



HUMAN LIFE INTERNATIONAL'S

SPECIAL REPORT

Pro-Life Missionaries to the World

Special Report No. 268

ISSN 0899-420x

April 2007

Celebrating 35 Years: HLI was established in 1972 by Fr. Paul Marx, OSB as the "Human Life Center" in Collegetown, MN; in 1981 it was officially founded as Human Life International.

By George Wirnkar and Franko and Margrit Sokolic

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Dear HLI Friends and Supporters,

In this month's issue of *Special Report* we bring you a sobering statement from HLI's affiliate in South Africa, where 10 years of legalized abortion in that country has resulted in the death of over a half million pre-born children. But first, George Wirnkar reports from Central Africa, where the Church stands strong in the face of threats, and HLI expands its mission to more seminarians and pro-life leaders.

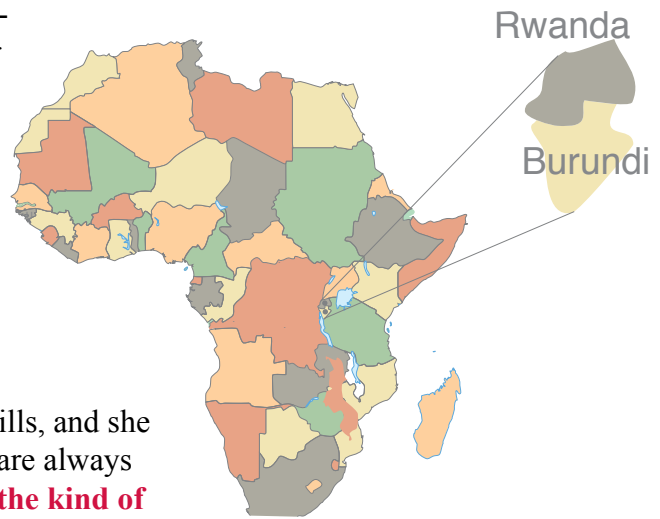
MISSION REPORT FROM RWANDA AND BURUNDI—Reported by George Wirnkar, December 6-14, 2006

When I jetted into Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda, I had before then only met four Rwandans in my whole life—none of whom lived in Rwanda. The same was true of Burundi, where my visit would culminate.

Rwanda and Burundi are neighboring countries with many similarities. They have populations of just over eight million people each. These are made up of about 84% Hutu and 14% Tutsi in each case. The Catholic Church is strong in both countries and counts among its members 56% of the population in Rwanda



and 62% in Burundi. They became independent from Belgium in 1963 and 1961 respectively. Sadly, in 1993 and 1994 they both experienced genocide that opened the saddest chapter yet in the history of these people. *In Rwanda, about one million people lost their lives in a spate of hate killings by Hutus of Tutsis* and moderate Hutus during a three month killing spree that was only stopped by the forces of the Tutsi leader **Paul Kagame** marching down from Uganda. In Burundi, 200,000 people perished when Tutsis turned on their Hutu brothers following the killing of the Hutu **President Melchior Ndadaye** in 1993. This ethnic civil war lasted practically 12 years, and calm was only achieved when 6,000 United Nations peace-keepers landed in Burundi. In early 1994, parliament elected another Hutu, **Cyprien Ntaryamira**, as president. He was killed in April, alongside the president of Rwanda, when their plane was shot down over Kigali.



Rwanda is referred to as the country of a thousand hills, and she shares this title with Burundi. When you travel there, you are always ascending or descending. **This, in a way, is a symbol for the kind of terrain that Human Life International is challenged with when defending the culture of life.** I was very happy about many good things I saw: booming seminaries, strong attendance at daily Mass in parishes, youth involvement in the life of the local church, Bishops unanimously welcoming the Gospel of Life. But I also came to realize I had to prepare myself for the downhill experience that constantly reminded me of how many problems call for urgent action from HLI.

THE PROBLEMS THAT COME WITH RELIEF

When a country experiences civil strife on the scale that these two nations have, almost anyone presenting themselves as a relief organization is welcomed—as long as they do not manifest any signs of being politically or militarily against the government in power. The central government is weakened, and the delivery of health services and even other essential services is hardly a priority. Many organizations have come into both Rwanda and Burundi in these circumstances and have continually modified, widened, and justified their continuous presence on the ground to keep their shop doors open. In all fairness, there was a strong need for relief. Many organizations brought badly needed food and medication. Many contributed to the training of agricultural and development extension staff. *Yet many have bundled some of these worthwhile goals with spineless and value-emptied brainwashing of the young, especially in matters relating to their sexuality.* Both Rwanda

and Burundi have lived through the experience of rape as a weapon of war. Their HIV/AIDS infection rates are steadily increasing. They definitely need more than condoms and contraception.

