

The Kanguka Story

By Chris Ndikumana

The Kanguka Story 2025 by Chris Ndikumana

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*This is the Kanguka story—a story about God's
faithfulness in spite of humanity's brokenness.*

Chapter 1: **Childhood Resilience**

*“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.
Before you were born I sanctified you. I ordained you
a prophet to the nations.” –Jeremiah 1:5*

I was born on June 15th, 1973 in Rohero I, a thriving and affluent suburb of Bujumbura, Burundi—a country many people know little about. Sadly, Rohero no longer possesses the same allure it once did fifty years ago due to overcrowding and the steady decline of the surrounding infrastructure.

In those days, anyone of clout or standing in Burundi was well acquainted with the suburb. My family lived in Rohero I, the original Bujumbura neighborhood for the wealthy.

My family were practicing Catholics, the predominant religion of Burundi’s affluent political class in the 1970s. My father had a prestigious job with the Ministry of Information as the Director General—second only to the Minister of Information (equivalent to an American Secretary).

He earned good money and our family never lacked for anything. As a child, I can remember having abundance in every

area of our lives, especially when my father became the regional director for TEXACO, the American oil company. Life seemed carefree and pleasant with no thought of anything different.

Around the age of six, I started attending Kindergarten at a school near our family's home and my world began to change quickly. I discovered that my father possessed a harshness that I had never seen before.

When I would make even small mistakes in arithmetic or spelling on my homework, he would explode with anger and beat me.

While others saw the persona of a successful governmental official, I experienced a different person—one who was harsh towards his son.

My mother and father had five children total. I was the firstborn son, meaning my parents' expectations towards me were exceptionally high and quite unrealistic. My father envisioned me becoming a paragon of excellence to model for the family.

As such, his harshness towards me was the only way he knew how to produce excellence in his son. God used it to produce a strong character in my life. While some of my other siblings also tasted my father's explosive nature from time to time, it was usually warranted.

By contrast, I was the quintessential firstborn, a child seldom causing trouble for anyone—quiet, polite, and shy.

I remember making basic addition mistakes in school such as failing to find the correct sum of one plus two only to return home

and experience my father's intensity as he would beat me. This created an immediate disgust in my heart towards school.

By the age of seven I can honestly say that I hated school with a passion due to the frequent beatings I'd receive at home from my father. More than just a disdain for school, I began to feel a sense of hopelessness and despair towards life itself.

During the summer holidays, my life would improve significantly as I didn't have to go to school and my interaction with my father was minimal since our main point of interaction was my school results.

Looking back I honestly think that my father thought that this was the way to lead a family.

Around the age of eight, I developed an awareness of the futility of life. It consumed me to the point that I can remember developing a growing sense in my heart to be free—free from abuse, free from anger, free from sadness, and free from pain. In those days, I distinctly remember seeing my classmates at school enjoying themselves during recess.

They would laugh and jump and play with all their hearts. I couldn't find the inner strength to join them. Instead, I would sit quietly and go inward with my troubled thoughts. Joy was a totally unknown concept to me as my mind tortured me with the reality of my home life.

As I would stare off into the blue Burundian sky, I'd let my heart and mind dream about the reality of being free. One day I would grow up and be a free man. I longed to be free to have fun and enjoy my life without the depression and heaviness of my home.

These thoughts consumed my every waking moment. In fact, it became more than just a subject of personal meditation and quickly became a powerful vision.

The pressure became so intense at home that I developed my first ulcer at the age of eight. My stomach would hurt so bad that I was unable to eat food and became very unwell.

My father decided that I needed advanced medical treatment. Since he had the means to do so, he bought us tickets to fly to Nairobi, Kenya some seven hundred miles to the east of Burundi.

There we stayed in a very nice hotel while I received some of the best medical treatment available in East Africa at the time. Kenya and Burundi are two worlds apart in just about every way. The nice hotels and hospitals in Kenya stretched my little mind farther than ever before to dream about the future.

I was learning that my challenges were not all negative—deep inside a hidden strength was being forged to envision a way out of my pain. I began to dream about the possibility of living a life that would leave an impact on the world.

The medical team in Nairobi informed us that my ulcers were so severe that if I had delayed medical treatment, I would have probably died within a few months. Initially, they were unable to diagnose my malaise, as the thought didn't occur to them to investigate the possibility of ulcers since I didn't fit any of the typical criteria for such a diagnosis.

The usual perpetrators are alcohol and bad food, neither of which characterized my life. I look back on those days in shock that an eight-year-old boy could be so ill with something as preventable as ulcers.

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Internally, I was killing myself because I perceived my external world to be one of hopelessness and pain. The doctors in Kenya were able to help me regain my strength so that we could return to Burundi.

My family was committed to the Catholic faith. Every Sunday my siblings and I attended the main cathedral in downtown Bujumbura since it was close to our house in Rohero.

