

Rwanda Challenge 2017

Upcoming Events

August – Teach church leaders in Rwanda assisted by Tim Turner and Winfred Felton

September — Teach in Rwanda and broaden my experience of the Church in Europe

November — Attend the International Conference on Missions in Peoria, IL

January — First scheduled trip to Rwanda in 2018

The Vision

Local church leaders throughout Rwanda who have the capacity to lead the Rwandan Church and become missionaries to neighboring countries.

God Opens and Closes Doors

The Apostle Paul experienced doors that opened, closed, and often opened again. On his 1st Missionary Journey he was stoned in Lystra (Acts 14:20), but the next day traveled to Derbe. One day the people of Lystra want to worship Paul and Barnabas and on another day they stone Paul. One day the door is wide open. On another day, it is time to move to the next town.

Paul and Barnabas... sailed back to Antioch...
and reported how God had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. Acts 14:23-27

On Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey he travels to Derbe and then Lystra. Where he was previously stoned and "left for dead," the Church is evidently alive and well. This is where young Timothy (probably converted along with his mother on the stoning visit) joins Paul and Silas on this 2nd journey. Next, "the Holy Spirit" (16:6), also called "the Spirit of Jesus" (16:7), closes the doors to Asia and Bithynia. But in Troas Paul hears the Macedonian call. God continued to open and close doors in the life of Paul up to and beyond the end of Acts, including prison and death.



Eastern Europe

But some say the book of Acts is still being written; in both mundane and supernatural ways, and God continues to open and close doors.

We sense new doors are being opened to Rwanda Challenge in various places in the world. Last December I was introduced to the Church in Poland. This September I plan to respond to another invitation in Eastern Europe. Lord willing, I will visit Messianic synagogue leaders in Israel next year. The RC oversight team has agreed that I should respond to these opportunities and let God continue to confirm which doors are open and which doors are closed.

2017 Highlights

December 2016 — Preached and taught in Poland the last two weeks of December

**January — Taught seven groups of church leaders in Rwanda
Conducted first full web-based teaching (NC to Kigali)
Preached for English speaking church in Bilbao, Spain**

**March — Shared RC with Towne South Church of Christ, Elizabeth City, NC and
County Line Christian Church, Axton, VA**

May/June — Bob and Marie Paddock joined me in teaching in Rwanda

Three Major Victories in May

The trip to Rwanda in May was filled with many blessings. Let me share with you three major victories.

First, there was *Gold Stone: A Narrative Approach to dealing with Trauma*. Marie Paddock, a licensed professional counselor, was prepared to spend a week with Rwandan church leaders dealing with major trauma they have experienced as a result of the 1994 genocide, etc. Marie's husband, Bob, and I were cautiously optimistic about the week. The success of the week was very much dependent on how much the church leaders were willing to reveal concerning their pain. By Wednesday, Marie, through the Holy Spirit, had brought them to the point they openly shared confidential things I had never heard. They shared things Theophile, my Rwandan partner, had never heard. Here is one small glimpse; imagine your family (spouse, children, maybe parents, siblings) has been slaughtered and you are fleeing to another country, leaving everything behind. In one week I saw a group of Rwandan church leaders grow deeper in Christian community than I had seen in my seven years with them.

A second victory was "Lessons on James" which the church leaders created. The week after Bob and Marie departed, we resumed our journey in the New Testament letters. I thought it was time to see what they could create. So, we divided them into three groups with the resources Rwanda Challenge provided; the *Kinyarwanda Study Bible* with text and study notes, and the commentary on James from the *Africa Bible Commentary*. Each group prepared a lesson on a section of James and then shared the results with the larger group. Then, as one group, they created lessons that we were able to print. In August we hope to finish James and send each church leader home with a copy of "Lessons on James: Prepared by Leaders of Harvest Christian Church."

A third major victory was microloans; a hand up, not a handout. \$2,100 was given by four churches in Virginia and North Carolina to forty-two widows/prostitutes, representing three Rwandan churches. These \$50 loans help a Rwandan woman start a small business, reject a life of shame, and with dignity, provide for her children, participate in a small accountability group, and with joy share in the life of the local church. God is to be praised for those who gave and the difference these gifts will make for forty-two families.

Prayer Requests (Phil. 1:9-11)

- Ask for wisdom and discernment in equipping Rwandan church leaders
- We prayed to God for *Gold Stone*. Now, let's praise Him for the healing He is doing in the lives of Rwandan church leaders
- Continue to pray for open doors in other countries as RC seeks to invest in church leaders who desire to know God's Word

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Rwanda Challenge

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