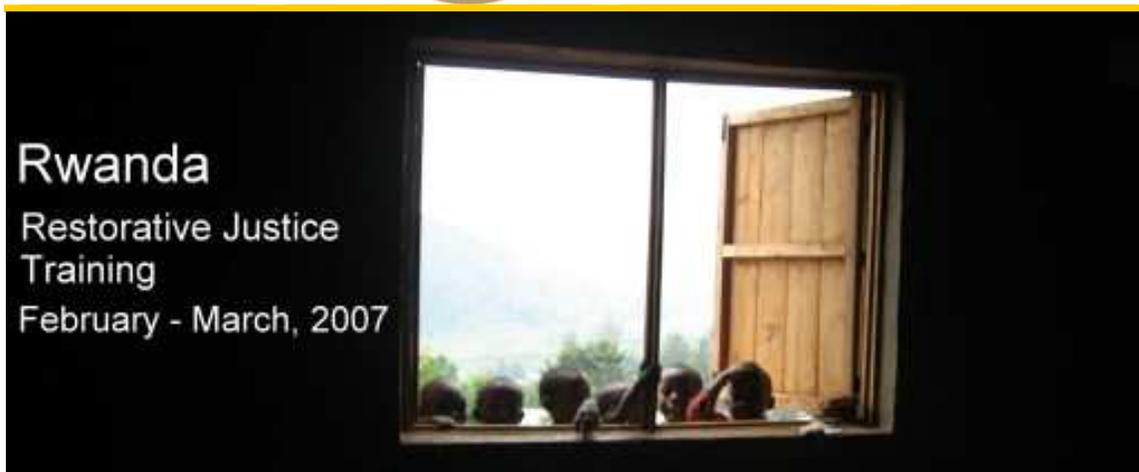




## Rwanda Report

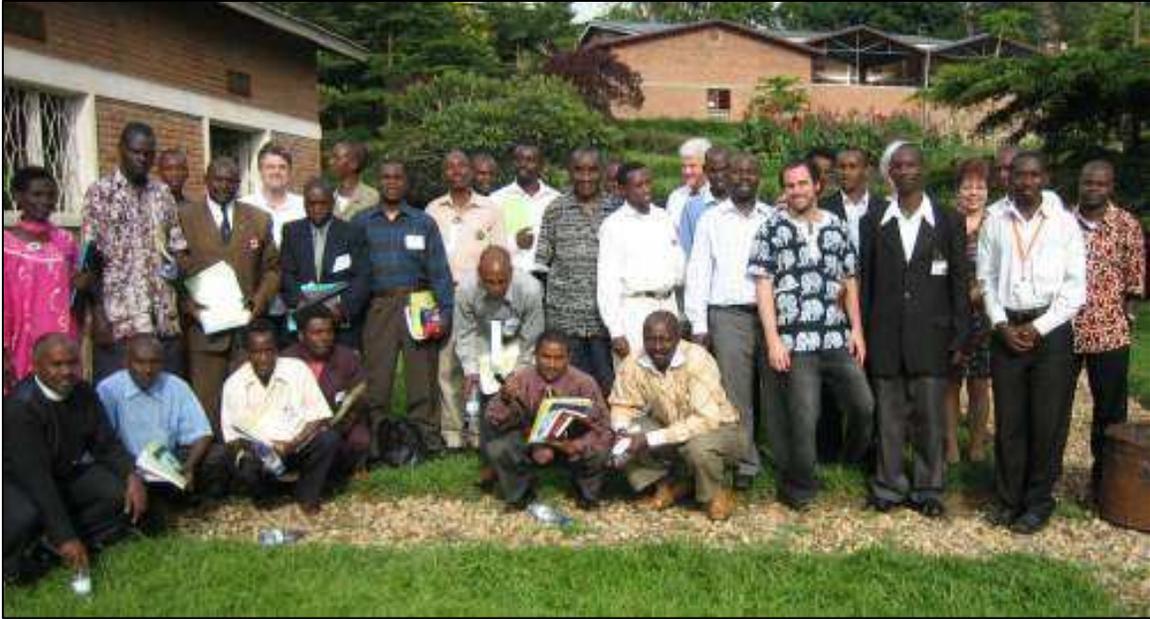


Our first training adventure under the auspices of our new organization, Just.Equipping, took place in Rwanda February 22 to March 12, 2007. It was a time of grace and a time of sadness, a time of thirst and a time of watering. We were overwhelmed by the resolve of our brothers and sisters there who are determined with God's help to contribute to Rwanda's new beginnings. We soon felt part of a vital family committed to building the Kingdom.



