

RWANDA FIELD ANNUAL REPORT – 2007

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Rwanda – background situation in 2007

Once again we praise God for the peace and stability of 2007 in Rwanda. As we came to the end of 2007, here are some of the key issues that the Rwandese people are talking about:

- ◆ The Gacaca courts.
The Gacaca courts are an indigenous attempt to handle the 10s of 1000s of genocide cases still untried from 1994. While these courts have helped to bring justice to some, release to others, they have also been a source of great anxiety in the society at large. Anyone who has a grudge against another can stand up in these courts and accuse him or her of a genocide crime that happened 13 years ago and that person is immediately locked up – guilty until proven innocent. Our partner in the work has been locked up for 19 years through a decision of these courts.
- ◆ Rising education
More people are going to university-level schools than ever before. Way back in the 70s when we first came to Rwanda only 2% of those finishing primary school went on to high school. Now the great majority goes on to high school and at least 30% of those graduates are going on to university.
- ◆ Joblessness and rising prices.
Jobs are harder than ever to get, yet the number of students finishing high-school and college is mushrooming. Prices continue to rise at alarming rates. Even Rwandese with relatively good jobs are cutting down at times to one meal per day to make ends meet.
- ◆ Taxes and corruption
The people are being taxed ever more heavily, but not seeing it result in benefits to them. The government is declaring war on corruption and bribery, but it is still a part of everyday business affairs.
- ◆ Development of Kigali
The government is pouring its efforts into making Kigali a city attractive to foreign investment. Indeed, compared to the other major prosperous cities in the region, Kampala and Nairobi, Kigali has the best security, is cleanest, and has the best infrastructure. The divided boulevards leading into the city are planted with well-tended grass, flowers and palm trees. Huge mansions are being built all around the city. New multi-story buildings are going up in the small down-town area. The down side is that 1000s of lower-class laborers are being kicked out of the city. For every mansion that goes up, 3 to 5 small adobe homes are torn down. The owners of these homes are rarely given enough compensation to replace what they had at today's prices. They must then go way out beyond the outskirts of development to try and find a place to live.
- ◆ The stagnation of the rural and unskilled population
While Kigali looks great, the rural areas of Rwanda are struggling. We just visited a rural pastor who said the men in his area are often gone for 6 months to a year at a time because there is just not enough there in that area for them to live on – no jobs and tiny unproductive farms. The population continues to rise dramatically making the situation worse.

Since “Hotel Rwanda” and other media coverage of Rwanda, everyone wants to come to Rwanda and “do something”. We’ve never seen such an influx of aid, people and money. From the big and famous, like Rick Warren and Hillsongs of Australia, to individuals supported by a few friends or their local church.

HIV-AIDS, street kids, unemployment and poverty, widows and orphans, inadequate health-care, all continue to be grave social problems in Rwanda. These are being addressed by various government and non-government programs to varying degrees of success.

Churches continue to proliferate in Rwanda. Most tend towards the charismatic spectrum. Many of the bigger churches are tending towards prosperity-gospel teaching. A couple have made their top leaders “apostles”, meaning that they are now untouchable, for life, leaders. The attractiveness of church leadership as a way to climb the ladder of success draws unspiritual opportunists into church leadership.

Leadership training and discipleship continue to be the need of the hour. More and more programs for training and discipleship are being established. The best are those based in Rwanda – for example AEE, WYAM, Campus pour Christ. Many outside groups are putting on seminars run and taught by outside people. Often times these miss the mark culturally, socially and spiritually. Various denominations are establishing training programs – the Friends, Assemblies of God, Swedish Pentecostals, Anglicans, and others.

WorldVenture works under New Creation Ministries (NCM) in Rwanda

NCM is the Rwandese organization under which WorldVenture missionaries work. The NCM board at this time is made up of 18 Rwandese and two representatives of WorldVenture (Gary Bennett and Tim Brubaker). Gary Scheer is the director and non-voting member of the board. Jean Baptiste Tuyishimire and Marc Bitiriki are the two professional full-time Rwandese staff members. Marc serves as the office administrator, treasurer and overseer of the NCM center.

Jean Baptiste is a teacher and discipler. Jean came on with MNC in November as a replacement for Laurent Katabirora. Laurent had worked for MNC for 4 years. In June he was suddenly accused of genocide crimes and thrown into prison. He was sentenced to 19 years. He hopes to have his case reviewed soon.

We are still praying for additional full-time Rwandese staff for MNC. We would like to hire two more full-time disciplers/teachers in the next two years. It is especially hard to find qualified teachers/disciplers among Rwandese church leaders.