GREAT HOPE FROM THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

HLI has made some of its greatest impacts on the world by educating young people so that when the agents of the culture of death come with their programs pertaining to such things as “Sexual Rights” and “Youth Reproductive Health,” they are not deceived. Our meetings with the bishops at their plenary meeting in Rwanda and my meeting with the president of the Burundi Bishops’ Confer-



George Wirnkar after addressing the Rwandan Bishops.

ence, Msgr. Ntagwarara, and my personal meetings with other Bishops in both countries have shown me that ***the Catholic Church here is prepared to defend herself in the face of anti-life attacks.*** On December 8, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, I was received by the Bishops' Conference of Rwanda. I expressed our great joy at meeting the Church in Rwanda in the persons of her bishops. They gave me one hour to make a presentation of Human Life International's global mission and of the present and impending attacks that the Church and the family need to be braced against.

That same morning, the National Assembly was in session, examining the government's family planning policy. The reaction of the local Church was both decisive and clear. Both **H.E. Kizito Bahutimihigo**—who is Bishop of **Hurengeri Diocese** and in charge of defending the family—and **Bishop Smaragde Mbonyinge** of **Kabgayi Diocese**—who oversees the seminaries—went to the parliament to defend the position of the Church on birth control. **H.E. Kizito Bahutimihigo** told me that the parliamentarians were very receptive and that **they agreed in principle to consider including funding for Natural Family Planning (NFP) in the 2008 national budget.** I promised him that we would help link them up with groups like Billings France, who teach NFP scientifically and in complete accord with the Church's teaching that it should only be used to prevent pregnancy when there is a serious reason. It is interesting to note that IPPF complains that in Burundi contraceptive use has grown very little from its nationwide average of 1% in 1996. They are working hard to spread birth control everywhere.



George Wirnkar and H.E. Smaragde Mbonyinge Bishop of Kabgayi, Rwanda.

I informed the bishops of Rwanda and the president of the Burundian Bishop's Conference that HLI will work with them to strengthen programs that address key issues, like Natural Family Planning and chastity education. ***Our work with seminarians also has enormous potential for helping train future pastors to be well versed in the Church's teachings on key pro-life issues.*** As part of this effort, our **Seminarians for Life International Newsletter** in French is published quarterly and reaches over 1500 seminarians

in Francophone Africa. I was grateful to God for the enthusiasm showed at every seminary I visited in Rwanda and Burundi. At St. Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary, located in Kabgayi, Rwanda, our sign up ceremony was attended by over 100 seminarians. At St. Cure d'Arms Seminary in Bujumbura, Burundi, I was blessed to meet with the seminary professors at the behest of Bishop Jean Ntagwarara—President of the Bishops' Conference of Burundi and Bishop of Bubanza Diocese—to encourage them and offer them all the help that HLI can provide in support of their all-important work of training future priests. The rector, Msgr. Gabriel Baregensabe, was warm in his welcome and encouragements.

THE BATTLE OF AIDS PREVENTION

Although the dominant problem for Rwanda and Burundi is still genocide and its consequences, ***the HIV/AIDS situation is a growing concern.*** Many organizations working in the area of "Reproductive Health" gain access to these two countries by promising to fight AIDS. ***The paradox is that they use their failed condom promotion and distribution strategies to justify the continuation of these programs!*** In January, Rwanda launched its first massive, nationwide condom-promotion campaign. Its purpose was to promote "correct" condom use among all Rwandans as part of the fight against HIV/AIDS. The campaign also aimed at reducing cultural and religious resistance to condoms. It specifically targeted the youth, inmates, prostitutes, and refugees; but it was also aimed at clergy members, who generally stand in the way of any mass distribution of contraception. A 2005 study conducted in Rwanda reported that fewer than half of all Rwandans age 15 to 48 reported ever hav-

