

The Musings of a Missionary Kid

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[0 : 00] As Bill says, I'm Chris Hindley, for those of you who don't know me. Give or take two or three weeks, I was born at the same age as each of you.

And Dr. Packer reminded us a few weeks ago that we all have something to do here at Learners' Exchange. Apparently this morning I'm to speak and you're to listen. If by any chance you finish before I do.

Please do it quietly. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you for your presence with us this morning. We thank you for what you mean to us in our lives. We thank you for what you've done for us. And through your Holy Spirit we're glad to be able to commune with you.

And we just ask that as we spend a few minutes together you would bless us and above all point us to yourself. For we pray this in Jesus' name.

[1 : 16] Amen. As Bill says, I was for a while a rugby referee. And I will remember one game which was not going well and I was aware it was not going well and so were the players.

And they all offered me advice. And it was getting quite impossible to carry on. So I stopped the game and I pulled them all together and I said, You know, we've got to stop this.

It sounds as though there are 30 referees on the field. And one of them said, yes and you're not the best. Arguably, I was the best.

But I'm under no illusions this morning about being the best. And I'm constantly reminded as I've been at Learner's Exchange at the wealth of depth of experience, theologically, spiritually and every other way, that is gathered in this room.

I'm quite amazed at it. And so I stand here, I don't mind telling you with some trepidation. Bill told me that you don't eat your speakers.

[2 : 28] But you certainly have an effect on them. This is the first time in seven years that I've been in Vancouver that I've worn a tie. Another time at just about this time of year, I suppose, I was living in Toronto at the time and was asked to referee a game between an Ontario side and a side that had just come from England.

And for those of you who follow rugby at all, you'd realise that this was the end of their season while it was the beginning of the season for those of us in Ontario. And I was rusty and our players were rusty and the English players, of course, were fit and they'd gone through a whole season.

They knew exactly what was going on. And things weren't getting that well that day either. And finally, halfway through the second half, I blew the whistle and there was a great lout of an English forward lying in the mud there.

And he looked at me and as clearly as though he'd spoken, he said, what did you blow it for that time? So I looked at him and I said, you know, I didn't write the laws.

And he wiped the mud out of his eyes and he said, no, but you might at least have read them. I felt that many Sundays as I've listened here at Learners Exchange and I've listened to people expound about learned books and people and I think, yeah, well, perhaps I should have read those.

[4 : 06] Well, let's not make a mistake. Let's at least read the word this morning from 1 John and the first chapter of 1 John. 1 John 1.

And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you.

God is light. In him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

And the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

[5 : 37] My parents were with a branch of the Church Missionary Society, which today is called Church Mission Society.

It's probably the prime society that encompasses the Anglican Communion. And as such, it encompasses the full breadth of the Anglican Communion.

And you can find missionaries around the world who we would consider extremely liberal. You can find others who are extremely conservative. And in the early 1920s, there were a group of people who belonged to the Church Missionary Society who felt they really were going too liberal and they needed to separate.

And in 1922, the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society was formed, which today is called Crosslinks. And at the same year, there was a group called the Rwanda Mission who split away from the Church Missionary Society because they said that they would stand for the complete inspiration of the whole Bible as being and not merely containing the Word of God.

Both missions told the parent mission that they would raise their own missionaries, they would raise the funds to cover those missionaries.

[7 : 11] Most British societies, most British missionary societies, pay their missionaries, unlike many Americans who asked them to raise their own funding. And they said that they would do this.

And at the time, there were two doctors in Uganda who were out with the Church Missionary Society who went to the far west of the country and had a look over the border and saw a land which has been called the Switzerland of Africa.

And they looked over there and said, you know, we ought to go there. And they went across the border and started the Rwanda Mission in Rwanda.

Rwanda is a strange country. It's very hilly, very mountainous, very beautiful. Certainly as beautiful as British Columbia. The joy it has, as opposed to British Columbia, is you can get across the whole country in a very short time.

