

## July Visit to Rwanda

### Presidential Opening of the Cyangugu Peace Guest House Annexe

Here are some extracts from letters sent from Cyangugu.

From the time I arrived in Cyangugu on 8<sup>th</sup> July I have been really busy. I went with Bishop Nathan to see new churches, four one day, four another day, in the remotest part of Rwanda, altogether 12 new churches. These are not the ten new churches I have been talking about, already built, able to stand the earthquakes, these are brand new plants, some starting in rented property, some in mud churches and one in a timber building. It was a wonderful sight to see the members of the church doing the work, one church clearing and levelling the site,



the other doing the labouring, with one paid builder. You would love to have seen the girls taking clay bricks off the kiln and throwing them to another girl to catch (cricket style)! At Nyarusange's big new brick church the congregation were busy laying rocks in preparation for a concrete floor. They also took me to give advice on a high wall of soil above an eight room staff house for the school. My advice is one we

learnt in earlier buildings, to cut the bank back to 45 degrees (the angle of repose!). At that angle grass will grow and hold the bank back.

I also went with Bishop Nathan to take confirmations. We do four candidates each at a time, we can just reach four heads! At Banda we confirmed 110. At Nyamasheke 80, at a new church out of Bweyeye called Nyamuzi we dedicated the church and confirmed 60. The military Major, in charge of this border area with Burundi, was in the congregation and estimated there were 1,700 in church. A huge crowd and so enthusiastic about their new church! I have travelled miles on bumpy, rocky, dusty roads, going up over 8,000 feet in some areas. (The Bishop's car has an altimeter!). We look right down at the cement factory and the big rice processing plant at Bugarama. So I have seen the expansion of the Diocese with new churches and recently built ones, bursting at the seams! I have preached in Kinyarwanda at all three confirmations with one to come on Sunday at Rasano, where we will also dedicate the new big church. Bishop Nathan is leading a great evangelistic movement across this part of Rwanda.





Yesterday (26<sup>th</sup> July) I spent the day with four evangelists (they call them missionaries) at Gatara, about an hour north, past Kumvya on the lake. They have each started in a house rented by the diocese, visiting the people and inviting them to the house as the beginning of four new churches. They have to depend on support from their congregation, who have generally been very encouraging. Each is looking for a piece of land where they can build a church. The diocese would pay for the land and would give a grant for building the church and a small grant for them to buy food. I was very impressed with their dedication. They certainly are missionaries. Now we are waiting for the President who is campaigning for the presidential election on 4th August. He will have three big rallies in this area and sleep in PGH in between. That could be today (27<sup>th</sup>) or tomorrow! So I won't have any more trips to churches, but await further news! On Sunday I go with Bishop Nathan to Rasano to open a big new church and confirm the candidates from that and another (daughter) church. On Monday 31st I leave Cyangugu for Kigali to catch **my direct flight** on 1st August to Gatwick, arriving the same day at 2020. I'll be ready for a rest after three solid weeks of travel and ministry!

We have now embarked on a programme of building houses for the pastors of 16 churches. We have completed one, are buying another one and have started building number three @ £12,000.



Yesterday (28<sup>th</sup>) I went with Bishop Nathan to a third campaign in the Cyangugu Diocese, for the presidential election on 4th August. I had something special when I had a Rwandan hug



as well as a handshake from the President! He was very pleased with the changes at Peace Guest House since he was last there. He stayed in the 'villa' and wandered around the whole place, including the annexe and commented on the improvements. We actually have some benefits from his visit as his people put in a glass 'shower cabinet'(sliding door

etc). They also put one way glass in the windows (I think stuck on), as his two children slept in the lounge.

The annexe was **well and truly opened** as a large number of government ministers slept there. I spoke with the Ministers of Education, and of the Environment, who commented on some of the trees I had planted there years ago, and Public Works.

All seemed pleased with their stay. All 67 rooms were taken by those who came with the president. Guests who came for a room had to go elsewhere. I was bowled over with the huge sense of love the people have for their President, who is their candidate for the election. I couldn't count numbers, but the Mayor estimated that



there were 100 to 200 thousand people, all calling "*tuzagutora*" (we will vote for you), *ijanakwijane* (100%) *tuzagutora*, *haki ya Mungu* (Swahili for 'in God's name') *tuzagutora*, and *turagukunda* (we love you). Many were from our parishes. Nobody had to come. Everybody wanted to come. The president was driven through the crowds and waved to them all,

thousands of them! I felt a huge wave of affection coming over because he has done so much for them and the country. I felt it so I am sure he felt it too!



You can be quite certain that the press in UK will be negative about the election, because he will get a huge majority. There are two other candidates standing and they also have their campaigns.

Today (30<sup>th</sup> July) we went to Rasano, one of the highest mountain parishes. A friend of the Bishop, from Colorado, came with us and we confirmed 44 people between us. Bishop Ken Ross came

with 5 members of his diocese, the “Diocese of the Rocky Mountains.com”, which is part of the *Anglican Church in North America*.

Tomorrow (31<sup>st</sup> July) I will drive back to Kigali, taking Manasse with me as usual in case I have a tyre problem in the Nyungwe Forest where there no people living, driving in the 29 year old Land Cruiser! I fly from Kigali **directly to Gatwick** on RwandaAir, such a great change from always having to change planes somewhere.

We have a coffee morning at Wormshill (Sittingbourne area) on 5th August and I take the communion service at Dallington on 6<sup>th</sup> and the communion service at Warbleton on 13<sup>th</sup>. We have plenty of Rwandan banana fibre Christmas cards, packs of five cards with envelopes £3.00 + postage if you want them sent, and lots of Rwanda craft if anyone would like to see it at Rosewood.

Please allow me to remind you about [easyfundraising](#). If you look it up you will see many companies that offer donations to the *Lawrence Barham Memorial Trust* when you purchase something through them, e.g. anything from Amazon. It is a way of helping with our projects. We greatly value your prayers as we try to help our friends in Rwanda. We love them and they love us. Please join in this partnership in the gospel (Phil 1;3-6).

With our love, Ken and Jill