Ten Years of Abortion On Demand in South Africa

Statement by HLI-South Africa Directors, Franko and Margrit Sokolic

January, 2007

In the summer of 1995, Fr. Paul Marx made a historical trip to South Africa with Dr. Brian Clowes, Joe Scheidler of the Pro-Life Action League, and Rev. Johnny Hunter of the Life Education and Action Resource Network. Their purpose was to try to forestall the legalization of “abortion-on-demand” through the “Termination of Pregnancy Act” that was eventually passed after the toppling of the apartheid regime. **This legislation, however, had catastrophic effects for the unborn and institutionalized another form of discrimination.** Abortion is the greatest violation of human rights in history, and the South Africans, under intense pressure from Planned Parenthood and the international community, eventually succumbed to the lie of abortion and became the first country on the African continent to legalize abortion on demand. Below you will read a statement by HLI’s South African affiliate, detailing the trail of tears that has been left in that country since then. May we never forget that we stand in solidarity with and prayer for all unborn children throughout the world!



Statement of HLI-South Africa

“The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined.” *Donum Vitae*, “The Gift of Life.”

Ten years ago, South Africa legalised abortion-on-demand. Millions of South Africans were disappointed that the strong opposition that was mounted to oppose abortion legislation went unheeded. Overnight, abortion became much more of a reality in South Africa. Chains of abortion ‘clinics’ sprung up in local neighbourhoods. Doctors and nurses, who could previously have been struck off the medical register for participating in abortion, suddenly were called upon to perform abortions in government hospitals and clinics. Schools and guidance counsellors began to refer young girls to abortion facilities to help them with their ‘problems.’ Abortion was no longer a theoretical debate, but a stark reality, affecting the lives of people we know, friends, family, maybe even ourselves.

Every day, hundreds of South African women resort to abortion as a solution to an ‘unwanted’ pregnancy. Six hundred thirty thousand deaths later, abortion figures continue to rise annually.

The culture of death has taken root, sprouted, and grown in the soil of the African continent. Ten years on and we are reaping its bitter harvest.

Throughout its history, Christ has provided the Church with opportunities to shine as a light amidst

an overwhelming darkness. In opposing the culture of death, we are afforded the opportunity to stand for truth and proclaim Christ and His Gospel until He comes again. We know that Christ desires the salvation of every soul caught in the culture of death. This is an awesome and challenging opportunity for us. However, through our struggle to establish a culture of life and to proclaim the Gospel of life, Christ gives us His supernatural grace as well as the means for our own sanctification and ongoing conversion.

There is no easy way to fight abortion and the culture of death. Our weapons must be prayer, fasting, sacrifice, and total trust in God, “for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.” (Ephesians 6.)

We cannot win through our own power—victory is through the cross of Christ. Therefore, ten years on, we cannot weary, but rather “let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before Him, He endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider how He endured such opposition from sinners in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart.” (Hebrews 12)

Those who believe in the sanctity of human life are bound in conscience not only to continue to oppose the abortion law, but also an entire culture which does not respect the dignity of the human person.

Throughout our own lives, let us pray for the grace to be living witnesses and to affirm in all we say and do, the dignity of the human person, made in the image and likeness of God.

“Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognised as having the rights of a person – among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.” (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2270.)

Prayer of Pope John Paul II for Life

O Mary, bright dawn of the new world, Mother of the living, to you we entrust the cause of life:
Look down, O Mother, upon the vast numbers of babies not allowed to be born,
on the poor whose lives are made difficult
on men and women who are victims of brutal violence,
on the elderly and the sick who are killed by indifference or out of misguided mercy.
Grant that all who believe in Your Son may proclaim the Gospel of Life with honesty and love to the
people of our time.
Obtain for them the grace to accept that Gospel as a gift ever new,
the joy of celebrating it with gratitude throughout their lives
and the courage to bear witness to it resolutely,
in order to build, together with all people of good will,
the civilization of truth and love,
to the praise and Glory of God, the Creator and lover of life.

ing used a condom. The study also found that, although the country's AIDS prevalence rate was at 3% in 2003, prevalence in some urban areas is as high as 7%. Rwanda was one of the 15 target countries chosen for President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

The Church is at the forefront of the fight in both Rwanda and Burundi. They continue to teach chastity, and through *Caritas* they are able to get medicines, care, and counseling to millions in both Rwanda and Burundi. In Burundi, for instance, 33% of all health facilities in the country that doing voluntary testing belong to the Church. Also, 48% of all Voluntary Testing Centers in the country belong to the Catholic Church. The big risk, which HLI must help prevent, is for the Church to be co-opted by immoral AIDS prevention programs.