It's all compact and you can see the beauty all around you. It's a strange country compared to many other African countries because although there are three tribes, they share a common language.

[8 : 21] And those three tribes are made up of Hutus, who are about 85% of the population, and Tutsis, who are about 14, and a little tiny tribe called Batwa, who we probably best know as pygmies.

Little tiny people who are despised by the other two tribes and live in great poverty. The Tutsis are tall, tall men, very good looking.

They apparently originally came from Ethiopia. And the Tutsis were the natural leaders. They got to the top of anything they did. And so, as these two doctors went into Rwanda, they found that there was a system of government, which I actually think was probably very like the Old Testament system of government.

There was a king, and he had a whole lot of chiefs, and under him there were a whole lot of sous-chefs, and they governed the country. And when the Belgians were given Rwanda and Burundi to look after as a protectorate, they looked at this system of government, and they thought, we can't better this.

We'll go along with this system. And so they followed what was already there. And almost without exception, if you were to go there at that time, you would find that the leadership of the whole country, in whatever form it was, was Tutsi, and the Hutus were the serfs, if you like.

[9 : 55] And the Belgians decided that they would carry on with this system, and so they educated the Tutsis, and right through the country, those who were educated and did well were in fact Tutsis, and usually not Hutus.

At the same time as the Belgians came in, they brought with them Belgian Catholic missionaries. And my first impression of when I could start to think and see things, was this was a highly Catholic country.

You could drive right through the country, right out into the bush, and every corner you would see a shrine. And the people were brought up to be strongly Catholic.

And so the country developed. And as far as I could see, and as far as I've learnt since, it developed reasonably well. There was, there didn't seem to be animosity between the two tribes.

They lived happily together. And when the Protestant missionaries came in, they found that the Catholic Church was already well established there, and so the country was basically Catholic. [11:09] And in fact, at the time that I'm going to tell you about, they thought that only 6% of the country were Protestant. The Protestant missions, when they came in, did an extraordinary thing. At least I think it's extraordinary.

They decided they weren't going to cobbles as to whether they were Anglicans or Presbyterians or Seventh-day Adventists or Baptists. And so they divided the country up, and if you were in an Anglican missionary part, you would all be Anglicans. So you had a group of Anglicans, and you had a group maybe 50 miles away who were all Baptists. And then you had a group who were all Presbyterians, and you had a group who were all Seventh-day Adventists. I well remember one night we got stuck, and there was a tree right across the road, and a fellow came along, and he said, well you need to yell for your sire, he'll come and help you.

He's a Christian. He's a really good man. So we stood in the dark and yelled into the blackness for your sire. And finally another chap came along, and he said, your sire won't come and help you. He's a Seventh-day Adventist, and he's already on holiday today. And it was no good yelling for an Anglican, because there wouldn't be any Anglicans in that part of the world. And so we learned. [12:17] And all the people who were around the mission station which I was on were all sort of Anglicans. And today, you will actually find that in the African church, the Anglicans are more Anglican than Anglicans are.

More Anglican than we are here. And it's quite extraordinary to see them. And if I don't pick my notes up, I'll be totally lost. And so I want to share with you about three phenomena that happened during my childhood and up into my teens and on.

And the first was that I grew up experiencing what has become to be known as the East African Revival. Revival started in Rwanda in 1935, and don't get excited, I wasn't around then. How did it begin? Where did it come from? What caused it? The wind blows wherever it pleases, said Jesus.

You hear it sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit. And all I can say is that having studied and looked at the Rwanda Revival or the East African Revival it's now been called, I couldn't tell where it came from, but I could tell that it was a work of the Spirit.

[13:51] It came through two Africans coming over from Uganda. They brought her the message. They were the ones that came and preached, and men and women and boys and girls were convicted of sin and turned to the Lord in unbelievable numbers.

And of course because they came initially to an Anglican mission station, it was reckoned that the revival was an Anglican thing. But it very quickly spread from being an Anglican thing to encompassing everybody.