Let me introduce the team: Reverend Rod Carter, Director of the Restorative Justice Program, Queen's Theological College, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. Reverend Doctor Pierre Allard, President, Just.Equipping (recently retired Assistant Commissioner, Correctional Service Canada and President, International Prison Chaplains' Association). Ms. Sue Morse, John Howard Society, Ottawa, Ottawa

Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Jeff Denault, B.A. Criminology, Assistant. Judy Allard, Team Organizer, Just.Equipping.



We landed at Kigali International Airport Saturday night and were met with warm hugs from Reverend John Ngabo and Reverend Kizungu, and soft, warm rain – a wonderful contrast to the snow we had left behind in Ottawa. Off to the Iris Guest House, and up the next morning to attend John’s Sunday morning celebration at the Eglise Episcopale du Rwanda (EER) in Gatsata. The service was great – 100 or more people, lots of singing and drumming on a marvelous instrument made from an old oil can and a cowhide top, and translation for us from Kinyarwanda to French or English. We felt that we had truly worshiped together even if we had taken our life in our hands getting up and down the steep and deeply rutted mountain road. John tells us that it is impassable in the rainy season.

We then went to the Kigali Central Prison 1930 to join in their afternoon service. We gathered with several hundred men for singing, preaching and dancing. A dozen or more clergy, themselves incarcerated, took part. It was our first meeting with XX, a small man with one leg and a fiery smile who danced his welcome to us ferociously. We were very thankful to Chaplain Kizungu Ntampaka for this opportunity.

Time for a comment about Rwanda – Land of a Thousand Hills. It is spectacularly beautiful, with green hills rolling away to the horizon covered with houses, terraced farming plots and equatorial vegetation. Pictures do not do it credit!

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## Chaplains Training



### Day 1

Monday we began in earnest our 1-week training program in Restorative Justice with thirty prison chaplains from Rwanda, Burundi and DR Congo. We had rented a meeting room at the Scripture Union building. Dorm space and meals for the participants were here as well. After introductions (including the mysterious Mr. K in his bandages – aka Jeff Denault), Sue played her flute, we had readings from Amos, Micah and Romans, a word from Pierre and a prayer from John. Each participant received a

package with pen, paper, schedule, reading list, team profiles, J.E bookmark and recorder.

Pierre then 'lost' his wedding ring and after help from the group to find it, gave his first session on "RJ - A lost treasure".

Sue followed with her first lesson for the recorder and spoke about how music was not only therapeutic, but it obliged us to learn new reflexes and to practice them. The participants were delighted with this unexpected course content!

After a break, Rod gave an introductory session to basic RJ principles.

Monday afternoon began with an RJ dance featuring 6 partners: the victim, offender and community as well as listening, truth-telling and restoration. Rod followed with a basic theology of RJ, touching on covenant living, practicing reconciliation and walking in Shalom.

Sue jumped in with another recorder lesson – three notes!

Pierre then helped the group to build their own history wall in three sections, Personal, Political and Prisoners, in two time frames 1960-1993 and 1994-2007.

The results, recorded on a 30-foot wall paper, were powerfully sobering and heart-breaking. We prayed Romans 8:28 together.

Five people were then invited to pop up in their seats and share what the day had brought them. Enough for Day 1!



## **Day 2**

Sue began with music and our 'Grounding' readings were from the Psalms and Romans. We created a visual flower with people kneeling, standing and praising in prayer. African singing was wonderful as usual.

Rod spoke about the 'Roots of Violence', with particular reference to the Zimbardo Stanford Prison Experiment. Translation of this session was a challenge (Kinyarwanda/Swahili/French). He then looked at Carl Jung and the area of Shadow and Transference, much appreciated by the participants. We divided into groups and discussed whether moral failure had led to such atrocities as the bombing of Hiroshima. Several scripture references were given as evidence of this behaviour.

Sue interspersed another music lesson – a welcome break for everyone.

After a break, Rod spoke about the essential roles of dehumanization and demonization in violent reactions.

