

BELONG TOGETHER

Winter 2020/21
Quarterly Update



TAYLOR'S NOTE	2
MISSION	4
WHERE: WE STARTED / ARE NOW / PRAY GOD TAKES US	5
MINISTRY IN RWANDA	6
Gicumbi (Northern Province, Rwanda)	7
Kigali (Capital, Central Rwanda)	8
Huye (Southern Province, Rwanda)	9
Mahama (Eastern Province, Rwanda)	10
CONGRATULATIONS!	11
JACKSON'S REFLECTION	12
PRAYER REQUESTS	15
PARTNER WITH US	16
GIVING	17

Belong Together exists to share the Gospel, and I can attest from my personal experience the fruit His Spirit is producing through this ministry, not only in Rwanda and Portland, but in my own life and in my family. How I desire ever more fervently for God to take His Word far and wide, all to bring Him glory to see the sons and daughters of God be revealed.

As 2020 comes to a close, I thank God for how He has used you in the sustaining and growth of this ministry, preaching and teaching the Word of God. And I pray that through this update, God may use some part of it as a call to examine your heart and make the Truth known to you, if you do not know it already. And if you do, how I pray He would continue to make Himself more known to you, and carry to completion the

good work He began, transforming you into the likeness of His Son, that the words of this famous hymn would be all the more personal and precious to you...

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now, I'm found, once blind, but now I see."

With gratitude and joy in Christ,



Taylor Gakundi
Founder and President



MISSION

Belong Together's mission is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with young men and women who've experienced displacement. Through Bible studies, curriculum and discipleship from leaders who teach sound doctrine, we explore who we are and who Christ is, what our works earn us and what His work on the cross accomplished, and what it means to receive salvation.

We pray God reveals the Gospel to the hearts of young refugees, and that by His grace, they will find true refuge in Christ, and experience unshakable citizenship in His Kingdom. We pray the sons and daughters of God may be revealed, for His glory, and that together, we may grow in a life of belonging to God.



WHERE WE STARTED

In 2018, we held our first meeting in Portland, Oregon from founder Taylor's living room, with 15 of her dear friends and brothers who were resettled from Rwanda. Later in 2018, Taylor traveled to Rwanda to help 10 of her friends who are refugees there to begin meeting as a group and exploring ministry opportunities.



WHERE WE ARE NOW

Thanks to God, in 2020, our ministry is now centered in Rwanda, with four groups across the country composed of more than 60 people. Our three ministry leaders travel the week to lead Bible studies nearly every day, as well as hosting studies and group meetings in their homes. God has greatly blessed our ministry with leaders who possess deep Biblical knowledge and teaching abilities, and a great desire to share the Gospel.



WHERE WE PRAY GOD TAKES US

In 2021, we pray God will allow us to register Belong Together as a non-profit in Rwanda (our current legal status is in the US), to invite at least two new leaders to join the ministry team, and to officially establish a Belong group with young refugees from the Mahama Camp. We pray God also allows us to complete and print new Bible study materials in Kinyarwanda, and to begin a YouTube channel to share sermons and messages.



MINISTRY IN RWANDA

This year, after prayer and reflection, God led us to direct Belong Together's ministry focus to Rwanda to support our leaders and groups there. In the coming year, we will be applying to register Belong Together in Rwanda, praying it be the Lord's will to further establish and expand our ministry in East Africa.

By God's grace, He has blessed Belong Together in Rwanda in 2020, even with COVID-19, and we're excited to share with you what has happened and is currently taking place in our four groups across the country.



BT leaders and friends (L to R) Brian, Taylor, Ornella, Maurice, Emmanuel and Albert (center)

Gicumbi (Northern Province, Rwanda)

While the first Belong groups began in Kigali (Rwanda's capital city), soon, members from the Gihembe Refugee Camp wanted to invite their friends who couldn't travel from the camp to join. Those members organized a meeting in 2019, and our leaders were so encouraged by the interest of the young men and women to study the Bible, that we began a new Belong group there.

Today, we continue to welcome new members to Bible studies that our leaders host weekly. We praise God for the work He is doing as we have begun to see people reading the Bible on their own, and some showing more evidence of believing in the sufficiency of scripture, and that salvation comes by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ.



Kigali (Capital, Central Rwanda)

With students back in school in Rwanda after COVID-19 shutdowns, many Belong members have returned to Kigali and are now able to meet regularly with leaders for Bible studies.

We praise God that after nearly three years of ministry in Rwanda, we have seen several men and women profess that Jesus Christ is their Savior and Lord, all thanks to the grace of God. We are also grateful for how Maurice, the younger brother of Belong

Together's Rwanda Director, Ornella, has been so involved in the Bible studies that take place in the Belong Together home.

Maurice's faith in Christ and passion to share the Word of God with anyone and everyone, gives God the glory and we are grateful to have his support in Belong Together. Maurice is in his final year of high school and we look forward to seeing what God has for his future.



Huye (Southern Province, Rwanda)

When one of the first Belong Together Rwanda members, Albert, asked to begin a Belong group for young men and women with physical disabilities, we were excited and grateful for this opportunity to share the Gospel.