And I'm well aware that there were things about the revival that went wrong. I'm well aware that there were things in the revival where it turned to legalism and judgmentalism. And I don't want to talk about what went wrong with the revival today because that's probably part of history. But I do want to talk about the positive impact and the effect that it had on my life and the impact it had on the lives of so many others.

I saw and heard men and women confess things to each other which can only have happened if the Spirit of God was in them and telling them to confess them.

[15:09] And that is something which I've found a great privilege to have been part of that, to have been part of seeing men and women come together and say, you know, I did this wrong and I did that wrong.

Tootsies were confessing to Hutus. Hutus were confessing to Tutsis and there was a oneness and there was an openness to talk about Jesus.

You could walk into the marketplace, you could walk into shops, you could walk along the street and there was a sense that everyone was talking about Jesus.

They talked about Jesus as readily as you and I discussed the weather and I've often thought to myself, you know, I long for a day when we would come back to a readiness to talk about Jesus in that way, when it comes naturally part of our conversation in everything we do, with strangers we meet.

And I learnt a great deal from those early people in the revival, both from Africans and from Europeans. Africans, I think I learnt most from the Africans, they were incredibly open, they were incredibly willing to share, they were incredibly willing to challenge and to ask whether things were going right in your life.

[16:32] One of the early leaders of the revival movement was a man called William Nagenda and he was my godfather and I just counted a great privilege to have had a man like him as a godfather.

The early leaders were very spirit filled men. Whenever there came a time when it sort of crept up as it very often does, it's happened with the charismatic movement, it's happened with all sorts of other movements in church history, that if you've been blessed this way you think you're a notch above other Christians.

You've got it and they haven't. And they were very quick to stamp on that and say that they weren't better, they weren't ahead of them at all. I heard amazing testimonies and I saw how lives have been changed.

And invariably it was followed as we were reminded when the bishops were here a few weeks ago by a song that would burst out quite automatically saying we praise you Lord Jesus, we praise you Lamb of God, your blood is cleansing me, I praise you Saviour.

Sounds much better in Luganda or in Runyagwanda but they would burst out into a song and I remember lying as a child in bed and hearing this singing coming over the hills again and again as a group of people I knew were meeting and were praising God for something that had brought them closer to each other and closer to him.

[17:57] They longed for the best in themselves. They longed for the best in each other. They longed that they would see everyone walk as Jesus would walk.

They would challenge you if they saw something in your life which they didn't think was quite right. And Africans can accept this much easier than we can. We seem to bridle and take offense.

How dare you challenge me? Why think you are better than me? But the Africans can do it and you get along. Because there was a deep desire to be like him. Very often the conversation would start and they'd say, are you saved?

And as a child I quickly learnt to know the answers. Yes, yes, yes. Do you have a testimony? And invariably with your testimony you had to say when you became saved.

And I could testify to the fact that I was saved and accepted the Lord Jesus into my life at the age of eight. my brothers also learnt the language. They learnt the responses.

[19:02] And I have a brother who is in the funeral business today, but he knew those answers off Pat. And he could fool anybody. He's a great actor. But he would admit today that he didn't actually give his heart to the Lord Jesus until he was 21.

And all the rest of the time he'd fool them. you can imagine my immense surprise when I was giving these answers, maybe somewhat patsy. And I was with an old Ugandan African.

I knew he was old because his hair was completely white. And he said to me, he said, are you saved? And I said, yes. Do you have a testimony? And I said, yes, and told him a little bit about that. And then he knocked me back on my heels.

And I thought, my, what a question. And how much that taught me. How much that knocked me back.

Is it stale? I wonder how many of us, if we were asked that question today, would be able to testify to what the Lord Jesus has done for us this day, rather than 10 years ago, or 20 years ago.

[20:16] Whatever it may be. At this time, I remember vividly hanging over the mantelpiece above the fireplace in our home, was a little red banner, only about this long, and on it had just one word, highest?

