gentleman why the electricity went out so often in Kayanza and he said that there were problems in the lines.

Prayer needs are always present.

- The young baby of one of the families I visited was running a fever.
- A lady that was in Rwanda during the civil war saw her entire family killed. She was shot in the shoulder and still has shrapnel in her body, which prevents her arm from functioning properly. She needs an operation which will cost \$1000.00

- A boy named Richard has lost his father. We encouraged him to attend the local church
- Most people in Burundi do not have jobs other than working their own land.
- There are not enough classrooms or teachers so most children attend school for only half a day or less.
- Spiritual growth for the pastors. Many of them are still struggling with very basic issues.
- That the goats that I bought will be cared for properly.
- For individual children. Take a picture and adopt the child for prayer support.

More financial support is needed for the following:

- Goats and livestock for families
- Bikes for those pastors who still do not have
- Gas money for supervisors to oversee the self help associations that are being formed for the women
- Building supplies for growing churches
- Medicine
- Educational needs
- Books for the Elijah school students
- Training for the pastors
- The infrastructure needs to be improved so the country can attract industry and trade.

We have various ways that you can contribute financially

- I have Burundian baskets and doilies made by the children at the orphanage for sale.
- The ice cream challenge is still alive and well.
- In December we will be offering a trolley ride to see Christmas lights. All contributions will be used to sponsor needs in Burundi.
- I have packets from World Vision for those who wish to sponsor a child in the Miyunga area of Burundi.
- There is also now a mechanism for you to set up giving on a regular basis.