

Burundi Report May 2009
Sharon Dumas
Amohoro!
Imana Imschimwe
Poa!



Psalms 125:2

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people both now and forevermore.

Burundi is a beautiful
Words cannot express
experienced while there.
Burundi is the people's



country with
the joy and
The most
love for the



beautiful people.
excitement that I
admirable aspect of
Lord. One man

walked for 3 days to participate in the workshops. Another lady walked for 24 hours carrying two babies. At the services people sat worship. Some had to stand outside at danced and sang often for more than convinced that the singing and dancing



in crowded conditions for hours to times in the rain. During breaks they 45 minutes without stopping. I am were a mini display of what singing in

heaven is like. Despite many distractions such as kids peering in the windows, loud echoing from the tin roof, young children nursing in the first row, mothers walking around to care for their children, noise from the other group during the teaching sessions, most people took a great interest in what was being said. They were anxious to just talk issues of the church. No one seemed to look at a clock or worry about time. About 100 people were baptized in a tiny ditch dug out and with a tarp



about
the
covered

The people also have a beautiful spirit. Besides their love for God they very hard working. They They have beautiful terraces rice, sweet potatoes and the buildings and weave bike or on top of their heads.



are also
work hard to get what they need from the land. and work hard to produce crops such as bananas, beans. They produce their own adobe bricks for mats for the homes. They carry most things by



The people are very friendly. They are always ready to share a friendly greeting or smile. They especially like to have their picture taken.

The village children friendly even toys or possessions. are very bright, were excited to children in America



make their own toys and seem to be happy and though they The children at polite and eager receive letters and write back to



have very few the orphanage to learn. They from the them.

There are many praises. The church has grown The number of churches in the Evangelical The president of the country is a fervent support the church. The Evangelical Association influential and well to do people. Although



to over 300 in just several years. Association is increasing rapidly. Christian and has been able has the support of some very Burundi is still a very poor

country there has been some improvement in the roads, education system and infrastructure of the country. There is a little light industry- the production of tea and of bricks. Peace has been established in much of the country.

Satan was hard at work trying to prevent the sessions from happening and trying to discourage us along the way but everyone on the team took the challenges in stride and continued to focus on the job that was to be done. Often times we had fun laughing about the obstacles. John's typical response was "It's mission." or "It's Africa." My first challenge was sitting on the runway in Honolulu for 3 hours due to mechanical problems on the airplane. Humanly by the time I took off it was impossible to make my connection in L.A. Northwest had said that it would not guarantee the connection at L. A. because the trip was booked with two separate reservation numbers instead of one. However, God pulled through by changing the winds so that the pilot was able to make up about an hour allowing me to just barely make my next connection. After getting the flu shot I developed a cold. In Africa it turned into a very bad cough. At times while I was teaching I nearly lost my voice. Other challenges included lack of interpreters, unexpected outages of electricity, limited hot water and surprises when we ordered our food. There was a limited variety of food available but most of it was tasty.

This was a typical lunch. and often we did not to jinx every hotel door eventually just slept



There were long delays when ordering at the hotel receive what we expected to be served. I seemed I touched. I got locked in my room twice and with the door ajar so I would be able to get out.

Our baggage did not arrive on the same flight so we had to go back to the airport the next day to get it. There were a few anxious moments such as the crowded conditions at the market and the time when the security approached me about a couple pictures I had taken of the Embassy. However, God's protecting hand was never far away! Assumptions sometimes fooled us. I took some arts and crafts supplies to use as part of my lessons at the orphanage. When I arrived the next day to gather my supplies I could not find them. I soon discovered that the ladies had already used them to make necklaces and bracelets for the children. Essentially a couple of my planned activities would no longer work as I had envisioned. Plans changed all the time sometimes almost by the hour. When we asked Steve about the plans or arrangements for the day, his standard response was "That's a need to know." Flexibility was the key! However, all of Satan's tricks were simply minor inconveniences for us compared to the joy and blessings we received from the people. The circumstances helped me develop patience and trust in God.

One of my highlights were seeing the intense love the people had for the Lord. It was very emotional and moving to experience the joy they expressed in their dance, song their "Amen's" and "Alleluias" and their willingness to learn. The other highlight was presenting the bikes with locks and chains to 10 pastors. The bikes will enable the travel more efficiently in the rural areas. What a difference a on our part can make in the lives of the people there! Each than \$200.00 The people seemed very appreciative of the Americans have in their ministry. They appreciated the books that we left and were anxious to share their prayer requests with us.



pastors to little sacrifice bike cost less interest the letters and

There are several financial challenges that the people face. As with most poor countries there is a big contrast between the rich and poor with a small middle class. Here is the Evangelical Association President's house.



By contrast the Twa a minority group of people live in homes like this.



There has been a drought in the northern part of the country which caused some people to lose their crops. Burundi is a landlocked country with bad roads in some places so it is expensive to export goods. The government has changed the building requirements for churches. They can no longer use thatched roofs or adobe bricks. They must pour a cement slab for the floor also. Some of the most active churches are facing the loss of their land if the churches are not soon brought up to code. The churches, orphanage and the Bible school need additional land to accommodate the increased number of worshippers. They also need food and books as well as other supplies. Land is set aside but the people do not have the money to buy it. These problems can be fixed for little money. We are often only talking hundreds or thousands of dollars rather than millions of dollars. If we continue to give sacrificially we in Hawaii could solve many of these problems. I challenge you to give up ice cream and give that money to Burundi. The people are anxious to become self sufficient so they are asking for funds that they can use to equip themselves. They are not asking for fish but equipment and techniques which will help them do the fishing themselves.

It's always fun to talk about travel experiences but the real purpose of this presentation is to encourage you to continue to support ministry in Burundi in several ways. For most of us it's not a question of whether we should support Burundi financially but how and how much we should be giving. The first and most important thing you can do is to continue to pray for the people. I will be distributing a list of prayer requests. The people of Burundi would also love to be encouraged by your letters. Everyone was very excited to receive the books and letters that were sent by you to the people there. The second way to support Burundi is financially either through on line giving at the Transformation Ministries Web Site or by donations to the church earmarked for Burundi. It is best to give unrestricted funds to Burundi so the people there can use the money for what they need the most. One way to empower the local people is to allow them to choose how to spend the money. Sometimes opportunities arise or emergencies arise in which funds are needed right away. For example, a few years ago a plot of land next to the church cost \$1500.00. Now it is \$4000.00. There needs to be a reserve of money so that when opportunities or emergencies arise, the money is there. Please pray and ask God not whether you should support Burundi but rather how you should support Burundi. The third way is to tell others about the opportunities to serve in Burundi and to encourage others to get involved. Thank you for all your continued support!

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