

W5 on Missions

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:37-39

Who... Bruno and Kathleen Soucy

Bruno has a B.Sc. in Agriculture from University of Guelph and a Certificat de Technicien Vétérinaire et d'Élevage en Milieu Tropical from the Institut de Medecine Tropical Prince Leopold, Belgium. He has worked in the areas of farm credit and management since 1981. He is fluent in French and English.

Kathleen has a B.Sc. in Agriculture from the University of Guelph and has completed courses in communication, marriage, family and crisis counseling towards her M.A. at the Canadian Theological Seminary in Saskatchewan.

The Soucys have three children; Benjamin is with them in Rwanda; their daughters, Caroline and Laura, remain in Canada. Before attending Allison Baptist Church, NB, they were members of l'Église Baptiste Francaise de Moncton, for seven years. They have traveled to El Salvador, Honduras and Rwanda.

Where... Rwanda

Rwanda is one of the poorest countries in the world; over eight out of ten people live on \$2 a day or less. Rwanda is still affected by the impact of the 1994 genocide in which an estimated 800,000 people were massacred in the space of 100 days. Microcredit and education/mentoring are two powerful tools in the fight against poverty and despair.

When... The Soucys arrived in Rwanda in September 2006 and are involved in sustainable community development and leadership formation, working with the Association des Églises Baptistes au Rwanda (AEBR) development team in the areas of needs assessment, project design, liaising with government and other NGOs particularly in the areas of microcredit and HIV/AIDS. They also help mentor young leaders within the AEBR. While hosting Short Term Mission teams and educating Canadian churches in integral mission within the Rwandan context, they engage in global discipleship.

What... From their August Ministry Update:

“This has been a busy time for us and exciting as we are learning about the many activities of our church partner. The church here in Rwanda is at the core of almost all aspects of community life. In addition to over 300 churches and chapels, the AEBR operates 49 secondary and elementary schools, a Bible college, the Baptist International Theological University, three health clinics, agricultural projects on land that has been donated by the local government, 22 community cooperatives involved in various micro-enterprises, 50 Guardians of Hope groups that minister to the special needs of people and families living with HIV/AIDS. Our colleague, Laura Ward has spear-headed the AEBR's Children of Hope program, a budding



Kathleen, Ben & Bruno Soucy

ministry tailored to meet the needs of child-headed households and orphans and vulnerable children. Every day we learn about new church activities and potential for partnership.

Our most important priority at present is to help the development group at the AEBR grow in its effectiveness through efficient use of time and financial resources, expansion of the network for potential cooperation with other groups working in Rwanda, and exploring new initiatives and partnership possibilities. ...we are developing a huge respect for the church here in Rwanda.

...It has been challenging at times to understand how things work in Rwanda as a whole, often more slowly than we would like and sometimes lacking cooperation, trust and respect, as well as sufficient physical and human resources. Imagine how difficult it is for the church leaders here to adjust to the expectations of Canadian and western visitors.... What we see as perhaps being the most valuable gift that any of us can offer to the church here is encouragement at every opportunity and respect for their faithfulness to live the gospel through holistic ministry, as they are practicing it now. Pray for the 6 teams who will be coming to Rwanda this year to participate in short term mission as well as our church partners who will be hosting them – that God's purposes would be realized.

The Dorcas group Kigali, Rwanda is a church based group of women who work together, support each other, pray together, and learn skills that can also be used in their own small income generating enterprises. It has been wonderful to work with and get to know these women. They reach out in Jesus' name to their neighbors who are often isolated due to poverty, the stigma of disease or their social status - and draw them into their circle of hope. These women have dignity because they are able to provide for their families in spite of their position as widows, second wives, or people living with HIV.

The Dorcas group recently received a small loan from a CBM partner to enable them to employ a full time sewing teacher to teach 15 women basic sewing skills. They successfully bid on and received their first sewing contract - curtains for a local hospital - which provided an opportunity to learn about conducting business, charging a fair price and making a profit, and the potential for receiving additional contracts. The Dorcas members have been empowered through this experience.”

Why... “God is using the churches in Rwanda to serve the most vulnerable. The AEBR churches reach into some of the most remote parts of Rwanda where the need for the comfort and hope that the Gospel brings is great. What a privilege to be a part of God's global church.”

Lorna McCain Corresponding Secretary for UBWMU/ABW