

A photograph of three people sitting on a wooden bench outdoors. On the left, a woman with braids and glasses wears a black t-shirt and blue jeans. In the middle, a woman with blonde hair wears a black top and a leopard print skirt. On the right, a man in a pink and blue plaid shirt and blue jeans is smiling. They are sitting under a thatched roof with hanging light bulbs. In front of them is a wooden table with food and a Fiji water bottle. The background shows a building with a white pillar and a window.

# **BELONG TOGETHER**

Spring 2020  
Quarterly Update

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## TAYLOR'S NOTE

From prison, the apostle Paul wrote his letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.

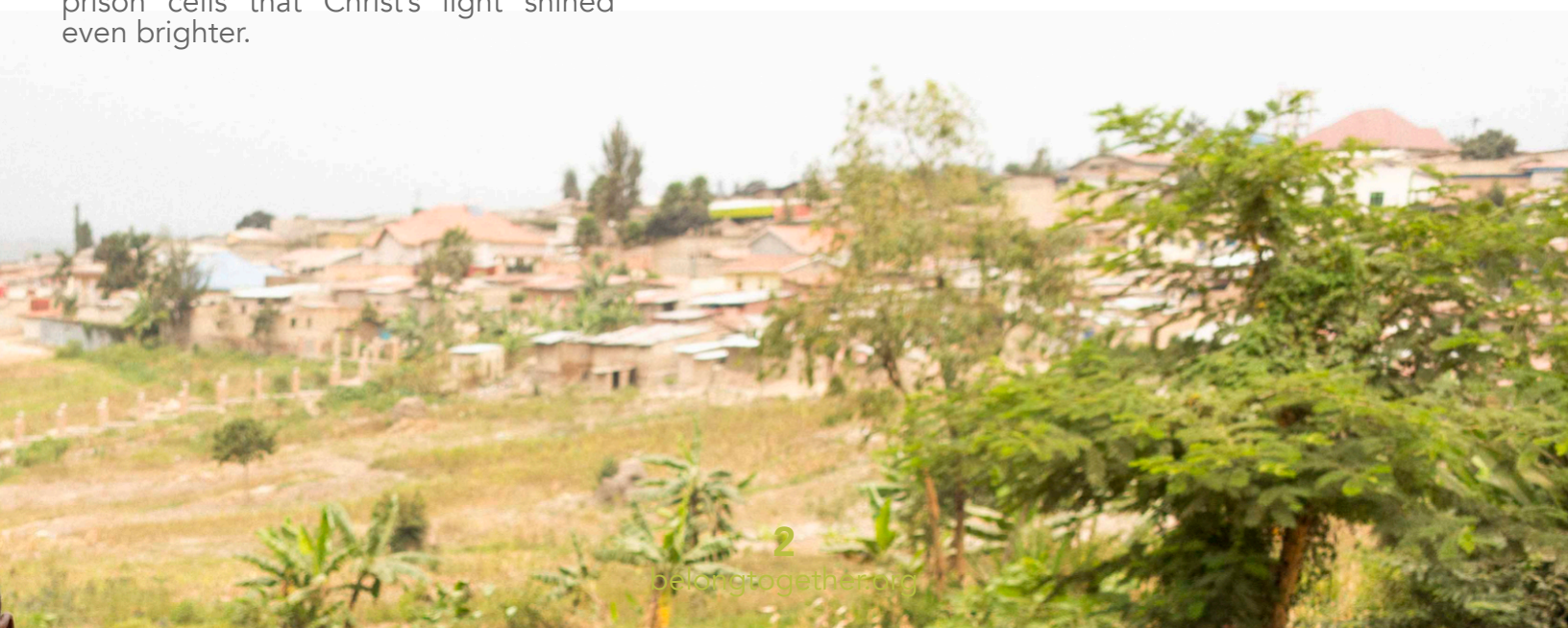
Exiled on the island of Patmos, Jesus' beloved disciple, John, received a vision from God and wrote the book of Revelation.

