



# Amohoro! \*

Cape Town, February 2023



**November 2022:** After a long time in Germany, separated from each other, and our daughters now in Germany, a completely new time began for us and we felt that we needed to reorient ourselves for our ministry with a week of fasting and prayer.

During that very week, a request came from Burundi. Bishop Desire had experienced Gottfried and Peter in Rwanda and wants to equip his churches for evangelistic ministry among Muslims. This request was very urgent. In Burundi, Bishop Desire told us that he had followed Jesus' personal invitation to teach his congregation and had invited us as a result. Originally the invitation went to Peter and Gottfried. However, Peter could not make up his mind at that time and so Susanne decided to accompany Gottfried. After checking the background, we accepted the assignment. We saw a clear invitation from our Lord Jesus to be obedient and to go.

Then the preparations began. We had 2 months to do it. Since the time from December to January is very quiet here in South Africa, this was very convenient for us. Gottfried worked day and night on a handbook for the participants. We experienced a lot of power outages during this time, on average up to 6 hours per day, so we had to manage our time well. In the meantime, 100 participants had already registered after the first two weeks of our commitment.

Flights, vaccinations, visas were some of the organizational things that had to be done in time. In this time came the offer from Africa Mission of our partner mission to participate in a training in EE3 (Evangelism Explosion). The date was rescheduled so that we could fly on to Burundi directly afterwards.

For our visas we had to travel to Pretoria two weeks before the start of the trip to apply for them personally. We finally had the opportunity to try out this 20 hour trip by bus, with the realization that we would later have to use our company car to travel to the training. It allowed us to move independently between campus and offices.

Our amazement was great when we were the only visitors at the Burundian Consulate and our visas were processed and handed to us within an hour. This saved us a lot of time both in South Africa and later at the Burundi airport.



When we went back to Pretoria two weeks later, we stayed at the Africa Missions campus, just outside of Pretoria, where we also did the EEiii training. Besides us, there was the missions director with his wife and his successor with his wife. Especially for us! Three days of intensive training, basically the training goes 6 days, we just didn't have the time. It was a blessed time with many conversations and inspirations. During the subsequent street outreach, 4 people decided to follow Jesus.

Then it was time to say goodbye. We were allowed to leave our car at Ron and Rina's home. The two of them provided us with a delicious meal and then drove us to the airport at night, because our flight left around 3 am.

From the airport in Bujumbura we were picked up by Bishop Desire and his right hand man, Innocent.



The welcome was very warm and we felt immediately in good hands. The temperature was tropically hot and we were grateful for the air conditioning for this first night in Bujumbura. The next day we visited the church in Bujumbura and Gottfried was allowed to preach his first sermon right away. „Be ready at all times to preach the gospel.“ Here the just received training in evangelism was still fresh in mind and inspired well. Spontaneous preaching then became a habit for the week ahead, as there were several opportunities to do so.

One Muslim gave his life into Jesus' hands during the first service. A wonderful beginning! Before the service was over, we left, as we had

about 7-9 hours of driving ahead of us. The drive was across Burundi to Moyinga and on to almost the Tanzanian border. Until the end of the trip we had no idea where the training would take place. Besides us, two ladies from the community were also driving along, who were responsible for the food during the week. Burundi is fascinatingly green. Full of palm trees and banana trees, corn and rice fields. The drive was constantly up and down as Burundi seemed to be made up of hills. Along the road were smaller settlements and a few towns. And everywhere in the towns there were also crowds of people. On foot, by bicycle and motorcycle, serving as



cab or load transport. Along the way, in various places, the most beautiful and freshest vegetables and fruits we had ever seen were bought. Soon the van was full of food and we were treated to freshly cut mangoes and sugary little bananas. We noticed that we didn't see any dogs or horses, quite different from South Africa.

