

Sisters Community Church reaches out to Rwanda

Sisters Community Church (SCC) reached around the world with funds to support the School Entrepreneurship Network (SEN) in Rwanda. SEN's mission is to teach discipleship and entrepreneurship to young people and to recover a 1946 dedication by King Mutara III, who dedicated Rwanda to Christ the King. On Sunday, October 27, 1946 in Nyanza, King Mutara III, kneeling at the foot of the altar, dedicated Rwanda to Christ the King with the prayer:

"Lord Jesus, King of all men and all nations, I Mutara Charles Leon Pierre, I bow to you... I acknowledge that You are the sovereign Master of Rwanda, the root from which all power and spell power. Lord Jesus, You who have shaped our country... Now that we know You, we acknowledge publicly that You are our Master and our King. Lord I give you my country and myself."

Rwanda is located in central/eastern sub-Saharan Africa, and is bordered by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west, Uganda to the north, Tanzania to the east, and Burundi to the south. It is about the size of the state of Maryland, with a population of about 11 million people. The population consists of three ethnic tribes: 85 percent Hutu, 14 percent Tutsi, and 1 percent Twa.

Ethnic rivalry has existed in Rwanda for centuries, with the Hutu majority being subservient to the Tutsi. Belgium was given control of Rwanda after World War II and exacerbated the rivalry by favoring the taller Tutsi.

The tribal rivalry increased dramatically in the 1950s, when Rwanda gained independence and the majority Hutus began to express contempt for years of subservience to the Tutsis. The Hutus

began a series of massacres that climaxed in 1994 with the genocide of more than 800,000 Tutsis in a 90-day period while the world stood by paralyzed. The movie "Hotel Rwanda" is a reasonably accurate portrayal of this horrific event. The genocide ended when General Paul Kagame organized the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in Uganda among refugees that had fled because of the Hutu persecution. The RPF invaded Rwanda and took control of the government.

Paul Kagame is now the elected president of the Republic of Rwanda.

In 2010, Regent University Center for Entrepreneurship (RCE), Virginia Beach, VA, opened a Business Development Center (BDC) in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, and began teaching a 14-week course in entrepreneurship with the objective of teaching students to transform their ideas into small businesses. More than 300 Rwandans have completed this training, and more than 50 percent of the graduates have started their own small business.

Habinshute Patrice was a graduate of the first class and won a prize for his idea of organizing entrepreneurship clubs in every high school in Rwanda. Patrice, with Bernard and Anaclet, who were college mates, formed a group that is now called School Entrepreneurship Network (SEN) and began organizing clubs in high schools in each of the provinces of Rwanda.

In 2012 RCE advertised on the Regent University alumni web site for volunteer mentors to assist BDC graduates in their ventures. Richard Miller, a Regent graduate and a member of Sisters Community Church, volunteered and was assigned to mentor Patrice. Richard visited Rwanda in July 2012

and traveled to several of the high schools where SEN had organized entrepreneurship clubs. In conjunction with SEN, Richard developed a training course for high school students to be presented at various high school locations throughout Rwanda.

In July 2014, Rwanda held a National Award ceremony focusing on groups that work among the youth of Rwanda. SEN received "The Most Creative Award." This award was presented to SEN for their amazing work in training high school students how to start a small business in response to the presidential initiative to rebuild Rwanda by infusing the youth with a spirit of entrepreneurship.

When the Sisters Community Church (SCC) Mission Committee learned of the Rwanda mission, they invited Miller to present a proposal for support for the project. Since the SCC emphasis is on discipleship and Patrice had recently been converted, the SEN training program was modified to incorporate discipleship with entrepreneurship. SEN called their modified approach to training "Caravans," because they declared, "We are traveling throughout Rwanda with training stops at every high school."

A Caravan Stop begins Friday evening, continues all day Saturday and Sunday. Phase One of the Caravan is titled "Who I am in Christ," based upon Biblical teaching. Phase Two is titled "What I Do," based upon standard business principles and teaches the elements of a successful business plan. Each attendee is provided a training manual and a Bible in their native language of Kinyarwanda.

Several of the entrepreneurship clubs have started small businesses. One club



PHOTO PROVIDED

Richard Miller with entrepreneurship class graduate Habinshute Patrice.

in a school by a large lake is developing a fish processing business. Another club raises rabbits, another raises chickens. One of the clubs visited in July 2014 had started raising pigs, but someone stole their pigs. So SEN issued a challenge to the members of the club to develop a business plan for restarting their business with three pigs, including a safeguard against theft. The club presented such an outstanding business plan using

the guide from the Caravan training manual that SEN, with funds provided by SCC, funded the project for three female pigs with the provision that out of the first litter, one pig is to be given to another club.

The Mission Committee of Sisters Community Church has provided more than \$18,000 to SEN to conduct the Caravans. For more information on the program contact SCC at 541-549-1201.

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