Question mark. And that was a constant reminder as I walked into that sitting room, is my life the highest? Not, have you done today what is good, but have you done the highest?

Have you done what Jesus would have done? And I believe that through the work of the Holy Spirit of my life, that has been something which has been a constant question mark in my mind.

Constant question mark over some of the things I've done. Is it the highest? best? Is it really the best? And as the old hymn says, throw light into the darkened cells where passion reigns within, quicken my conscience till it feels the loathsomeness of sin.

And if the revival taught you anything, it taught you about the loathsomeness of sin, and yet those early leaders were very quick to move away from the loathsomeness of sin to what the Saviour

could have done about it, and what the Saviour has done about it.

[21 : 38] And I long for that, and still do. My parents tell the story of how they were challenged by some Africans one day, and they were deeply challenged.

They said, how is it that you've been missionaries out here all these years, and you've never told us that 1 John 1 is in the Bible? Our lives could be transformed by 1 John 1, and you've never shown us this.

and I began to love 1 John 1. Dr. Packer says, true repentance only begins when one passes out of what the Bible sees as self-deception into what the Bible calls conviction of sin.

And he's so right. And that's when it all began. And coupled to that is another quote which he made, which I found so useful.

It is in fact a law of the spiritual life, that the further you go, the more you are aware of the distance to be covered.

[22 : 51] Your growing desire for God makes you increasingly conscious, not so much of where you are in your relationship with him, as where yet you have to go. And that is also so important.

and reading those quotes from Dr. Packer, I got great comfort because they are so true and so helpful.

Revival teaches us so much about longing to be more like him. And that little three words that that old man said to me, is it stale, have hung in my life ever since.

I have a dear friend who is now in his 80s, who has his quiet time every day and he can preach a sermon from that quiet time every single day, something fresh and something new, and I just long to be like him, that I could bring something fresh from the Lord every single morning.

I don't want to sound patronising, but in my teen years of I saw again and again and realised that the folk who were testifying were unschooled, ordinary men, and I was astonished and took note that these men had been with Jesus.

[24 : 17] I can see that in many of you too, Sunday by Sunday. I saw it very clearly in Greg Venables, I saw it very clearly in Henry Oromby, who is a great friend of mine too, and yet I wouldn't dream to think that these people were unschooled and ordinary folk, but you could see Jesus, you could see that they'd been with Jesus.

And their revival taught me all of that. Another great thing that came across in my life as I was growing up was rejection.

As missionary kids we had, our friends were roughly other missionary kids, we used to travel back and forth to school together, and one of those friends of mine, he's actually a year older than I am, senses that he was abandoned by his parents.

He never saw them because he was sent off to boarding school, and even when he came back they were busy, and he felt total rejection. I was sent off to boarding school at four, and I went there at four, and I have not one iota of sense of being abandoned or rejected.

I knew that my parents were always there, I knew that they were available should I want them. I knew they would come if I was in trouble. That's not to say that I didn't suffer from homesickness as any kid of four might do.

[25 : 47] I remember one of the teachers coming to me one day and say, oh we just had a letter from your father, he's going to be here in a fortnight. So I rejoiced at that, and I counted one night, two nights, three nights, four nights, and at the end of the fifth day I went to the teacher and I said, where is he?

And they had to explain that a fortnight meant a bit longer than four nights. the first school I went to was in Uganda.

It was about six hours drive from our home and I was there. It was a school which God has amazingly blessed. It was started just for missionaries kids.

In fact, it was started in the garage of that first doctor who ever went to Rwanda. and there were only five pupils in that first day and they sat in the dust of that garage and my elder sister was one of those five.

And the school then blossomed and grew and grew. And during the years of Idi Amin, that school was left totally untouched by all the troubles because Idi Amin sent his own children there.

