

April 2018

Beloved in Jesus Christ,  
Easter Greetings from Rwanda

As the Christian world celebrates the power of the resurrection, we in the churches in Rwanda are trusting God for that resurrection power in a very specific way this year. The Rwandan government has closed more than 1,500 worship centers in Rwanda because they have determined the buildings to be unsafe or unhealthy. Over 2,000 more have been given a time limit of 3 weeks to 3 months to correct imperfections in buildings or they will be closed. This impacts all denominations in the country. For a country the size of the state of Maryland, this is significant, For instance, in Gitarama Presbytery, the one of which I am a part, of the 93 worship centers (39 churches and 54 chapels - a satellite worship center of the main church), 10 churches and 26 chapels have been closed and the remaining 29 churches and 25 of the chapels have required renovations to make or they will be closed. These renovations range from replacing windows and doors to putting on new roofs, improving rest rooms, fencing property, providing rain harvesting cisterns and paving dirt floors.

In the Mugombwa sector, about 12 kilometers from Huye where I live, all the Protestant churches in the sector have been closed. Everyone in the sector must travel to Huye to worship until their worship centers can reopen. The Presbyterian chapel there is a small one, only 36 members. Before they can reopen, they are required to build a church building rather than renting a space, as they have



*Mugombwa sector, where all the Protestant churches have been closed*



*Me preaching last year in Mugombwa's rented worship*

been doing. Easter Sunday, with help from our English chapel, which is not closed, they have hired two mini-buses to carry the congregation to the main church in Huye so that they can at least worship together on Easter. We at the English chapel have been partnering with them in a number of ways in the last year and are delighted to assist them in this way, but it is only for one Sunday. The long-term need of a new building is at least a year in the future. In the meantime, they are not allowed to meet as a congregation. They must do their fundraising and their building without gathering together as a congregation. This is just one of over 1,500 worship spaces in this situation.

The amazing thing, to me, is that these folks are not discouraged. They have accepted the government's orders and are working to meet the demands. There is no grumbling. They are moving on in the faith that God has a plan for them and he will bring about that plan in his time and in his way. They are working in that faith. They believe in the resurrection power that raised Christ from the dead is the same power that will enable them to rise to the challenge of building and reopening their congregation.

As you celebrate this Easter season, I invite you to remember the Christians in Rwanda who will not be worshipping in their sanctuaries this year. Pray for Christ's resurrection power to enable them to renovate and reopen those spaces to the glory of God. Pray for the resources necessary to do the necessary renovations in each location. As you pray for us, I pray that you will be drawn closer to Christ and experience his resurrection power in your own lives.

Yours in Christ's power  
Kay (Cathie to the family)