NCM's main ministries focus on leadership training. Its purpose is to enable the Rwandese church to function as the Body of Christ. We are seeking to not just provide schooling or pass on knowledge, but to disciple, foster life-change, develop the heart's ability to think and problem solve with the mind of Christ. We desire to be culturally relevant, but not in order to maintain the cultural status quo, but to challenge the culture and its strongholds.

NCM has been funding its ministries through missionary work funds, special projects and the fees collected from the students. We began 2007 with a deficit of \$12,000 in the operating expense budget of NCM. The Scheers went on home assignment (HA) and appealed for people or churches to commit to giving \$600 per year. So far we have over 60 such commitments and now have a balance in the operating expense fund nearly equal to the deficit of a year ago! We thank the Lord for this provision. In this way we are hoping to establish a firm base of funding for the NCM that will allow us to greatly expand our ministry. Part of that is to seek more contributions from the Rwandese themselves.

The main ministry of NCM in 2007 continued to be the Pastoral Training School (PTS).

The Pastoral Training School (PTS)

The PTS was started to serve the Rwandese churches by training their pastors. It's estimated that 80% of Rwandese churches are rural and pastored by:

- ◆ those with no formal Bible training
- ◆ those with only a primary school education
- ◆ those who farm to supply the needs of their families

These are the students of the PTS. Though there are some new training programs being established in Rwanda few are meeting this need. And fewer still have NCM's burden for culturally relevant discipleship.

The PTS graduated its first class of seventeen students in 2005. In 2007 we had 38 students in two classes, a 2nd year class and a 3rd year class. These students are from eleven different church denominations. We have recruited a new class for 2008. So far we have applications for over 35 students.

All these students are pastors. They study in intensive three-week blocks so they can continue to pastor their churches. There are 4 such terms each year, for 4 years. In each block they study two Bible/theology courses and English. Between blocks they must go back to their churches and fulfill a practical assignment.

The NCM Training Center

The basic buildings of the NCM Training Center were completed in 2005. We have all the buildings we need for our present ministries. All are basically furnished and usable:

- ◆ 4 offices
- ◆ library
- ◆ 3 classrooms
- ◆ dormitory that sleeps 70
- ◆ cafeteria

We are raising funds for Phase 3 of the building program, the building of staff housing. It is very difficult to find good housing to rent for our staff in this area of Kigali for a price within our budget constraints.

The children's ministry

In 2007 Audrey Sorensen joined our WorldVenture team to work with the Children's Ministry of NCM. Few churches have a children's ministry. Of those that do, few have it set up to really disciple the children. The NCM Children's Ministry will focus on training children's workers in the churches and then giving them on-going training, encouragement,

organization and accountability. She also hopes to help do teacher evaluation and training for ministries that are working with children.

NCM is praying for a Rwandese individual or couple who has a gift in children's work and has leadership gifts who could work with Audrey.

Degree-level school for leadership development

In looking at the future of church leadership in Rwanda, we've concluded that in 10 years many pastors should have a university level degree. The day in which primary school educated people can successfully pastor churches in Rwanda will come to an end. We will continue to train these primary school level leaders as long as they are pastors in Rwanda. But to impact the church and its leadership in the future we must train people at the university level.

NCM has, therefore, decided to establish a bachelor's level program for leadership. We ended 2007 in the beginning stages of planning for this project. Tim Brubaker is taking the lead in this project.

We hope that within 5 to 7 years we can accept our first students. Remarkably we have already taken significant steps to establish a university level library. Seed money has been given. A core of key books is about to be ordered and shipped.

We are proposing that this school train Christian leaders for Rwanda; this will be broader than just training pastors. The school will maintain the distinctives of NCM training:

- * block classes for ease of access for students,
- * focus on character development
- * development of thinking skills like analysis and problem solving
- * practical focus to all courses
- * small group discussions
- * personal contact and relationship with teachers

This is a huge undertaking and will be the object of much of our future prayer.

NCM programs being considered

Literature

NCM would like to revive its role in providing Christian literature for the Rwandese churches (before 1994 NCM had two staff members translating literature). Jessica Brubaker (see below) has a burden of this ministry. We would like to see an NCM newsletter or journal eventually come out of this ministry.

Seminars

NCM would like to periodically offer seminars targeting various ministries of the church, for example, youth workers, pastors of small churches, those in teaching ministries, etc.

Innovative Agricultural Demonstration Project

Gary Bennett has a burden for helping the rural pastors that come to the PTS with making the most of their meager land resources. Most Rwandese have postage stamp size farms. All farming is by hand. Much of the land is worn out and needs fertilizing to bring in a decent crop. There are methods being developed to help such farmers make the most of their land. If we help the pastors, they can pass it on to their people.

