

Update from Rwanda #2, June 9, 2014

Greetings from Kigali!

YAGM's are coming! That's the message I've been sharing these days with our brothers and sisters in the Lutheran Church in Rwanda. The term "YAGM" – Young Adults in Global Mission – doesn't translate easily in the Kinyarwandan language, but the message is simple. Six young adults from the U.S. will be arriving in August and they will be living, learning, and serving here for one year.

Last week I started a round of visitations to the placement sites we've identified for the YAGM's. Four young men and two young women will be scattered throughout the country: northeast, southeast, in Kigali, and in the far west. For the first time in the history of the YAGM throughout the world, we will have more men than women serving in one country. I met the 6 members of the Rwanda team in April at the YAGM discernment event near Chicago, and feel excited by the energy, gifts, interests, and commitments they will bring to Rwanda.

The Lutheran Church in Rwanda (LCR) has limited experience with missionaries, as the church was founded by Rwandese returning from exile after the 1994 genocide. In the past 20 years, relationships have been formed and sustained between the LCR and Lutherans in the U.S. primarily through short term visits – Americans visiting Rwanda for a week or two, and Rwandese in the U.S. for brief stays. The YAGM program will provide opportunities for relationships between the 2 churches to go much deeper, as the young adults from the US will immerse themselves for a year in the daily lives of our brothers and sisters in Rwanda. I'm enthused about this new way of being in partnership in mission.

I'm also impressed and grateful for the ways the Lutheran Church in Rwanda has stepped up in faith and embraced the YAGM program without really knowing all the details. I've had many questions in my meetings and conversations with LCR members: will a young person from the US be able to eat our food? Do they know how to wash clothes like we do (ie, without machines)? Can they buy Rwandan medical insurance? What will happen if they get sick?

In my conversations here, I often say that when brothers and sisters from different places come together in the body of Christ, we open space between us for God to do new things. As I prepare and wait for the first group of Young Adults in Global Mission to arrive in Kigali, I do believe God is doing a new thing. Soon we'll have stories to tell! In the meantime, I invite your prayers for Lars, Luke, Jake, Ryan, Sarah and Emily as they prepare to come to east Africa in August.

In Christ's peace,

Kate

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