Recently the group finished its first year of meeting together! We pray God will guide our leaders in further Bible studies with these men and women, and that it be the Lord's will to make the Gospel known to their hearts.



Manzi Fabrice, from our Huye group, with leader Emmanuel

Mahama (Eastern Province, Rwanda)

Five months ago, Belong Together volunteer, Brian, began our ministry exploration with young people in Rwanda's biggest refugee camp: Mahama, home to nearly 70,000 Burundian refugees. It was during Brian's work in the camp with the Red Cross that he began hearing stories of young people who felt hopeless in their circumstances, some even to the point of taking their lives. Knowing the true hope of salvation in Jesus Christ, Brian began sharing the Gospel with a small group of men and women in the camp.

After we first met Brian and learned of the young people in Mahama who eagerly desired discipleship and a community to study the Bible, Belong Together was grateful to have Brian volunteer to lead Bible studies with a group of 20. In these past five months, the group has discussed what salvation is and our need for it, the Lordship of Christ, and the new life we are given through faith in Jesus Christ.

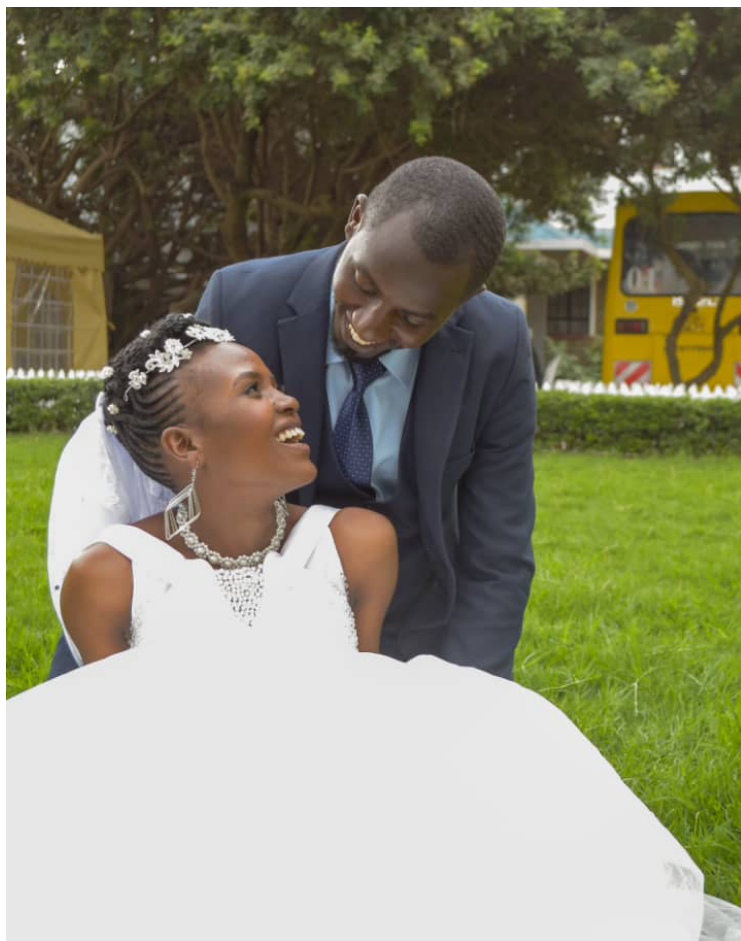
Even with the Bible studies taking place through phone calls, due to COVID-19 regulations, we are grateful to God for the seeds of the Gospel that have been sown. After exploring ministry there with Brian as our volunteer, our prayer is that it be God's will to officially begin ministry in Mahama in 2021.



Brian, Taylor and Jackson

CONGRATULATIONS!

We praise God that it was His will to join together our leader Emmanuel, with such a God-fearing wife, Beatrice. Their wedding took place this fall in Kenya, and already in their first few months of marriage, God has powerfully used this couple to share the Gospel in their home and in ministry in Rwanda.



JACKSON'S REFLECTION

One year ago, Belong Together's founder, Taylor, was married to Jackson Gakundi. Originally from Rwanda, Jackson's heart for those who have been displaced through political conflict and genocide is personal. This year, Jackson has been part of Belong Together through leading Bible studies in Portland, and as a member of the board.

However, it wasn't until Jackson and Taylor traveled to Rwanda this summer, that he fully realized what Belong Together is about, and he thanks God for what He taught himself and Taylor through the ministry's commitment to studying the Bible and sharing the Gospel. In this Quarterly Update, Jackson is excited to share more about his experience...

This past summer, I was blessed to go to Rwanda to visit the ministry of Belong Together (BT) with my wife. We had on our minds plans to encourage and help mentor team leaders in Rwanda, but it did not take long for us to realize God's plan for us was to listen and learn. Emmanuel and Ornella, both BT team leaders, have a deep understanding of the Bible and are gifted to teach the Word of God.

Despite the fact that Rwanda has a majority Christian population, what is being preached in most churches is works righteousness and the prosperity gospel.

