

# SPREADING THE GOSPEL IN RWANDA



**BY RACHEL HERBECK**  
Rwanda Mission Team Member

Rachel Herbeck is the Director of Young Adult Discipleship for Renewal Ministries and hosts *Burning Hearts*, a daily podcast and radio program. She received her degree in Catholic Studies from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. Rachel has worked extensively in youth ministry and speaks to youth and young adults at retreats, conferences, and events in the US and Canada. She currently resides in Plymouth, Michigan.

In October, I had the privilege of joining Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw on a Renewal Ministries mission to Rwanda. I have served on our mission to Mexico many times, but this was my first time serving on a mission in a different country. Renewal Ministries has been working with the Charismatic Renewal in Rwanda for over twenty years. The Lord led us there in a particular way after the genocide as He began to do a profound work of healing in the country. The core message of this trip, in addition to the preaching of the gospel, was finding freedom in Christ through prayer and the five keys of Unbound ministry. Throughout our time there, the Lord revealed His love and the power of the gospel through signs and wonders, and we witnessed miracles and freedom found in Christ through prayer ministry and the Eucharist.

We spent significant time in two dioceses: the diocese of Ruhengeri and the diocese of Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda. The first week in Ruhengeri was spent teaching and preaching the gospel and offering Unbound ministry every day. Many of the people we had worked with on missions in the past had experienced incredible freedom through Unbound prayer and desired for us to train other leaders in the charismatic renewal in the principles of Unbound—repentance and faith, forgiveness, renunciation, authority, and the Father’s blessing. Each day

we had about 1,000 people gather at the cathedral there. We sang, danced, and worshipped the Lord. Nancy and Lloyd taught about how to step into our God-given authority over the evil one. Two of the core spirits that the Lord combats there are a spirit of unforgiveness and a spirit of witchcraft. There is great faith in the people, but there are also deep wounds from the genocide and from the significant presence of witch doctors. We saw great fruit as the Lord destroyed the yoke of bondage that these spirits cause.

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#### ONE STORY AMONG MANY

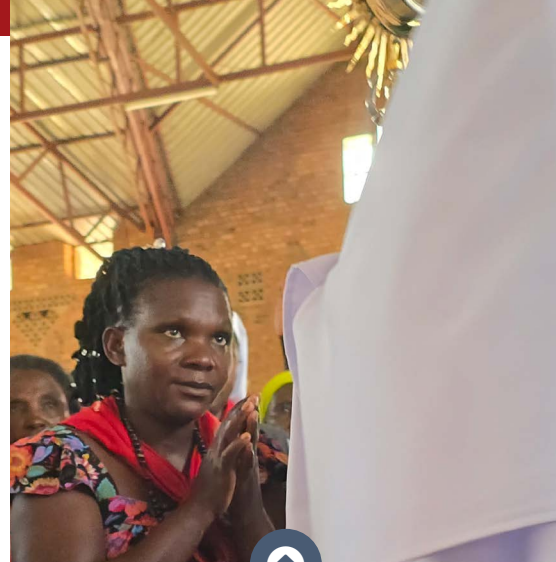
One of the most powerful ways I saw this was when we had the opportunity to pray with people and walk them through the five keys of Unbound. After the teachings each day, we would spend some time praying with people and hearing their stories. I could write pages about the amazing work the Lord did in these encounters, but I will share one particular story that represents how the Lord was working. We prayed with a young woman in her thirties who had a swollen leg from her knee down to her toe. It had been very swollen for seventeen years. As we began to talk, pray, and hear her story, we discovered that when she was young, a neighbor had put a curse on her that she would never get married. At various times, different members of her family had also brought her to a witch doctor to seek healing for her leg. In addition, she shared about sexual encounters that had left her feeling broken and empty. As we prayed, we invited her to renounce the spirits that had gained power over her through the witch doctors and to forgive the men who hurt her. There was a point where she forgave a particular man who had sexually taken advantage of her. As she forgave this man, the swelling in her leg began to go down right before our eyes. It continued to shrink until it was essentially the same size as her normal leg. As this happened, she cried and thanked the Lord over and over again for healing her and setting her free. Her spirit was so light and her smile so joyful, it was clear the Lord not only physically healed her but set her free internally from unforgiveness and spirits of darkness.

#### THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

To end our time in Ruhengeri, there was a closing Mass where the Lord continued to pour out his healing graces upon all of us. The organizers were expecting 2,000 people in an outdoor venue right outside the cathedral. When Mass began, they counted approximately 35,000 people who showed up. We enjoyed a beautiful liturgy together, and immediately following the Mass, the priests exposed Jesus in the monstrance and began a Eucharistic procession that lasted for hours. As Jesus passed through the crowds, it was easy to lose sight of Him because of the sea of humans surrounding the priest carrying the monstrance. The only way I could identify his location was by the crowd surrounding his presence that would erupt in dancing and worship with such vigor, energy, and reverence. As the Eucharist passed by the people, Jesus was casting out demons, healing the sick, and above all, moving people to worship and adore Him in such an amazing and profound way. It was clear that the people present had a profound conviction that in their poverty what they needed the most was for Jesus to pass by them. The most important thing was to get in front of Jesus in the Eucharist and allow Him to do the work.

#### AN INSATIABLE DESIRE

Seeing Him work in the lives of individuals in such a deep way through prayer and witnessing the power of the Eucharist truly deepened my faith.



A Eucharistic procession ended the closing liturgy in Ruhengeri.

I was so moved by the palpable hunger of the people. Like me, they were weak and broken, but they showed up with an amazing hunger and desperation for God. They came with a deep conviction that He could and would work in their lives and in their circumstances in ways that were unimaginable. We made a commitment to the Lord that we would return home and share the stories of what He had done, so that our faith would increase. God wants to deepen in each one of us a hunger for Him, an insatiable desire that only He can fill. We are used to filling this space with other people, entertainment, pleasures, or even “catholic things” or content that are still not Jesus himself. Our prayer is that these miracles grow in us a deeper desire for God and for his will to be done on the earth.

Pictured left to right: Rachel Herbeck, Bishop Papias Musengamana of the Diocese of Byumba, Tom Hornacek, Nancy and Lloyd Greenhaw, Dr. Francois Xavier Ngabonziza, and Fr. Epimaque Makuza.