A jail cell was the birthplace of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, one of the most influential, and widely-read, theological books ever written.

Each of these men experienced seasons of suffering in isolation for their devotion to Christ. And yet, in their confinement, their service did not diminish. The walls of their captivity couldn't contain the work Christ was doing in them. As darkness closed in, it was from their prison cells that Christ's light shined even brighter.

Right now, as much of the world is under home quarantine due to COVID-19, what we are called to do in this season is opposite of the way most of us live our lives. Recently, I've wondered if our call to stay inside and not physically interact with others has brought some of the same challenges Paul, John and John Bunyan experienced: isolation, unrest, restraint.

Yet, as we see from the lives of these three men, in times of confinement, God can do a deeper work inside us, producing the richest fruits of our faith. *Do we believe that is true for us now?*



From Portland to Rwanda, our Belong Together family is quarantined at home, just like you, but that doesn't mean Christ's work stops. In fact, questions of faith often arise in times of uncertainty, and we recognize it's more important now than ever to be there, committed to honestly wrestle fears and doubts, and seek God together. Right now, our ministry leaders in Rwanda call their Belong members weekly to continue Bible studies, and are even creating audio sermons for discussion. The more we press in, the more we realize our only security in this ever-changing world is Christ and His unchangingness.

Belong Together began with the belief in a reality where men and women who've experienced displacement will find true refuge in Christ, and know their unshakable citizenship in His Kingdom. How that belief still stands true today.

No matter where we are or what our circumstances look like --war. drought. storm. pandemic-- nothing can separate us from our belonging to God.

Like the messages written in captivity from the apostles Paul and John, and John Bunyan, may our belonging to God bring forth the most fragrant offering during this season of confinement. Thank you for being with us as we keep our eyes on Christ.



Taylor Gakundi  
Founder and President  
[belongtogether.org](http://belongtogether.org)



## MEET YOUR MINISTRY LEADERS

Since our last update, our ministry leadership team in Rwanda has grown! We love how God uses people of all ages to be agents of the Gospel. Like King Josiah, whose story is recorded in the Old Testament, we believe God is calling forward *young leaders* to point the world back to His Word. Whether faced with a season of home quarantine, or traveling across the country to visit young men and women in a new refugee camp, God is equipping our Rwanda team leaders: Ornella, Emmanuel and Albert, with creativity and passion to share and discuss the Gospel with others. We are excited for you to get to know them in their own words!

**ORNELLA**  
**BT RWANDA DIRECTOR,**  
**MINISTRY LEADER**

**EMMANUEL**  
**MINISTRY LEADER IN**  
**GIHEMBE, KIGALI**

**ALBERT**  
**MINISTRY LEADER FOR**  
**THOSE WITH DISABILITIES**





## Ornella

Though Ornella Ingabire was born and raised in Burundi, she shares the heritage of two nations: Burundi and Rwanda. In Rwanda, she's called Burundian. In Burundi, she's called Rwandan.

Growing up, her head used to tell her she's a Christian, but her heart wouldn't buy it. One day, God resurrected her soul and showed her the light. Then she found out where she truly belongs.

She has a God-given complex family of ten siblings and her all-time prayer is that they all find the way to the one and only true God, whose love is matchless.

She's grateful God has chosen her to work in His ministry. When thinking about the people she gets to interact with through Belong Together and the kind of conversations she's blessed to have with them, she's always amazed by the providence of God and the greatness of His Grace!

She believes love means caring, trusting, encouraging, empowering and irreplaceably hugging.

When someone talks about a resting day or a good moment, she thinks about a lot of things, but some are too pure to just forget about! A good hot cup of coffee, someone to laugh with for hours, listening to music, the flowers her mom

planted all around their home growing up, and the serenity that comes with sitting on an uncrowded beach (why she misses Lac Tanganyika so much!).