[26 : 59] And that was the testimony that that school had. But after a while I had to go to school in Kenya because this was only a pre-preparatory school. And to get to school in Kenya you had to drive two days by road and then you got on a train and you went two days by train.

And eventually you arrived in Nairobi. I was at school in Nairobi during the Mau Mau times when there was all that trouble and Europeans were being slaughtered and cut up into tiny pieces. We used to go on the train sometimes and the armed guards who were on the train would come down and tell us to duck down below the windows because this was an area where they'd throw stones. if they saw a European face. And yet through all that never once did I feel rejected or abandoned.

Maybe my brothers did because I remember at about this time my parents wrote us each a letter and asked whether we wanted them to make a home for us where we could be at home and not be a boarding school.

I don't know what my brothers or sisters wrote back but I remember writing back and said no I felt they were where God wanted them to be and I was totally happy. And anyhow they stayed.

[28 : 19] However back to Rwanda. The government as I said went on backing the Tutsis and what happened I don't know.

But suddenly in the mid fifties the government decided they would change horses. And they started backing Hutus. They started promoting Hutus. They started educating Hutus and making them up into going to the universities and things and this was done at the rejection of Tutsis and suddenly Tutsis were no longer the favoured tribe.

And it culminated in 1959 when there was the beginning of what was eventually to be the genocide. and those were sad days.

I remember these Tutsis many many of them they would get caught by these Hutus who would cut their legs off at the ankles and say ah now you're the same height as we are let's see how well you can walk now.

And many many many many were the men and women who my father had to administer medical assistance to who had no feet. and that was the beginning of what was to become the genocide and many of those Tutsi families fled.

[29 : 35] They fled to Uganda and they were camped in a great big refugee place. It was a place that was Tetsifly infested.

Tetsifly is that wretched fly which will come along and bite you and give you sleeping sickness and eventually you die from it. And no wonder there was plenty of area where they could put them because no one lived there.

They were rejected indeed. They were stateless. They were unwanted. They were unloved. They were misunderstood. Rejection is very hard to take.

And as the years went on they had ample time to ponder and to think and to consider and to plan. revenge. The Hutus back in Rwanda also had time to consider revenge. They suddenly realised that they had had years and years of being suppressed.

[30 : 40] And although the Belgians had changed and backed them all of a sudden they still felt that there was a lot which they needed to get right and even the scores.

years later as Bill told you I was general secretary of the mission that took over from the Rwanda mission and called itself the mid-Africa mission.

And my friend came to see me. And today he's a little hunchback man and he walked into my office and for two hours he tried to persuade me that we should form a sort of society of those missionary kids who were abandoned by their parents at some unearthly young age.

I don't know what his motives was. I don't know to what end he would use this. I don't know what purpose he had. Most of the parents who were guilty of this heinous crime in his eyes were long since with the Lord.

So I don't know what he was hoping to achieve from this but he was going round visiting missionary kids all over England trying to persuade them to form this sort of group that would fight against being abandoned as children.

[32 : 04] It obviously meant a great deal to me. I told him that I didn't feel abandoned. I told him that I wouldn't have swapped my upbringing for anything in the world.

And he looked at me with sheer amazement in his eyes. I have no clue. I understand he did go round and persuade some to join him but I really don't know why. And I really don't know to what end.

And what saddened me particularly was because my father was his godfather. and these Rwandans who had fled and forced to leave all they possessed and going into another country with

nothing they planned revenge.

And here in this country we have the privilege of knowing a great deal about the genocide. We know that what happened we know of men like Dallaire who did so much to try and put it right. We know through watching Hotel Rwanda what went on. And the Hutus took their revenge in 100 days they slaughtered a million people.

[33 : 15] And I don't think we'll ever know the result of that. And the Tutsis took their revenge by marching back from Uganda and retaking the country which they felt was theirs anyhow. Which is why today if you go to Rwanda you will not find that many of the top government people speak French as being ex-Belgium they'll speak English because they were educated in Uganda which is under British rule or was.

