

The Exponential Power of the Bean to Do Good

Shelly Miller



Workers at the Bukonya wash station celebrate their harvest.

The government has given Jean, Claudette and Clementine each parcels of adjacent land and coffee trees to farm. Jean was a perpetrator in the genocide, murdering family members of both the other women. Through a process of reconciliation fueled by the power of God, they have combined their land to share the burden and reap the benefits. They work hard together every day, discussing the harvest and making plans for the future.

“They told me that the government encourages reconciliation, the church educates and discipled people in reconciliation and the coffee cooperatives actually engage reconciliation,” Golden explains.

THREE YEARS AGO, the Rev. Jonathan Golden, Rector of St. Peter’s Place in Roswell, Georgia, had what he describes as an “inkling”, a nudge from the Holy Spirit, to buy Rwandan coffee beans, roast them and sell the coffee to churches, doing his part to help surviving Rwandan farmers living in unjust conditions. What started out as an adventure in making a great cup of joe has turned into the “exponential power of the bean” in jobs, bicycles, micro-finance loans and wages for thousands of coffee farmers in Rwanda.

Today, Land of a Thousand Hills Coffee Company (LOTH) has 32 employees and buys coffee beans directly from farmers in Rwanda, paying them \$1.60 per pound, more than double the amount they received prior to the Rwanda genocide. This year their purchases provided wages for 2000 farmers in Butare alone.

As they sell the coffee to churches, restaurants, on the web and in their two stores, part of the profits are returned to the Rwandan people through micro-loans that start small businesses and purchase sustainable bicycles for farmers to transport their bulky loads.

Nadine was sixteen when her parents died, leaving her in charge of four younger brothers and a baby of her own. As the first micro-loan recipient, the profits from her small vegetable stand have sustained this child-headed family so they can continue living together.

Most important to the company are the stories of reconciliation among perpetrators in the genocide and their victims’ family members as they work side by side to harvest coffee for the LOTH cooperative.

LOTH has been sharing these stories of redemption and reconciliation on the road this fall, touring with the band, Third Day. A portion of ticket sales helped fund the first phase of a sustenance farm for 500 malnourished orphans in Bukonya, site for a LOTH coffee bean wash station.

Most in Bukonya had never seen running water or experienced electricity when the wash station opened. The Province of the Anglican Church of Rwanda purchased the land, and Anglican Mission churches made the station possible through their coffee purchases.

“The stories of reconciliation and redemption are really the Anglican Mission story,” explains Golden, “Because they choose to purchase Land of a Thousand Hills coffee, they are truly fulfilling our slogan — ‘Drink coffee. Do Good’.”



Golden, Claudette, Jean and Clementine join hands for work and hearts for reconciliation. Bottom: Nadine runs her own business selling produce, made possible through a microloan from LOTH.

For more on the exciting projects in Rwanda through Land of a Thousand Hills Coffee, check out their redesigned website: www.drinkcoffeedogood.com

THEATRE AWAKENS CURIOSITY

REACHING THE UNCHURCHED WITH CREATIVITY AND INGENUITY

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Blending love of theater with a passion for spreading the Gospel, a Christian community theater in Denver seeks to reach a broad audience awakening curiosity about Christian faith among theater goers and actors alike. The Troupe performs comedic adaptations of established works that communicate a Christian worldview through portraits of authentic humanity. Many of these “non-preachy” plays were written by the Rev. Patrick Dorn, The Troupe founder and Assistant Pastor of Epiphany Anglican Fellowship in Lakewood, Colorado. His ministry illustrates a wonderful example of the creativity and ingenuity that marks so many Anglican Mission leaders.



The Troupe performs their unique play “O Holy Knight” for audiences during the Christmas season.

As a missionary to the theater community, Patrick attends two to six plays per month, performed by companies throughout the Denver area, in order to build relationships with directors, casts and crews and to write reviews for his popular blog, Playwright Priest, which he describes as a kind of “cyber-pulpit.” While he is a caring presence for many actors, Patrick says his goal is to go out and “reach those who won’t go to church, but will go to a play and be transformed by the message.”

Funded by a grant from the Anglican Mission’s Rocky Mountain Network in 2008, The Troupe outreach ministry has staged six plays in a variety of venues, drawing crowds of hundreds and equal numbers of email inquiries from actors of all backgrounds who want to be part of their productions.

“The nature of theater is commonly egocentric and includes a lifestyle where areas of sin can take a stronghold,” explains Patrick. “With our large cast productions, we work with many unchurched actors who want to be involved with our plays because the people are nice and not profane. It becomes a life-giving experience for them.”

After a performance, it is common for theater goers to linger with questions about faith and God that arise from the play’s message. Actors are encouraged to go out among the audience to engage in conversation, and they often respond to requests for prayer.

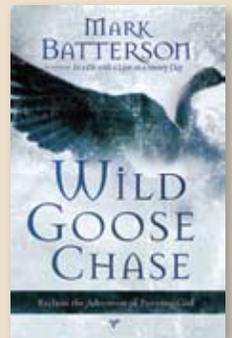
Looking to the future, The Troupe is developing a marketing plan and group sales strategy that will enable churches to “buy out” a performance. They envision members inviting unchurched friends to enjoy a play that makes them laugh and provides opportunities for discussion afterward. Doors are opened, hearts are touched and sometime lives are transformed – it’s exactly what Jesus calls us to do.

For more information on The Troupe, visit www.thetroupetheatre.blogspot.com and read Patrick’s Playwright Priest blog: www.playwrightpriest.blogspot.com

EDITOR’S CORNER

When I was growing up in South Carolina, my Grandfather always warned me about “going off on a wild goose chase.” He meant folly...waste of time...futile search — apparently wild geese are next to impossible to catch. So I’ve always been cautious about such pursuits...until now. In his book, *Wild Goose Chase*, Mark Batterson, Pastor of National Community Church in Washington DC, and plenary speaker for WC 2010, reframes this phrase for Christians. In the opening chapter he writes:

The Celtic Christians had a name for the Holy Spirit that has always intrigued me. They called Him An Geadh-Glas, or ‘the Wild Goose.’...The name hints at the mysterious nature of the Holy Spirit. Much like a wild goose, the Spirit of God cannot be tracked or tamed. An element of danger and air of unpredictability surround him...I think the Celtic Christians were on to something that institutionalized Christianity has missed out on...



Mark challenges readers to live a life of “spiritual adventure,” suggesting that Christ-followers often act more like “caged Christians” than risk-taking adventurers. He describes six such cages, including routine, assumption and fear and offers guidelines for breaking free.

Pick up a copy of *Wild Goose Chase* and let your own chase and adventure begin!

Mark is also the author of *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day* and his latest book, *Primal: A Quest for the Lost Soul of Christianity* is in bookstores now.



Cindy

Cynthia P. Brust is the Mission’s Director of Communications and Winter Conference Chair.