On the other hand, some organizations like USAID and FHI have used the Church's struggling health infrastructure for voluntary testing, distribution of ARVs, management of mother-to-child transmission, and opportunistic infections. Human Life International will help strengthen the Bishops' efforts by providing such materials as *The Case Against Condoms*, which we will print in French and distribute to all seminaries of Francophone Africa this spring.

The new **Seminarians for Life** groups in Kabgayi and Nyakibanda (Rwanda), as well as the group in Burasira (Burundi), are currently translating HLI chastity education pamphlets and flyers into the main local languages of Kinyarwanda and Kirundi, respectively. These languages are universally spoken in Rwanda and Burundi, and literature in these languages is sure to be useful even to people with little or no formal education.


We are on the look out for groups working to strengthen families, support the youth, and contribute to the battle against AIDS in ways consistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church. This has greatly enriched Human Life International's work in the Congo, where we work with Sr. Anna Perez Cossio; in Togo, where we engineered the birth of Pro-Life Togo to fight the recently liberalized abortion law; and in Benin, where we are helping to strengthen and organize *la Communauté de Marie Mère des Enfants à Naître* in resisting the culture of death and promoting the culture of life.

CHALLENGES TO THE CHURCH AND THE FAMILY

The genocide in Rwanda and Burundi wiped out a large portion of middle aged and older men. This has left these two countries with a high percentage of young people, who are heavily targeted by the population controllers. This can be seen in their programs that are geared towards the young. IPPF's choice projects promote their sexual and "reproductive health" messages to the young through the media and through training workshops. HLI has gained significant ground working with young students in high school and at university in Cameroon and other African countries. Our involvement with a dynamic group of young people in the Republic of Benin and Togo has encouraged us to expand our work, since young people are usually the first casualties of the culture of death. Our hope is that we can work with the Church in Rwanda and Burundi to support and encourage programs that will give young people the enduring message of the Gospel of Life.



The Pro-life Wisdom of Fr. Marx



The more you sow contraception, the more you reap sexual sins, family and social disorders, venereal diseases, and deadly AIDS — and the more you must make available “abortion services” to take care of the “contraceptive failures.” (From *Fighting for Life*, page 39.)

Fr. Paul Marx



Workers who help the Archdiocese of Gitega, Burundi, in its fight against AIDS.

POPULATION CONTROL AFTER GENOCIDE?

Rwanda and Burundi have the kind of fertility and birthrates people can still expect on the continent of Africa. ***Rwanda has 5.43 children per woman, and Burundi has 6.55 children per woman.*** But there are concerted efforts to undermine this healthy birthrate. In the early part of this year, legislative moves were made to place limits on the number of children a couple could have. ***The Bishops of Rwanda rose with with one voice in defending the right of the family to determine how many children they will have.*** International Planned Parenthood Federation is deeply rooted in these

countries. In Burundi, they are called Burundian Association for Family Welfare, and in Rwanda they go by the name Rwandan Association for Family Welfare. The truth we all know is that their work is against the welfare of the family. USAID is hard at work, with its proven track record of promoting and sustaining aggressive population control initiatives across Africa. It is criminal to promote smaller families in countries just recovering from the staggering number of deaths from genocide. On top of this, HIV/AIDS is now rising as another potential genocide for their population. HLI wants to help promote chastity—which is the only answer to HIV—and support the bishops in their efforts to strengthen marriages. ***The condom answer has failed to address Rwanda and Burundi's concerns arising from the HIV/AIDS scourge.***

ANTI-LIFE AFRICAN UNION PROTOCOLS

When African ministers of health met in Maputo – Mozambique for an African Union (AU) meeting in October 2006, they signed what is now known as the ***Maputo Protocol.*** ***The AU admits it was developed in collaboration with the African Regional Office of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)!*** In the days ahead, we are sure to see determined moves across Africa to bring both the demands of the Maputo accord and other AU accords like ***The Youth Charter*** to bear on development planning and health policy making. Rwanda is a good example of one place where this is in process. Consider, for instance, Article 16 of the AU Youth Charter, which aims to “(a) Secure the full involvement of youth in identifying their reproductive and health needs and designing programmes that correspond to these needs with special attention to vulnerable and disadvantaged youth; (b) Provide access to youth friendly reproductive health services, including contraceptives, antenatal and postnatal service.”