We were surprised when we took a policeman into the bus about 1 hour before arrival. Only in the course of the next days we understood that he was assigned for our protection and would follow us everywhere and would not leave our side day or night. In this way, he was also present at the training and at every conceivable event, always careful that no one would be allowed to touch us. In general, we noticed that Bishop Desire had a good relationship with the police. He is quite well known through his healing services and radio program, and has open doors all the way into political ranks. What we also didn't know was that the people in the area where we would be conducting our training had never seen a white woman before. There were all kinds of reac-



*Unsere Küche.*



tions when we showed up together somewhere. The most common was curiosity. The children usually ran alongside the bus with big happy eyes. When Susanne tried to photograph them, they usually ran away again.

Once we arrived at our training site, we quickly realized that we would be living here on the most basic level for the week ahead. No electricity and no running water.... Our accommodation was in the middle of the village, behind a big gate was a small yard where the bus was parked. A cow in the same yard provided fresh milk and chickens fresh eggs. The pigs were behind the toilet room. There were different little rooms, about 3-4m<sup>2</sup> with a place to sleep, a net for protection from the mosquitoes and an old closet. Already the first night the unannounced roommates showed up in the room. A family of rats and mice had taken up residence in the closet and Susanne chose the bus as her sleeping place for the rest of the week. Our hosts did their best to remove the unpopular roommates and by the end of the week all animals were temporarily removed from the living area.



On Monday, the training began. From 9:00 in the morning until 16:30 in the afternoon, including lunch



break and short interruptions. Gottfried had previously asked Joseph from Rwanda if he would like to take over part of the training and be available to us as a translator. He was so enthusiastic about this invitation that he sold parts of his equipment to cover his travel expenses to be able to be there.

And he was really a great help and a wonderful addition to us. We could rely on him and serve God in harmony with each other. Gottfried's collection of materials

on Islam and Evangelism Explosion complemented each other very well. The bishop, his deputy, Joseph and the two of us grew together to form a very harmonious and humorous team, for which we are immensely grateful. There were no disagreements, no one got sick, more than 100 people were accommodated in the village, were taken care of daily and participated enthusiastically and motivated.



During the training there were practical assignments. The participants, who came from different directions in Burundi, some from Bujumbura, went out with what they had learned and talked to many people in the area. Some young men see themselves again as God's evangelists. Every day people were converted through these outreaches. We cannot express how happy we were to see the shining eyes of the young people who had applied what they had learned and had become life savers.



On Friday, the topic of women in Islam was Susanne's responsibility. The honour and value of women in Islam was contrasted with biblical teachings. There was a lot of discussion here. Especially the problems that Christians in Burundi have in marriage and family were addressed very openly. It was a very special day and the questions and answers went on until the afternoon. Afterwards, the lillis (washable pads) that Nerina (from Cape Town) had prepared were distributed for the women.

One of Susanne's concerns now is to organize two mechanical sewing machines for the women so that the community women in the village will be able to sew their own underwear and sanitary napkins.

On Sunday there was an extended eventful service. Once again a group of four people came forward to give their lives to Jesus. A couple officially announced their engagement and certificates for attending the training were presented. At the end of the closing service, the whole congregation and our "students" stood united and declared their desire to continue spreading the gospel without fear.



We decided at short notice to drive back to Bujumbura in the afternoon. When we were already back in Bujumbura, we were told that 12 more Muslims had decided to follow Jesus that weekend, came with their Muslim clothes and objects to burn them. Hallelujah!

On Monday we visited several families, blessed their homes and spent another day in the townships of the city, which reminded us a bit of Cairo, especially the loud calls of the muezzin, which we hear here in Cape Town only rarely or quietly.

We are infinitely grateful to our Lord Jesus for this experience and encouraged for our ministry in Cape Town. In His grace He has strengthened us to hear the call and to accept the very simple conditions on the ground. The book had been on Gottfried's mind for a long time. Through Jesus' commission in Burundi, this collection of material has now been put together. Joseph found it a great help for his own study and the bishop has already begun to translate it into Kirundi. Susanne has sparked an important and helpful discussion that will probably give new impetus to some marriages. The bishop's testimony was that the whole village has changed. We feel it is Jesus' great grace to be taken into the work of God in this way. He continues his work, and we can unite with him in prayer.



\*amohoro! = a usual greeting in Burundi. It means "peace" it is similar to the Hebrew Shalom.





Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your participation in this mission, you have done your part.

Gottfried und Susanne