And you can see that they've gone there. But what a cost. What a cost revenge has. And revenge continues to this day I'm sad to say.

I don't suppose there's a single day when someone in Rwanda is not slaughtered. And yet I wonder why. I wonder whether we can blame them.

Why should this have happened in a country which had experienced revival? Why should this have happened in a country which supposedly is so Christian?

And I think half the trouble is that the Christianity that was there was very very thin. There was no teaching. This is why I thank God for a church like this that tries to get deeper and teach us the word of God doesn't just have us leaving as being saved but goes further.

[34 : 37] Goes further into our walk with the Lord and what we're supposed to do day by day. That is why I think the things like our titso are so important where we're training young men and women to actually understand and get deeply into the word of God.

That's why I've been so blessed by coming to Learners Exchange and hearing from you folk the deepness of walking with God. And yet I think in Rwanda many of this was left undone.

Not on purpose because very often those people who were saved went out and taught others and they taught from a very limited base. What else could they teach? And yet if I had time I could go on to talk not only of revenge but of reconciliation.

Jesus said to them, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

I've learnt more and more and I continue to learn about forgiveness. And I find it now no difficulty to understand why when Jesus taught us to pray he picked out only one phrase to expound upon and that was the one on forgiveness.

[36 : 05] Forgiveness is so important. And yet as I look at many of my friends in Rwanda and I have many friends in Rwanda, I look at them and they say, Lord, this man killed my wife.

This man I saw actually kill my children. This woman came and set light to our hut. Am I supposed to forgive them?

if you hold anything against anyone. We've been back to Rwanda several times, Lynette and I, and one of the amazing things is to see men and women, Hutu and Tutsi, come together and genuinely forgive and be reconciled.

And I think to myself, if they can do it after what they've been through, if they can do it after all the things they suffered, if they can do it after having actually seen their own brethren killed, is it so difficult for me to forgive other people who just offend me in some small way?

I'm not saying that everyone in Rwanda forgives, but I have been totally amazed at how the Spirit of God has come into that country and enabled those people genuinely to forgive.

[37 : 46] And today, if you go to Rwanda, you can see places of reconciliation where they come and they meet together week by week and just praise God, and you can see Hutu and Tutsi standing side by side.

You can see a murderer and the wife of the family he murdered, standing side by side. We went to church there a few Sundays ago when we were last there, and sitting in front of us was a young man of about 21, 22.

He had all sorts of cut marks across his head, great big gashes. And we talked to the pastor afterwards and we said, tell us about that man. He said, that man was slashed with machetes, and he had to walk holding his head, otherwise it would have fallen off.

And he had to walk for three days to Burundi in order to get medical help. And I said, why has he come back here? He's come back here, he said, because the people who did it are here and he

wants to forgive them.

How much they have to teach us. Revival and its message has transformed my life. I just don't know where I'd be if I hadn't experienced that, if the Spirit of God hadn't come into my life and convicted me of things that were wrong that I needed to put right.

[39 : 18] Rejection. I've seen the damage that rejection can cause. I've seen the hurt that it can cause. Revenge.

I've learned more and more that revenge is not mine to administer. Do not take my revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath. For it is written, it is mine to avenge, I will repay, says the Lord.

And yet sometimes I think we feel that God's gone to sleep and we better do something about revenge ourselves. And the Bible would teach otherwise. Forgiveness and reconciliation means the other person may be as wrong as wrong can be, but it's not us to judge.

I just pray that the Lord will continue to teach me the lessons that I learnt as a teenager and on, growing up in Rwanda.

Thank you for listening. One of our friends in Rwanda, who's now gone to be with the Lord, was the first African Archbishop.

[40 : 41] A man called Erika Sabiti. And we used to, whenever we went back and forth to school, we could not go past his home without stopping and being with him.

