



river west church

The “Two Hands” of Gospel Ministry

Pastor Charles Buregeya

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“When you pick coffee, you must use two hands. What one hand cannot reach, the other can reach. This is why Africa New Life Ministries focuses on two things—acts of compassion and the proclamation of God’s Word. If you have only one hand, you are crippled, you cannot be effective. So we have two hands, joined in one goal—to bring hope and new life to the poor, the orphans, the widows, all the hurting people of Rwanda.”

-Pastor Charles Buregeya

The Story Behind Africa New Life

In 1968, Charles Mugisha Buregeya was born to a Rwandan family living as refugees in Uganda. His parents fled Rwanda after the first genocide in 1959, but settled in another war-struck country: Uganda. Life was not easy for refugees living in Uganda under the rule of Idi Amin Dada and other dictators. At age 14, Charles was recruited to work for the guerrilla warfare as a child intelligence officer. He spent nights on roadblocks watching for intruders. It was during this time that Charles learned how to pray. As the war came to an end, Charles wanted to return to school. He had a prayer book, but couldn’t find a prayer for his specific need. He laid the book down and began to pray with his own words. Tears poured down his face. For the first time, Charles felt connected to God. He began to attend church in a neighboring village and gave his life to Christ. Just a few weeks later, Charles joined with other young people and began preaching the Gospel on the streets.

In the early nineties, Charles went to England to preach the Gospel. In 1995, after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, Charles returned to his family in Uganda and discovered that his father had left and returned to Rwanda. Charles followed. Even though the war had ended, Charles saw signs of death everywhere. When he saw the orphaned children, widows, and homeless people, Charles knew he had to do something to help them. As Charles prayed, one day he received an invitation to attend Multnomah Biblical Seminary in Portland. In 2001, while in seminary, Charles wrote the ministry plan for Africa New Life. The mission of Africa New Life is to transform lives and communities through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and acts of compassion. For the last decade, Africa New Life has shared the Gospel using two hands: the hand of compassion—helping to meet basic needs and give hope for the future to those living in poverty in Rwanda—and the hand of evangelism—sharing the freedom and hope found in Christ. Today, Africa New Life has more than 2,300 sponsored children, has planted three churches, is building the first seminary in Rwanda, and reaches over 700 street kids each week!

Our Assignment

If the story of Africa New Life teaches us anything, it’s that amazing things happen as God’s people love, serve, and follow Jesus with two hands—extending both a hand of compassion and the hope of the Gospel to others in Jesus’ name. As followers of Christ, this is our assignment. Today, as you hear the story of Africa New Life, will you begin imagining what your life would look like to serve Jesus with two hands? This week, ask the Lord to reveal the people He has sovereignly placed in your life. Don’t wait for those around you to reach out to you! Reach out to them in faith that God will place exactly what that person needs in your hand.