

# Rwanda Ministry Trip Report

April 2007

‘Muraho’ to all our friends and supporters of the “Linking Arms with Rwanda” mission. If you would reply in Ikinyarwanda, you would say ‘Muraho Neza’, or a ‘very good hello to you to’’. It’s been a few days since arriving home from Rwanda with our team of seven, so I thought we’d give you an update with our impressions. For those who prayed for us, thank you so much, we felt lifted up every day. Our days were full from the early morning barking of dogs and chirping of birds to the going down of the African sun – I will attempt just to hit some of the main themes. This was my fourth trip to Africa, and every time it leaves a rich deposit.

## 1. The Team

Our Team consisted of two couples from the Halifax Vineyard Sending Team, Todd and Lisa Brousseau and Peter and Peggy O’Blenis, Rik Berry and Rob Smith from Valleygate Vineyard, and myself, Larry Levy. The team was great – everyone contributed through prayer ministry, words of encouragement, teaching, prophetic and artistic gifts, worship and farming, and a lot of hugs, tears and laughter.



## 2. The Finnerty’s

Pat and Val Finnerty with their boys Joel and Brendan arrived in Kigali, the capital city Rwanda in January of 2006 to follow God’s leading in working with Rwandans to establish a Vineyard church and help connect the emerging Vineyard churches in Central Africa. Amidst the usual high stress of cross cultural ministry, health and adjustment challenges, and spiritual warfare, we think they’re doing a fantastic job! The eleven of us stayed together in their home, often worshipping and praying with a different group each evening until the late hours. They are truly exhibiting servant leadership, building up the Rwandan people, learning the language and committed to seeing the vision come to pass.



### **3. The Mission**

It's hard to believe it's only been a year since Karen and I were in Kigali praying and dreaming with the Finnerty's and our daughter Michelle who had joined them for 6 months to help out. We were praying "God, how do you want to start this missional community? With whom? How? What do we do? God has led them to the poor in their own neighborhood. They have established 6 home groups among them with Rwandan facilitators. They are learning to worship, care for one another, pray for the sick, and they invite their friends! It's quite common for newcomers to give their lives to Christ in these home groups.

Part of our mission was to spend time with these home groups and encourage the new facilitators, helping them to see how important this was to building healthy community. We loved meeting in the home groups, laughing and weeping with them, many of them overwhelmed that 'muzungus' would want to be with them in their tiny homes. Because of the emphasis on home groups, when they started meeting on Sundays, just 7 weeks ago, they already had a growing sense of community, facilitators in place, and real sense of God among them. With adults and children, there were about 100 of us crammed into a little mud building – it won't be long before they will have to do something about a different space for Sunday mornings. We prayed for a lot of people with eye problems that morning, with several of them sharing how they sensed God touching them and healing them.

We spent 2 days with the home group facilitators building relationship and looking at such areas as "What is the Church" and "How to Build Healthy Home Groups". It was a lot of fun as we tried to understand one another through partial translation and lots of hugs and prayers.



Some of you had heard that next to the small building the church is renting for Sunday meetings is a large piece of land that would be suitable for a community garden. While we were there, they got the land ready for planting and using some of the unique methods of “Farming God’s Way”, a development program in Africa, we spent a Saturday planting corn and beans with our Rwandan friends.

This is part of the ‘wholistic’ mission of what is developing: the birthing of a multiplying missional community which will seek to make disciples of Jesus and be creative in meeting the practical needs of people. All ready, through the young church’s offerings, and from our partnering here in the ‘West’ they have been able to help over 60 people obtain social insurance which enables them to receive medical care. As things develop they would love to see literacy classes, small business initiatives with micro credit, and further sustainable agricultural projects.



We also made a trip to Burundi to meet with the leaders of new and growing Vineyard in the capital city of Bujumbura. The 17 hour return bus trip was certainly worth it as we sat under the stars, worshipped and encouraged each other with God stories. We took Antoine with us, who is the young man providing the key leadership in the Kigali church next to Pat and Val. Here is Ananias(left), pastor of the Burundian church, with Antoine (right), next to Lake Tanganyika, the longest fresh water lake in the world, and the second deepest.



#### **4. Partnership and Prayer**

We come back home with the usual jumble of emotions, grateful for the opportunity to be a small part of God's plan, and committed more than ever to this African adventure. We're still in the beginning stages of what we hope to be a long and fruitful partnership. We are looking for more individuals and churches to join the partnership in both prayer and financial support. We are at about 80% of what we need for the Finnerty's support, and we want to continue to partner with the Rwandan leaders in the development projects they initiate. To receive prayer bulletins and the Finnerty newsletter you may contact our sending team leader Laura McDonald at [lauramcd@eastlink.ca](mailto:lauramcd@eastlink.ca) For financial contributions you may contact Anne Marie at [anniemarie@eastlink.ca](mailto:anniemarie@eastlink.ca)

Murakoze (thank you) for allowing us to share this brief report and the privilege of partnering together, many blessings, Larry Levy