The various groups gave feedback, and Pierre and Rod led informal discussion circles. Those who needed a lighter note spent some time with their music tutor, Sue, who started the afternoon by adding another note to her students' repertoire and reinforcing it later on.

Pierre introduced Biblical Justice as Restorative Justice, using the book of Genesis as an illustration of this. Conclusion: Jesus was the perfect victim.

Three small groups were formed to discuss: How could what we looked at today affect my ministry?

The day ended with a Pop-up time – thoughtful and positive comments from several.

## **Day 3**

The Grounding began with flute and a reading from Ezekiel – dry bones. Our five-member team then confessed to moral failure in areas for which we carry

responsibility in our Canadian context. We were joined in prayer, confession and song by our brothers and sisters and witnessed the Spirit's moving.

Rod presented on the subject of 'Change' and spoke of his own journey. Sue gave another music lesson. Appolinaire Kayitavu Mpumuro was invited to share a report on Human Rights in conjunction with his work at the University of Rwanda. Documentation on Human Rights from the United Nations as well as HIV/Aids hand-outs were provided.

Rod continued by asking the participants to identify resources and people who help us to make changes. Questions were distributed for discussion. Again, there was some difficulty with comprehension and translation.

Sue made us practice our scales!

Pierre began a study of RJ and the Offender. During this time, Sue shared her work at the John Howard Society. Pierre then moved to RJ and the Victim, stressing the importance of the well-being of the victim – safety, autonomy and relatedness.

We finished with 'Pop-up What' comments on the day.

#### **Day 4**

Our Grounding began with a community circle around a 'Hurting One' to protect him from the 'Roaring Lion' (Simba Simeon!) stalking, from our Bible reading.

Learned 'Bind us Together Lord'.

Pierre continued his look at Victims, touched on Howard Zehr's 6 questions, and discussed Forgiveness and Forgetting. A prayer was offered for victims.

Pierre then moved to RJ and the community. Community Chaplaincy (CC) for Ex-Offenders, Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA) and Restorative Justice (RJ) Week were mentioned.

Rod introduced 'The Attributes of a Good Chaplain': call from God, Micah 6:8, Bonhoeffer, Proverbs 31:8.

Sue began rehearsing her orchestra for their performance of 'Alleluia'.

Rod continued to share the role of chaplain in the ministry of reassurance, and spoke of the commitment of prison volunteers.

The chaplains were then invited to share their experiences. About 20 chaplains talked of their joys and struggles, immense suffering and hopes for the future: "Big wounds need big medicine", "Join with us!", "God gave me love for prisoners", "Tell the community that we have changed", "The guards started trusting me", "There is pitiful suffering of prisoners. They have no food, medicine", "We baptized 72 prisoners, all of us dressed in their uniforms", "How will we put RJ into practice in my context?", "RJ in prison is half the job – the other half is in the community", "When I acknowledged my call to work with victims, they started coming out – we have a group of over 300 meeting now", "I have prayed for a time like this", "The community is not happy to receive released prisoners and we are not equipped to deal with this", "We are amazed to see people saved in prison and then ministering there", "A prisoner said: Don't come to me. I am already dead. They were eating banana skins", "I go in because I was a prisoner", "The over-crowding is terrible", "We need to value all human beings", "God has changed many lives", "We need faith".

Sue held a stirring practice for the concert tomorrow.  
Pierre finished the day with an expose of Biblical Footprints of RJ from Exodus, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea and Jonah.  
Several participants popped up to comment on the day.

## Day 5



On our last day, we went from 'Grounding' every morning to 'Flying'. We removed the old History Wall and as a group we took it outside and burned it, praying and singing in a circle. We felt burdens of the past rising in the smoke. Praise God!

Sue had a serious practice with her students.

Rod then addressed Miracles and Parables in the New Testament. There are around 40, there is no single interpretation, in prison we adapt them

to the situation. Jesus was reluctant about miracles, feeling that they would be misunderstood, but the focus was on healing.

Sue had another serious practice with her students.

Rod and Pierre led the group in a discussion of the question: Think of a difficult time in your life. How did you react and how would you react differently now in the light of restorative justice? Several people shared their responses.

A community circle of all those who had befriended Mr K. was created around him. He had become better as the week progressed and was now calling himself Mr. K.F.P. Kubabarira (Forgiveness in Kinyarwanda). In forgiving, he had healed himself.

Sue polished the final rehearsal.

