

## Shyira parish

Emmanuel continues to work to help Shyira Parish develop, and to alleviate poverty in the parish. Since he moved there 2½ years ago he has:

- Helped establish two groups of people who hire out cooking utensils for weddings, etc., formed two farming cooperatives and established two groups looking after sheep and goats.
- Used funding from St. Luke's youth group to purchase animals, and for young people's seminars in the fight against HIV/AIDS.
- Started a hospital ministry and a Sunday School. He has produced study and training guides which may be used in the whole diocese, and trained 23 of his own parishioners who volunteered to be teachers. At present the Sunday School has about 300 children.
- Started a technical school—he refers to it as a polytechnic—known as CEFOPS. It is attended by children who have not achieved the grades necessary to go to a state secondary school.

There continues to be adventurous plans for the future. The church owns quite a lot of land on Shyira hill, and some buildings which are derelict after the war. He has plans to repair and use derelict buildings and to build new facilities, including

- A modern cowshed. The parish has been given a cow by the Bishop. It is intended to breed from it, increasing cow ownership in the parish.
- A trauma relief centre. This forward-looking project would require a new building below the primary school. Many people in and around Shyira are still traumatised from the effects of genocide.
- Guest accommodation. Shyira is quite remote, but gets many visitors. Emmanuel would like some parish accommodation for visitors, rather than having to use hospital facilities.

### A peaceful Sunday afternoon picnic.



Sunday afternoon—what better thing to do than go for a picnic at a nearby waterfall? Off we went, Caleb and Louise, their children, Moses who lives with them, me and Lucian, a local boy who needs heart surgery if they can get an airline to fly him to London.

In Rwanda crowds soon gather to watch whatever Mzungus (white people) do. We counted 85 watching the picnic and the children swimming and climbing the waterfall. I guess we provided some entertainment for people who have little time for leisure.

## And there was Great Joy in Shyira

Friday April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004 really was a red-letter day in Shyira. The Rwandan Prime Minister, Minister of Health, Minister of State, Minister of Security, and Minister of Information gathered with several of their staff and the Health Attaché from the American Embassy. The occasion was the opening by the Minister of Health of the new maternity hospital building which had been paid for by people from St. Luke's and their friends, and a policy statement from the Prime Minister. I was there to represent the people of St. Luke's.



Waiting to greet the Prime Minister.

It is thought that something like 5000 people were present, with low key security provided by 80 police and army. The parish and diocese had organised music, choirs and dancing, and a celebration meal was provided for invited guests.

First on the agenda was the opening of the new maternity hospital by the minister of Health, with the help of the Prime Minister. The previous evening had seen new mothers with their babies moved into the 16 beds of the hospital, so the hospital was a functioning unit. The guests were then given a tour of the hospital by its medical director, Dr. Caleb King (It was exactly one year since he, Louise and the children arrived in Rwanda).

The next part of the process was the formal speeches. The area outside the primary school was used for this. Invited guests were under covers made from poles and UNHCR sheeting. Cloth in the colours of the national flag—blue, green and yellow—was wrapped around the poles and formed a backdrop.



The PM talks with Bishop John outside the maternity. The Minister of Health looks on

Other people were at the lower level used by the school for entertaining visitors. This area was not covered, so many of the people used umbrellas to keep the sun off. In this area there was also choirs, musicians and dancers.

The speeches took quite a long time—considerably more than 2 hours. I was introduced by Bishop John who, speaking in Kinyarwanda, told the visitors and people about all that St. Luke's had



Bishop John tells of the role of St. Luke's in the rebuilding of Shyira.

done and continues to do for Shyira and its people. Caleb, also speaking in Kinyarawanda, took on his missionary doctor role and gave a short talk within Bishop John's speech in which he called people to accept Jesus as their saviour.

The Minister of Health thanked the people of St. Luke's for all that has been done for the people of Shyira and the Prime Minister made a lengthy policy statement. I saw the PM's entire speech on Television the following evening. It had short clips in which the PM's picture was replaced by pictures of the

crowd, new maternity hospital or older sections of the hospital.

Key points from the Prime Minister's speech were:

- Shyira hospital to be re-opened. Prior to the genocide the hospital had been one of the best in the region, but the damaged buildings and lack of staff in the years following the genocide resulted in it being downgraded to a health centre. The new designation is to be "District Hospital", and it will have four or five health centres in its area.
- The government will provide the hospital with a new ambulance.
- Two new doctors are to be provided by the government for the hospital.
- All qualified staff will be paid by the government, and there will be additional staff.
- The hospital will become an HIV/AIDS treatment centre. This will result in the hospital having supplies of drugs to prescribe free of charge,

How important was the role of St. Luke's in this? It is difficult to know, for many have contributed to the hospital; Caleb and Louise and Save the Children for example. However, Archdeacon Ephraim told me that without the new maternity "None of this would have happened!" His reason was simple—without the maternity hospital there would not have been a ministerial visit, and so no PM's statement. Perhaps we have been a catalyst for something greater than we ever expected.



Part of the crowd at the hospital opening

Allan Hobson

## The New Maternity Hospital

The new building is quite magnificent. It stands out among the older buildings because of its construction style, colour and exterior stonework. It contains an entrance/reception area, consulting room and store, two delivery rooms, toilet and shower facilities, nurse/security station, two 4-bed wards and four 2-bed wards. It seems that



Rwandan mothers do not use cots, so none have been provided—instead the beds are slightly wider than normal, and have a small drop-down side. Mothers will keep their babies at their side in the beds.

There is a feeling that in the future it may not be sufficiently large, but it will be possible to add a second floor, which will be level with the wards of the main hospital.

Facilities in the maternity hospital are quite sparse. 16 wooden beds made locally and funded by us as part of the building. They were £10 each. Two delivery beds, one old and one donated by UNICEF. Curtains made using fabric sent in a Containers of Hope container. Provision of more equipment is urgent, and we are thankful that Rotary Club of Formby are to support this work.



Maternity hospital ward. Note the mosquito nets.

A small accounting error occurred while the building was in progress—it has now been corrected by means of a loan from another account, but it means that we have not quite paid for the building—the loan needs to be repaid. The amount is around £3000, so please keep up the fundraising.

## Comic Relief.

An application has been submitted to Comic Relief by Containers of Hope in conjunction with St Luke's—we can't apply directly because, as a church, our primary objective is not "development". In Rwanda one birth in 100 will result in the death of the mother, and one child in six will die before their fifth birthday. Our application was for funding to allow the women of Shyira to operate a World Health Organisation Safe Motherhood programme, training others with the purpose of reducing these mortality rates. Feedback from a previous application was taken into account, and there had been discussions with Comic Relief staff.

Comic Relief have again rejected the application. We don't yet know why.