She studied Economic Statistics, but she's dreaming of being a passionate and good tailor -- that's why she's excitedly saving for a sewing machine. If she had to learn an "unconventional" skill for a woman, it would be carpentry.

Ornella currently lives in Kigali with her younger brother and has an awesome little community of people with whom she shares her Christian journey.



**ORNELLA**

## Emmanuel

Emmanuel Masengesho was born in 1993 in Bwishyura, Karongi district in the Western province of Rwanda. He is the third in a family of five children. He graduated from the University of Rwanda, College of Science and Technology, as an electrical power engineer in 2016. In the same year, he came to the saving faith in Jesus Christ. He is part of a house church called the Reformed Church of Rwanda where he serves as an assistant teacher and preacher of the Bible.

Emmanuel is very passionate about knowing God more, and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to all. He loves reading books, especially Classic Christian books.

He is engaged to Beatrice Wanjiku Mwangi, a beautiful and godly woman from Kenya and they plan to be married in 2020.

Knowing that God has given us a message that saves souls from God's judgement, and that He calls us to live for His own glory alone, which glory is our truest and highest satisfaction, Emmanuel's everyday endeavor is to make this message known to as many as he is able to reach, and to help others in finding true life and light in Jesus Christ.

Having lived at an island in Lake Kivu, Kibuye (Amahoro Island), Emmanuel is a good swimmer, and he enjoys swimming long distance as a hobby. He also likes learning about foreign cultures and languages.



**EMMANUEL**

## Albert

Albert Bisore Ngemanyi is a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Born in 1995, when he was one-year-old, his family fled their home because of conflict targeting those from his community. Since 1996, Albert, his parents and five siblings have lived in the Kiziba Refugee Camp in Rwanda. While life as a refugee has not been easy, Albert remembers how his mother always told them, “we have to put our trust in God (“I will bless those who put their trust in Me” Jeremiah 17:7), that a time will come and things will change.”

Despite his circumstances, Albert has seen God use his refugee experience to grow a desire in him of supporting vulnerable people. While he was studying statistics at university, his passion further developed to help his classmates who faced unique challenges, primarily those with physical disabilities.

With a firm belief that God has a beautiful purpose for all His children, Albert leads a Belong Together group for young men and women with disabilities. As they seek God together in community –reading the Scriptures, and discussion from the Belong curriculum- Albert has seen Christ at work in his life and society, impacting his community’s spiritual needs.



**ALBERT**



## HOW KNOWING GOD HAS IMPACTED ME

*Claude, a member of Belong Together Rwanda, offered to share a turning point in his life this year.*

From the time I was young, I was eager to learn about God, and always wished for an occasion where I could learn God's Word. Later, a colleague of mine told me about Belong Together, where the focus was all about living fully and completely through your identity in Christ. Since I became a Belong member, countless changes have taken place in my spiritual life.

Before joining Belong Together, I thought my works would be enough for me to be accepted in heaven. I have now realized it's through believing in Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross that we are saved. We are saved by the grace of God who gave his Son as a sacrifice of our sins.

Before joining Belong Together, I often felt guilty and ashamed of telling people where I came from, due to the fact I was scared of being despised in one way or another. Since I joined Belong, I got to know how we were no longer wandering exiles and strangers (Ephesians 2:12). Thus, it enabled me to know that we still belong to God. In God, we have redemption through the blood of His Son, the forgiveness of sins, and riches of His grace.

-Claude



**CLAUDE**

## GATHERINGS

We feel hospitality is one of the best ways to reflect the heart of God. When we can gather in person, Belong meetings take place in homes or community spaces where Belong members live. We love how Jesus fed people spiritually, and physically. During gatherings, we feast on God's Word, and enjoy a meal together. Spring 2020, our ministry leaders in Rwanda came up with a way to continue conversations and connectedness during home quarantine through recording their own weekly audio sermons to discuss with their members! Through consistent fellowship, our hope is that we may equip, encourage and empower each other to live fully and completely through our identity in Christ.



