

## Scheer's March Update -- 2005

Dear Friends,

### SOMETHING TO WRITE HOME ABOUT

Sunday we visited one of our student's churches on the outskirts of Kigali -- 320 people packed into the building. Seven choirs -- and the pastor said the church has 4 more that didn't sing that morning. "Nearly every Christian is a singer!" he told us. After the main service they served the Lord's Table (communion). Laurie and I looked at each other as under the table cover the pastor brought out a single drinking glass. Then we counted the people whose mouths it would pass through before getting to us -- 65! Then we silently prayed.

### GOOD NEWS:

We sent just a brief update in February asking you to pray for the retreat with the Executive Committee of NCM. Here's how it went -- we put it under "Good News" because it went extremely well.

My big prayer for this Executive Committee retreat was, first, that all would come. All nine of us were there, in spite of some serious issues -- like a child in the hospital for Laurent Katabirora! -- that could have kept some away.



Since it was a vision, goal-setting retreat, my prayer was that we would come away knowing that God had led us, that it was not just some kind of planning or goal-setting exercise that any secular organization might engage in. This prayer, too, was answered in a big way. How could we have this conviction that God was leading?

Without going into detail, I can best explain it like this. After a few hours of clearly understanding the purpose of NCM, and plenty of time in prayer and worship, each of us went off on his own, with a piece of paper and Bible and pen, for over 2 hours to ponder what God would say to NCM about its future. We came back together, each shared what he'd written down, and we short-handed it on the white-board in front of us.

It was my job, then, to see if or how it all fit together into some sort of pattern or consensus. I sat down before the white-board at 9PM, scribbled full of ideas, lit by two candles (the electricity went off about 6PM). With a mere 1 and 1/2 hours that night, and another hour in the morning before breakfast it all came together.

When I shared the findings with the group 9AM on Sunday morning, they were all amazed at the clear consensus and message that came out of the privately written ideas of 9 people. These thoughts focused on 4 things that NCM should work on in its present operations, 4 things that NCM used to do (before the war and genocide) that should be revived, and 4 new things that NCM should do in the future. This was no strained effort on my part to bend and squeeze into this pattern. It just fit.

More remarkable were the words and comments that each shared about the overall purpose and vision of NCM (both in term of thoughts and Bible verses). Writing them down in the order that they were shared was like writing out a well-planned lesson that I might teach, complete with opening comments, meat of the matter, and closing emphasis. At one point I had that tingly feeling run down my spine as I realized how remarkable it was -- I've been in a lot of planning sessions before and never experienced anything like this. It was literally awesome.

So we all went away knowing God had led us. In brief, the message to NCM is that NCM is to have a sort of prophetic role to the churches of Rwanda, calling them to live and operate as Christ to the Rwandese people. This is in a context wherein the Rwandese churches are too often a reflection of the strife, tribalism, greed, corruption, and immorality that characterizes the secular culture as a whole.

In a needy country like Rwanda, all sorts of ideas could have come up -- what about AIDS? what about street kids? what about joblessness? what about poor health care? infant mortality? and on and on. The clear mandate was that there are lots of organizations doing those kinds of things and doing them well. We applaud them, but --there is no organization like NCM! Every organization we could think of has been moved into the meeting of physical needs at the expense of the spiritual. And the church is showing it.

So thanks for praying. I'm not going to write anymore in this update -- it's pretty lengthy as it is, but I wanted to give you an idea of how we knew we were led by God in the retreat.

Let me finish with this proverb: "Utazi ubwenge ashima ubwe." --- "The stupid one praises himself."

There's a lot to this proverb: it indeed is foolish to praise yourself, for it never sounds good to others; no man is an island, there are always others involved in the success of anything; it is the fool who thinks he accomplishes what he does or has gotten where he has without God's providence. It is all true of our retreat and the praise I offer to God and to our executive committee and to you who prayed for us.

Partners in Him,  
Gary Scheer  
CBI -- Rwanda