Pierre invited all to fill out a new wall under the banner: There is hope in your future, Jeremiah 31:17. The wall was Personal and Ministry/Work, 2007-2010 and 2011 on.

Pierre then addressed the need for a Vision and a Mission in our work, and the need for cooperation with other groups. As his advice as the elder in the group, he encouraged all to 1-Take care of yourself, 2-Obey your spouse, 3-Never, never, never give up.

## Closing

The participants had prepared a Declaration which was read during the closing ceremony.

The Recorder Orchestra under the direction of Sue played Alleluia.

Appreciation was expressed for the week and for John Ngabo's efforts, with prayers and great singing.

Each chaplain was given a Certificate of Attendance signed by Rod and Pierre. This was in a package with The Little Book on Restorative Justice, a CD of the

Pam Hodges Trio, a Canadian crest, and a gift of \$20 from Bethany Baptist Church.

Then we celebrated with maple sugar candy for everyone!

## **Prison Directors and Leaders Training Tuesday, March 6, 2007**



### **Serena Hotel, Kigali**

After introductions by Coordinator Reverend John Ngabo, and flute music by Sue, we began a day's training with the Prison Directors from all the prisons in Rwanda as well as a Member of Parliament, Crown Prosecutor and Prison Superintendent.

Pierre presented RJ as a lost treasure.

Rod looked at various definitions of RJ and the issue of 'disrespect'. He used both overheads and handouts. After looking at the principles of RJ, there was time for questions.

Lunch was provided at the hotel.

Pierre then spoke about the Correctional Service Canada as an organization and the prison sub-culture. He talked about its mission and values. He looked in some detail at the Situational Management Model, CAPRA, and pp4-5 of the Memorandum.

Pierre shared the experiences of CC for Ex-offenders, COSA and RJ week. He provided several hand-outs.

Rod continued with a short look at the roots of violence and Carl Jung/ shadow/transference. He then mentioned qualities of a good leader.

Important questions were raised: 'Why are you afraid to admit that punishment is part of corrections?' 'We believe that beating is necessary'.

Pierre closed with three slides and a challenge to creativity, courage and compassion.

Appreciation was expressed for the day.



The team, or parts thereof, spent another wonderful Sunday at the Kigali Central Prison 1930 where Chaplain Kizungu oversaw the baptism of 24 prisoners. Sue was always available to play for them. Rod preached at Enoch's Pentecostal Church.

We visited the Pre-school program at John's Gatsata church and brought the 64 little ones a yogurt and muffin snack. We were also able to leave a small amount of craft material with the teacher. The program is full of energy but sorely lacking in resources.

We next travelled by van to Gisenyi on the DR Congo border and stayed overnight at the Urumwe Guest House. We visited the prison there and were wonderfully welcomed with song and traditional dance. The Director, Roger Gahaya, and Chaplains Lazare and Jean Bosco Kamondo thanked us and gave us a thank you letter for medicines received. This was very humbling as our offerings were so small. The inmates also read us a letter of intent for our visit. We had the occasion to visit and speak at the Transition Camp not far from Kigali. There were 1700 prisoners housed under tarpaulins in a field. They would spend 30 days there before release back into their former communities. Lectures are given in the new political and legal realities of Rwanda and life skills are suggested for the return to community. These people are filled with more fear than anticipation, more insecurity than joy, more good intentions than resources. Thank God for those who visit them with a message of encouragement and concern.

Upon our return to Kigali, we went directly to visit the Warden, **Ms Dativa Mnyangezi**, at **Kigali Central Prison 1930**. She graciously shared her life experience with us – she herself is a genocide survivor. Chaplaincy was discussed and she expressed the possibility that it be included formally in the Correctional system organizational chart. This is very encouraging for Rwanda and would open so many doors for the chaplaincy in the country and surrounding regions.

From Ms Dativa's office we went inside the Male Section of the prison. A path was made for us through the mass of humanity. The living conditions are suffocatingly difficult, unbearable but for the grace of God. In the Female Section of 1930, we spent time talking and singing with the women and children. We were offered two meaningful gifts: a baby to Sue (!! ) and a superb handcrafted basket. We kept the basket and have it here in the office as a permanent reminder of that wonderful time. We gave the cuddly baby back to the grateful mother!