To kick off 2020, all four Belong groups in Rwanda met for a day of celebrating God's gift of a new year. This was the first time all four groups had the opportunity to be together! We talked about who Jesus is and how He transforms us, shared in laughter and games, and enjoyed a delicious meal.



Time in God's Word is central to any Belong gathering. Between Rwanda and Portland, our ministry leaders host weekly small-group and individual Bible studies. This spring, we are continuing those Bible studies and conversations via phone.



Albert leads a Belong group for men and women with disabilities. Together, they felt called to share the love of Christ by regularly visiting patients at a local hospital.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Every action in our life is building upon something. At Belong Together, we want the base of all we do to be built upon prayer. Prayer is nothing small to us. Thank you for joining us to pray for our needs, and as the Spirit leads you!



**NADEGE, A MEMBER OF BELONG TOGETHER RWANDA**

- Rwanda: **Seeking**. During this season of isolation, our prayer is that the men and women of Belong Together Rwanda give voice to their honest questions, and explore God's Word for answers. We pray for ever-increasing passion to seek God, take hold of His unchangingness, and build uncompromising trust in His promises.
- Portland: **Momentum**. This year marks the start of a weekly Saturday evening Bible time for Belong Together, Portland. Our purpose is to read the Bible out loud in community, ask questions and discuss, and share a meal together as a family. There were ten of us at our first two gatherings and we had the best time. Please join in prayer that our Saturday evening Bible time continues in commitment, depth and enthusiasm when we can resume.
- Ministry: **Foundation**. As we learn and grow, we never want to lose sight of our focus: Jesus. Please pray that as a ministry, we hold fast to God's Word and lay our plans before the Lord in all decisions we make.



## PARTNER WITH US

In a time of apparent crises, our response can reflect our faith. Even when we cannot physically be together, that does not stop us from continuing our journey in discipleship, recognizing the importance of diving in deeper now when questions of faith arise.

We realize all of our needs are different during this season, and we are especially thankful for you joining with us to continue our mission of sharing the Gospel.

**Laptop:** Our ministry leaders in Rwanda spend hours preparing for Bible studies, Belong groups and one-on-one meetings. They want each gathering to be rich in Biblical depth. Having a laptop would be hugely helpful for our leaders to study and plan. (\$900 for a laptop)

**Curriculum Development:** Part of our ministry includes creating content that contributes to our study of the Scriptures. We are in the process of writing a second Belong Together Workbook as a tool to help groups continue in their discipleship to Jesus. With your help, we hope to have these books ready this summer! (\$25/book includes writing, formatting and publishing)

**Bibles:** Belong Together's ministry centers around the life and teachings of Jesus, recorded in the Bible. We want to make sure everyone who is part of a Belong community has access to a Bible they can use for group and personal use. (\$17 for a Kinyarwanda study Bible, \$5 for a NIV English Bible)

**Recurring support:** We are excited by how God is bringing more men and women to Belong Together who are curious about the Bible and a relationship with Jesus. Our hope is to say "yes" to mentor anyone God brings our way. One of the best ways you can help our ministry continue is through recurring monthly support via PayPal by checking the "monthly donation" box.



**EMMANUEL WITH YOUNG MEN & WOMEN FROM THE MAHAMA REFUGEE CAMP, WHERE WE HOPE TO EXPAND ONE DAY**

## GIVING

If you'd like to give, you can do so online through PayPal on our website

[belongtogether.org/donate](https://belongtogether.org/donate)

Or, you can send your support via mail!  
Make checks payable to:

**Belong Together**  
**PO Box 6553**  
**Portland, OR 97228**

Our Tax ID number is 82-4357562

## THANK YOU

On behalf of your Belong Together family, **thank you for walking alongside us on this journey to celebrate how we all belong to God.** Thank you for being with us as we commit to living from our identity in Christ, and loving and serving our world wholeheartedly.

We love you!  
Your Belong Together family