And if ever you saw a man who you knew had been with Jesus, it just glowed from his face and from all that he said. And he used to go on safari very often and used to stop and have his picnic. And he talked about the men who'd been affected by revival. And he said, I often meet people on the roads as I stop in the shade of a tree to eat my picnic lunch. And they come up to me while I'm resting.

And if they'd been affected by revival, they'd demonstrate the following characteristics. He'll talk to you about Jesus. He will ask if he can give you his testimony as to how the Lord Jesus came to save him.

He'll ask you politely if you are saved. He'll be dressed very tidily and soberly. He will sing a chorus in Luganda, glory, glory, hallelujah, for the cleansing blood has reached me.

[41 : 49] He will do so as to give you his testimony. He'll be peaceful. He will love you and you will feel that he does. His face will light up when he talks about Jesus with you.

He won't be afraid of you if you're a white man. He'll want to do something to help you. He'll want to take you to his home, to his wife.

She's saved too, he'll say. And you'll know you've been with Jesus. What a testimony. And Uganda has been blessed by some outstanding archbishops ever since.

Right until today when Henry Orombe is the archbishop. I went to him last time I was in Kampala and I said to him, I just want to thank you for the way you stood by us in BC, for the way you have absolutely been there.

And his eyes filled with tears and he looked at me and he said, Chris, I have no option. Do we have that sort of faith?

[42 : 57] Thank you. Chris, the 1935 was the revival.

1959 was the Belgian blunder. Did they have written scripture for people there?

Certainly in 1935 most of them would not have had. There was an old man called Gilbo who in fact translated the Bible and they do now have it in complete but in those days they didn't and I was amazed.

There was a church dispute way out in the hills one day and they settled that dispute and they came and reported to my father how they had done it and you know they had followed almost word by word what is said in Matthew 18 and that has to be the spirit of God.

Is the word being taught strongly today? No. There are now Bible colleges in Rwanda.

[44 : 13] There's a big interdenominational one in a place called Butari. There's an Anglican one in Kigali. and they are starting but they've still got a long, long way to go.

I'm thinking about the love in our connection today. I think you'll find it's the same right through Africa. There are very few Bible colleges which go deep. And one of the reasons is you're very often dealing with unschooled people who don't, I mean if we think of Bible college here, if we think of Regent, we go there as very well trained people long before they start trying to drum the Bible into us.

And these people don't have that background. I think they're short of the Bible too, aren't they? Oh, very much so. And even though Bibles are ridiculously cheap by our standards in Rwanda and Burundi and maybe other parts of Africa, there's still a fortune to them.

We have in our church this man Joel, who attends here, who's from Burundi. And he wants to start a fellowship with other Burundians here and I got some Bibles over for him.

And they're only five dollars, those Bibles, but that's a fortune for many people in Africa. I heard on the BBC News this day that in Burundi today they are selling bread by the slice.

[45 : 44] Yes? Chris, I'm interested in what you're saying about people being able to give their testimony. That's something I associate with my Baptist background.

It's not something that's ever happened to me in the Anglican Church. You've never given your testimony in the Anglican Church? Be my guest. I've never heard anybody in the Anglican Church give a testimony until we started baptizing more adults and like last Sunday a young man gave his testimony.

But there seemed to be a sense that whatever had happened to you was kind of private, you know. And so I'm wondering, you're describing something that sounds very exciting.

Now, I heard exciting testimonies in my youth in the Baptist Church. They were almost too exciting. They were terribly dramatic. And I thought, God will never love me because I haven't got such an exciting record of sin to kind of get up and talk about you.

And we had a lot of that kind of exposure when I was small. So I realized that Baptists are not necessarily still doing that kind of thing in that kind of way.

[47 : 04] But you're talking about a very definite value in people being able to tell their story. And it makes me think that, you know, yesterday's Christian has a testimony to give.

I mean, you don't need a long experience as a Christian in order to give that kind of witness to others. And you seem to be saying that it's working there.