WorldVenture Missionaries in Rwanda

There were three families and one single woman with WorldVenture working with NCM by the end of 2007.

Gary Bennett

Gary Bennett serves as field treasurer/administrator. He is the builder for the NCM Training Center. Because of his years of experience in Africa he knows how to oversee building in the labor-intensive African way. NCM knows that the buildings would cost more money and be built less well if Gary Bennett were not heading it up. Gary also serves as an advisor to the Grace Churches of Rwanda, a small baptistic group of Rwandese churches. Note above also the Agricultural Demonstration Project he is heading up

Gary and his two girls had left the field on their last HA in 2004 still with the prayer request that God provide him with a wife and mother for the kids. Now they are back on the field with Barbara! Having just been back a year Barbara is in the midst of the struggle to learn the difficult language of Kinyarwanda. At the same time she's still adjusting to her new role as mom and wife.

Gary and Laurie Scheer

Gary Scheer is director of NCM. He works closely the board of NCM and its staff. He teaches in the PTS and is the head of the WorldVenture team in Rwanda. He also chairs the Kumbya Development Committee. Kumbya is the site of a spiritual life retreat center that the missionary community in Rwanda is seeking to develop.

Laurie serves as secretary for the field and for Gary. She teaches the English class in the PTS. She partners with Gary as head of the Rwanda team in caring for the pastoral needs of the WorldVenture team in Rwanda.

Tim and Jessica Brubaker

Tim and Jessica Brubaker are into the second half of their first term in Rwanda. Tim teaches in the PTS. He is heading up the project to start the degree-level program of NCM. Jessica is mom to their three kids, Thomas, Martin and Cecelia. She's giving advice and support to the women's program of the PTS.

Audrey Sorensen

Audrey has just finished her first full year in Rwanda. Having now a foundation in the language she's taking the beginning steps of getting the children's ministry established (as described above). Her need for a Rwandese partner is key to her moving ahead into this ministry.

What's ahead for 2008

In January we are accepting a new class for the PTS. We have 36 students enrolled. They come from 6 different church denominations. Later in the year we will hold the second graduation of the PTS. There are 16 in that class that should receive their diplomas.

We're praying that Audrey Sorenson can find a Rwandese partner for the children's ministry of NCM. By the end of 2008 we hope that she will have been able to begin training people in the churches to disciple the children.

The staff of NCM is considering adding another member in 2008. This is always a huge challenge to find someone with the qualifications and the heart for discipleship that characterizes NCM.

We are continuing to work on establishing a solid, on-going base of funding for the operation of NCM. We have an excellent start in the 600 Club, with over 60 people or churches giving \$600 per year to subsidize the studies of the students.

We are just beginning to raise funds for another phase of building. In this phase we are beginning to prepare for the degree-level program of NCM. This will involve building:

- ◆ housing for short-term teachers (duplexes)
- ◆ a main complex of classrooms, library and offices

Final word

We give God the glory for all He's accomplished in our great weakness, and look to Him to take us on into the fullness of His will for us in 2008.

Appendix

Rwanda field special projects – 2007

Children’s Ministry	903	\$3,000
Pastoral Training Center Construction	905	\$200,000
Rwandan Staff Scholarships	906	\$10,000
Church Roofs and Church Development	910	\$ 7,000
Nationals Training Nationals	926	\$20,000
Pastoral Student Scholarships		\$20,000

Personnel requests – 2007

Trainers/disciplers of national church leaders – long-term
 Trainer in family health and development – mid- or long-term
 Promoter/fund-raiser – mid- or long-term
 MK teacher – mid-term

Budget for NCM – 2007

Expenses:

	YEARLY
Transport	\$352.29
Office supplies	\$352.29
Kitchen supplies	\$286.24
Teaching materials	\$484.40
Student books	\$880.73
Electricity	\$1,100.92
Water	\$330.28
Telephone	\$176.15
Maintenance	\$1,321.10
Student supplies	\$660.55
Students meds	\$110.09
Worker medical	\$110.09
TOTAL	\$6,165.14
Wages	\$12,022.02
Taxes on wages	\$2,404.40
Adjunct teachers	\$396.33
TOTAL	\$14,822.75
Food	\$6,836.70
Women's program	\$1,302.75
GRAND TOTAL	\$29,127.34
Resources:	
School fees	\$2,884.40
NCM member dues	\$150.00
Alumni contributions	\$31.00
From Rwanda field budget	\$5,200.00
Contributions from the States	\$15,861.94
Contributions from missionaries	\$5,000.00
TOTAL	\$29,127.34

