

Rwanda Challenge 2018

Upcoming Events

March — Share RC with churches in VA/NC

April/May — Israel and Rwanda.

714 Churches Shut Down in Kigali

The Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) began in February to implement their anticipated crackdown on faith-based organizations (FBOs); predominately churches. Over 700 churches were shut down for operating below the minimum required standards: regulations such as standard structures, sanitation requirements, location of churches and certificates of operation. There were also issues of noise pollution and allegations of pastors preaching misleading sermons. This has advanced talks that religious leaders in the country should also acquire theological training. This initial implementation of these regulations are expected to be applied throughout Rwanda in the coming weeks and months; 1400 churches now closed according to my latest information. Police in Rwanda have arrested six pastors suspected of planning to disrupt the ongoing crackdown.

Implications for Rwanda Challenge

Rwanda requires churches to be registered under a Bishop over a group of churches. While Rwanda Challenge teaches church leaders from many denominations, our primary group is Harvest Christian Church under Bishop Theophile Rugubira. Thirty-two of the sixty-one churches Theophile oversees have now been affected by the closings. Some of the churches see the requirements as insurmountable. Others view the improvements as difficult, but not impossible. Some worshippers will find new congregations from a variety of denominations.

RC will be evaluating the future issue of theological training. Theophile thinks the certificates given by RC will make a difference for now. If actual degrees are required in the future, that will be much more difficult. Only a small percentage of church leaders in Rwanda have theological degrees.

We need “knowledge and depth of insight...to discern” (Philippians 1:9) what we can/should/will do to help our Christian brothers and sisters in Rwanda.



**Bersheba Church (January newsletter)
that Baptized Eight, now Closed**

2018 Highlights

January — Taught four groups of church leaders in Rwanda including web-based teaching (VA to Kigali)

The Vision

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

Israel and Rwanda

My (Frank) next trip to Rwanda will be April/May. Lord willing, before I arrive in Kigali, my first destination will be northwest Israel. I will visit friends I met in Poland and teach some local church leaders. The churches are predominately Messianic Jews. There are four basic priorities for my time in Israel.

- To be an encouragement to my new friends (1st core value of RC is "Relational")
- To teach church leaders in Israel who, in turn, can teach other church leaders (3rd and 4th core values of RC are "Sustainable" and "Reproducible")
- To learn more about the Church in Israel in 2018: what are the needs of leaders?
- To visit a few historic sites in northwest Israel

After Israel, the plan is to continue to Rwanda and teach four groups. Besides the normal teaching schedule, I will be listening to/evaluating the stories of the church closings (see page 1) in Rwanda. No doubt, some of the more difficult stories will come from leaders whose churches have been closed. They will lack the financial resources to comply with the government requirements. While I am concerned about this difficulty, the discussion in the government about Bible training for church leaders could lead to a bigger obstacle for the churches. The majority of church leaders in Rwanda have no Bible degree. The government would view many church leaders as not knowing the Bible and teaching dangerous things. I would agree. The Church in Rwanda, Theophile and I will need your prayers.

Prayer Requests (Phil. 1:9-11)

- Ask for wisdom and discernment in equipping Rwandan church leaders
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide in the Israel trip
- Please seek God for our brothers and sisters in Rwanda as the government seeks to bring about healthier church settings and teaching

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Rwanda Challenge

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