After weakening the family and popularising contraception, the stage is set for legalising abortion.

Human Life International knows IPPF only too well to expect them to stop at any point before achieving legal abortion on demand. We must have informed and vigilant persons, especially at the level of the bishops' conferences, who can identify and address any attempts to push through legislative change of the sort. We need people like Bishops Kizito Bahutimihigo and Smaragde Mbonyinge, among others. I was also encouraged by the interest of Bishop Jean Ntagwarara, President of the Burundi Bishops' Conference, who worked with us to stop any moves by the agents of the culture of death. Archbishop Ntamwana of the Archdiocese of Gitega (Burundi) is equally worth mentioning as a dependable example when it comes to matching resolve, word, and action in favor of the family. 🙏

Dear friends, it is truly providential that HLI is expanding its pro-life work in Africa just as the threats to life have increased in recent years. We are blessed to have many willing collaborators in the Church throughout

the continent. Now it is a question of harnessing all the information and experience we have in defending life and transferring this knowledge and zeal before it is too late. All this expanding work is made possible by the contributions of our supporters, so on behalf of all our missionaries and affiliates, I want to thank you again for your continued support.

May God bless you!

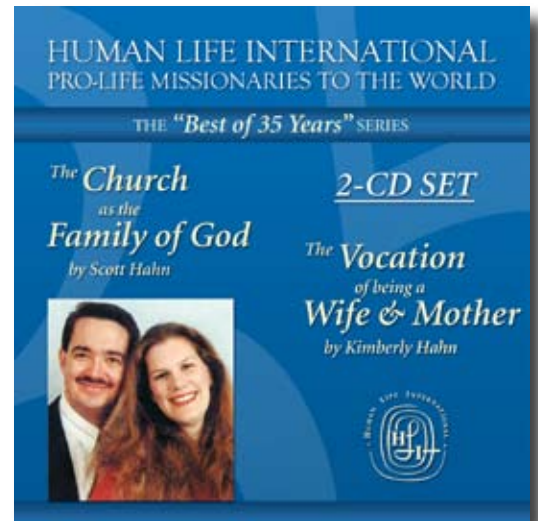


Rev. Thomas J. Euteneuer
President

P.S.—This month I'd like to send you *a set of 2 talks* that beautifully illuminate the importance and vocation of the family. In the first of these talks, which is titled **THE CHURCH AS THE FAMILY OF GOD**, author, speaker, and Catholic apologist Scott Hahn explains that *as we better understand the real meaning of the family as God designed it, we can likewise better understand the mystery of God's own nature and his relationship to us*. St. Paul tells us that it is through the visible world that we understand the invisible world. And hence we can better understand God's own fatherhood, the Mystical Body of Christ, and Our Lady's spiritual motherhood through our earthly experience and understanding of fatherhood, motherhood, and family life.

Please send your contribution of \$39 or more to HLI this month, and let me send to you this inspiring talk! Among the many points covered, you see how:

- ▶ The triune God is truly a family
 - ▶ Why we should not use genderless titles for God
 - ▶ How God calls men to be holy fathers
 - ▶ How the Holy Eucharist is our sacred family meal
 - ▶ The three-part daily spiritual plan every father needs
 - ▶ And the startling difference between the Catholic and Muslim concepts of God



The second talk in this set, which is titled **THE VOCATION OF BEING A WIFE AND MOTHER**, is given by Scott Hahn's wife, Beverly. In this talk, Mrs. Hahn expounds on the Scripture passage from Proverbs, Chapter 31, on the characteristics of a good wife. In it, you'll hear:

- ▶ What makes a good wife
- ▶ How to build trust in your marriage
- ▶ How to lift each other up in daily things
- ▶ How to be a good steward of your time
- ▶ How men and women are equal before God, but functionally different

These two talks will inspire you and give you a greater love and appreciation for the great gift God has given us in his design for the family. They are great talks to share with your friends and loved ones who are married or considering marriage.

Please send your contribution of \$39 or more today, and be sure to mark on the reply card whether you prefer CD or cassette!