Most who call themselves Christians are being taught that salvation is achieved by what one does (works), and the earthly



success they will have based upon those good deeds. Yet, these teachings undermine the work Christ did on the cross. As Paul writes, it is “by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

On every occasion we had Bible studies with the BT leaders, through the very words of scripture, the weight of our sin was emphasized, the wages of our sin was explored, and it was made clear how only a person who is as perfect as God Himself could live with God in heaven. This led us to talk about who is Christ, why we need Christ, and why Christ is the only way to God. From these Bible studies, I concluded that I have never been part of a faith that talks about man’s sinful nature and the wrath of God that is awaiting every person who does not come to God

through putting his faith in Jesus Christ. I realized that until that moment, I had never really understood the Gospel.

Having been raised in the Seventh Day Adventist church, where one has to keep the Ten Commandments, especially keeping the Sabbath as it is written in Exodus 20: 8-11, it has been my understanding that accumulating good works and keeping the law would bring me salvation. Not only was my understanding corrupt, it was blasphemy to God. The Law is meant to show me how sinful I am and how impossible it is to attain God’s righteousness on my own. The Law is a reminder of how much mankind needs a Holy sacrifice -God Himself- in order to be saved.

One of my favorite moments from our time in Rwanda, and one that deeply touched my heart, was when we went to spend time with young men and women from the Gihembe Refugee Camp who are part of BT and come from different religious backgrounds. Emmanuel led the Bible study that day and taught from the book of Romans, chapter 6. As he taught, there were so many questions asked. Emmanuel, filled with Biblical wisdom and the Spirit of



Jackson, Taylor and leader Emmanuel

God, kept the Bible the center focus, and with each question, he opened to pages of scripture to read and discuss what was there. He didn't answer with opinion or cultural views; he answered with the Bible.

The saving message of the Gospel was something I wanted every member of my family to hear and receive. I extended an invitation to my little brother, Freddy, and my niece, Gaella, to join our BT Bible studies. I am grateful to God how, by His grace, they were curious and asked

questions. Since Freddy joined his first BT Bible study, he has purchased a Bible and has kept connected with the leaders and friends of BT.

I am grateful that through Belong Together, sound Biblical teaching is being taught and I pray for the salvation of all those who God brings to be part of BT, including members of my own family.

- Jackson Gakundi

Jackson, Ornella (BT leader), Maurice and Freddy



PRAYER REQUESTS

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.



Registration in Rwanda: In 2021, we will begin the process to register Belong Together as a non-profit in Rwanda, which would allow us to further establish and grow the ministry there. Please pray that God gives us wisdom and discernment in all our steps, and that He may be glorified throughout the process.

Commitment to Biblical Truth: Studying the Word of God is the core of our ministry. In a time when cultural views and traditions hold great influence, please pray that we remain faithful and committed to studying and teaching God's Word, for "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Seeds to Fruit: We thank God for every opportunity to plant seeds of the Gospel in the hearts of those young men and women we meet. Please pray that these seeds fall on good soil, and that through the work of the Holy Spirit, the words of the Gospel would take root and flourish into true, saving faith in Jesus Christ, that they may receive salvation.

Pathway to Rwanda: For the dedication of their time to serving the ministry of Belong Together, Jackson and Taylor Gakundi pray it's the Lord's will for them to have a home in Rwanda and live there for part of each year. Please pray God makes a path for them to live in Rwanda, to begin working there for the support of the ministry, and for their future home.

PARTNER WITH US

God is the one who provides for our needs and we depend on Him. We pray to God for our needs and He answers through supporters like you who love Biblical truth, who want to stand with us, and who have a desire to see the Word of God spread around the world and in Rwanda.

Right now, we are in a season where we have more young people who want to participate in Belong Together than is in our leaders' capacity to lead studies and disciple them. With that, our hope is to enter 2021 with a financial base that will

allow us to invite more leaders to our team for the teaching of sound doctrine, to invest in the creation of resources (such as Biblical study materials in Kinyarwanda, and starting a YouTube Channel), and to begin new Belong groups in places like the Mahama Refugee Camp, which we shared about earlier in this update.

If it is God's will for you to be part of Belong Together in a financial capacity, we thank God for what He has given you that would share with us for the furthering of the Gospel in Rwanda.

BT leaders and friends



WHERE DOES YOUR GIVING GO?

For each member who joins a Belong Together group, we spend an average of \$50 per month on expenses towards study materials like Bibles and curriculum, transportation and meals, ministry team salaries and our Belong Together home in Rwanda where many of our studies and meetings take place.

IF OUR GIVING GROWS

To grow in our ministry in 2021, our budget would increase by \$900 per month. If God wills for you to be a financial supporter of Belong Together, would you consider becoming a monthly donor to insure we can cover our expenses each month?

HOW TO GIVE

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

belongtogether.org/donate

To become a monthly donor via PayPal, check the box that says, "make this a monthly donation."

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

Belong Together
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Our Tax ID number is 82-4357562