It very definitely does. I think the African is more open than we are in the West. We are reserved. We don't share that. I mean, that's my private thing. The Lord's dealt with that sin, but I don't know why you should know it.

But the Africans, I mean, from 1 John 1, walk in the light. Now, walk in the light meant a tremendous amount to me. And I think a lot of my growth in Christianity was because men and women were willing to come and walk in the light with me and challenge me.

It was also misused. I remember, you know, as someone came, I want to walk in the light with you as an excuse for an absolute barrage of what came next. But there was the good side too.

[48 : 13] Yeah, but I think it comes more naturally to them, yes. When this genocide occurred in Rwanda, were Christians on both sides of the of the Jews and did they murder one of them?

I'd be lying to if I said they didn't. The Catholics were far more involved with actually taking part in the genocide. There's Catholic Church after Catholic Church after Catholic Church in the country where they rounded people who thought it was a refuge, and then they just bring the people and say, there they all are, and they'd burn them alive and hack them alive.

Were Protestants immune from that? No. Protestants, I'm afraid, did take part, but nothing like to the same extent as the Catholics did. But I'm afraid, yes. I guess we're human.

Yes. Do you think that there's some misunderstanding about what forgiveness is that would make it so difficult to have forgiveness?

What's been involved in in me being forgiven? What that actually means? We kind of think very superficially and in very vague terms that makes it difficult to forgive.

[49 : 42] I just think... I'm no expert on this, and I'm sure there are 25 experts here, but I believe for myself forgiveness is nothing that I can work on.

it's a work of the Spirit of God. He gives you that desire to forgive someone and make it genuine. I don't think it's in us naturally to forgive. I think the Spirit of God has to come and enable us to forgive.

And when that forgiveness comes, it's genuine, and I would like to say you forget too, but you don't forget, but at least you can definitely put it right behind you.

And it's no longer a barrier between the two people. Isn't that true that everything, though we try to be something, we're not going to make it. It's when we come to God and He shows us and He gives it to us, we just can't do it.

Absolutely. Absolutely. It's all entirely of Him. There's a dear friend I have in Burundi, he's passed away now, but he wrote a fantastic hymn, which seems to bear in mind just what you're saying.

[50 : 54] Oh, how the grace of God amazes me. It loosed me from my bonds and set me free. What made it happen so? 'Twas His will, this much I know, set me as now I show at liberty.

And it goes on for some verses like that, but it's all about God's goodness and His grace. Isn't it an important step if we say, I can't forgive?

And God would say, I can. So it comes from that source. Corrie ten Burundi, you know the story? She has a very simple way of explaining what she ran into.

Absolutely. bumped into the Nazi, who treated her sister, I think. And that was her prayer. I can't forgive this man. I can't forgive him.

Absolutely. Absolutely. I mean, I suppose the Lord is the supreme example when he said, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. Stephen, who we were reading about in our readings just two days ago, had the same theme.

[52 : 09] I had a great, great friend in Rwanda. He was an Anglican pastor called Yona. And they shot him. And before they shot him, he prayed the same.

I just want to pray for you, he said. I want you to know that I forgive you. And his death had an amazing impact across the country.

And the fact that as they were standing there with their guns pointing at him, he said, I want to pray for you and tell you I forgive you. I think we do have to find out what the Greek for stale sounds like. And the Hebrew, you've got to have that too. Then we could properly consider it. Well, I think we've knocked it back a bit.

and I thank you so much for this story and the exaltation. And we don't like it, of course.

[53 : 19] And we will resist it in some way. But if we keep it in our minds, God begins work.

work for what you've started here, you will begin a work if we keep it in our minds. That's the secret of it. And so thank you, Chris.

I had no idea you had all that character stored there. that's the thing. So if St. John's is still around later in the year, I'm sure we're going to have Chris back and have him shouting at us again.

He was shouting, wasn't he? He raised your voice. Some things are worth shouting about. Anything else to, a statement or anything?

I'll have to do all the thanks, Chris. Thank you.