Our last day, we had a farewell lunch with several of the local chaplains and family members. We shared little gifts we had brought (we had given gift bags to



a chaplain's wife as we visited an institution with him, and a small gift of money from Just.Equipping). Rod's T-shirts were very popular! During our stay in Rwanda we were privileged to visit two genocide memorials, The Kigali Memorial Centre, and the Ntarama Church Genocide Site and to see many more as we passed along the roads. Each was unforgettable. We were left without words, but with enormous admiration for those living and forging ahead. We are not able to

understand how this could have happened. We do feel God in the healing and rebuilding and in the respect with which these places are treated.

Similarly, the overcrowded prisons, sometimes without the necessities of food, clothing, medicine and adequate shelter, are desolate places of misery. Yet it is there that we danced and sang and praised God with brothers and sisters and assured each other that 'there is hope in our future'.

How can we thank our brothers and sisters – now family – in Rwanda for this time with them? How can we thank God? We will try to continue our fight for them and with them in matters of criminal and social justice. We will try to share with them our vision of a justice that restores shalom, health, healing, compassion and community. We will remember them in prayer and pray that the Kingdom will come quickly for them. And we will look into our own hearts.

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## Comments:

As Team Organizer, I would like to add:

1. A Follow-up Committee for the Great Lakes Region was set up. Members are John Ngabo, Appollinaire Kayitavu, Lazare Nsonera and Simeon Muhunga (DRCongo), Jean-Bosco Manihankuye (Burundi). Plans are actively underway to look at further training and organization of chaplaincy services. Just. Equipping will be in dialogue with this committee.



2. Rod and Pierre gave excellent instruction, slightly hampered by time constraints and translation. Some subjects would have benefited by more lead-in time. It was apparent that this was not an area with which the chaplains were familiar, but their enthusiasm made further training an obvious possibility.

3. The addition of music was very powerful, helpful and fun! Thank you, Sue. I might add that Sue was the only member of the team who was sick for 2-3 days. She braved through it and rose again to play for us!

4. I am getting older! I really appreciated having a younger member on the team. Jeff was originally recruited to accompany Jacqueline Hodges who has health problems. At the very last minute, she was not well enough to come and her daughter Pam, who was to help with music, also stayed home to be with her. Jeff ended up being very busy with day to day errands, and also connected with the younger segment of the participants. I suggest that a younger member be part of every team.

5. The very small amount of medicine that we brought was snatched up. We need to help more in this area.

6. Two women were part of the course, Louise Nyirantunga and Sophie Nyirarukundo. Sophie introduced us to the Mamans Naomi organization involved with widows, youth heads of families and female prisoners and children. We are currently involved in gathering teaching supplies and resources for them and the pre-schoolers at Gatsata EER.



7. Gently used lightweight clothing (men, women and children) is needed. The difficulty is getting it to Kigali as the shipping costs are exorbitant.

8. Several people spoke about the

need for English lessons. They see this as a gateway to future equipping, particularly when interacting with people from outside the country.

9. This is one of the most moving training sessions we have ever done. We are thankful to John for his perseverance and trust in us.

## Appreciation



Picture from left: Rod, Sue, Judy, Pierre, and Jeff

Queen's Theological College, Congrégation Notre-Dame, Audrey Hellyer Foundation, Bethany Baptist Church, Correctional Service Canada, First Baptist Church, Ottawa, International Prison Chaplains' Association, Pam Hodges Trio, Pharmacie Uniprix Buckingham, John Howard Society, Simon Coakeley, Nancy and David Connor, John and Jane Denault, John

Grant Fletcher, Lise Fleury, William and Doreen Gibbs, Catherine Green, Joe and Doris Hache, Rodney and Linda Hagglund, Wendy Hagglund, Eileen and Randal Henderson, Julie and JC Kennedy, Nicole Lalonde, Gord Lorimer, Douglas and Muriel Mackenzie, Barry and Jill Madill, Calvin and Margaret McCarthy, Beverly Whitelaw and Ian McCowan, Jim and Libby McRobbie, Gordon Miller, Maria Novati, Steven and Jennifer Outhouse, Connie Penner, Debbie Potter, Jane Ann and Alan Sears, Jenny and Matt Sears, Gabrielle Shane, Irene and Roy Sletcher, James and Carole Soros, Michael and Wylda Thornber, Pierrette Vézina, Elizabeth White, other 'quiet' donors. Without you, this would not have happened! Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,  
Judy Allard