For my father, it was nothing more than religious tradition and routine with little deeper meaning.

Still, he insisted that we attend the Sunday Mass. My aunt, however, who lived with us at the house, was deeply devout. Another aunt was a nun serving under the Catholic Diocese.

My mother's side of the family was also committed to the Catholic faith. For several years, I even served as an altar boy to the main priest at the Cathedral. I had no real personal love for Jesus or His Word, but I did discover that I liked to stand in front of people at church.

In 1984, I turned eleven years old and this was the first time that I discovered the music of Michael Jackson. Many other musicians of that era were popular in Burundi such as Lionel Richie, Stevie Wonder, Kool and the Gang, but Michael became my main obsession.

His unique style and personality is what most drew me to his music. Something about the way that he refused to conform to the musical expectations and norms of the day resonated deep inside of me.

I could see myself in the music and persona of a mid-1980s Michael Jackson. He was a shy, reserved dreamer like me. Everything inside of me wanted to make a difference in the world like he was doing.

When Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie sang, “*We are the world*” to raise money for the drought-stricken children in Ethiopia’s worst drought in living history, it gripped me.

Even though I didn’t know any English at the time, I memorized every word and would sing it at the top of my lungs like an African parrot.

While I didn’t understand it at the time, I look back now and see that God’s calling on my life was starting to take shape. I had no personal relationship with Jesus, but heaven’s purposes were already starting to coalesce around me.

Michael’s desire to use his talents and abilities to eradicate poverty in Ethiopia only fueled the growing vision within me, while my father’s harshness was producing a resilience in my heart and life to pursue heaven’s purposes.

One day I wanted to help poor people experience a different life. I could see myself setting people free from their oppression and sorrow. I would make a difference in the world around me.

At school, I found social acceptance with my new love for Michael Jackson. I quickly became a break-dancer much to the admiration of my peers.

When I discovered that Michael was physically abused by his father and possessed a shy, quiet personality, I identified even

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more with him. The more my father would beat me, the more I would appreciate the music of Michael Jackson.

One can wonder why I didn't run away from home and the answer is my mother—she was the kindest, most tender person I knew.

Both of my parents had personal vehicles, a very rare feature for a Burundian family in the mid-80s. Often when my mother would come home from work, I would begin to weep. As her car approached our front gate, she would honk for someone to open it.

As my father's harshness at home intensified, I would suppress my emotions by playing in the yard, until I would hear my mother's car honking. Her car became the signal to let the tears flow. She would get out of the car, take inventory of my bruised face, and tenderly console her weeping son.

To this day I have hearing issues that require annual attention from an audiologist because of my father. My mother's kindness and generosity towards me, however, produced a sense of hope in my heart. In fact, I'm sure that any kindness I possess today came through my mother.

Looking back I see God's Hand preparing me to serve Him by giving me a heart for the down and out. He had called me even before birth to serve Him. My childhood experience started a dream inside of me that became solidified: I wanted my life to make a difference.

My father's harshness prepared a strength of character that would give me the resilience I needed for the challenges that still laid in front of me.

Don't get me wrong: I don't hate my father but I'm sharing my story so you can understand where I came from.

Chapter 2: The Road to Salvation

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some count slackness, but He is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

– 2 Peter 3:9

When I entered high school at fifteen, I was still obsessed with Michael Jackson. During that school year, I had a math teacher from Congo. His class was scheduled for the last period of the day. On Wednesdays during his math class, he made it a practice to share his faith in Christ. He would start the class with a few arithmetic revisions before he would jump into his specific message for the week. As students, we actually enjoyed his presentations because we were tired of the day’s academic rigors and enjoyed listening to something out of the normal. Of course, no one took anything he said seriously; it was just a free period in an intense school schedule. The standardized Burundian curriculum required all students to take a religion class, choosing either Catholicism or Protestantism. Both felt like a waste of time, but this man’s class generated interest.

Our teacher would give space for questions and discussion, which increased participation among my classmates. We looked forward to each Wednesday because it broke up the normal routine and we could make jokes and try to generate some controversy. Interestingly, he was a Pentecostal believer meaning that he emphasized the ongoing work of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, in a believer's daily life. It was my first time to be exposed to Pentecostal doctrines and this created a greater sense of derision and mockery in our class. We would deliberately ask him questions just to try and trick him or make his beliefs look ridiculous.

Just a few years earlier, I had made a personal decision to become an atheist. Several people in my family, including my father, had tried to convince me that God was real, but I could not accept their arguments. It was easier to choose a belief system that eliminated the need for a divine being. My newfound convictions worked for a short period of time, until I attended my first funeral. The unmasked reality of death weighed heavily upon me. What happened when people died? Where did they go? Was there an afterlife? Were heaven and hell a reality? Specifically, the concept of hell troubled me. I would tell myself that if God isn't real, then hell isn't either, but it didn't seem to satisfy the questions in my heart. I was terrified that hell could be real. Every funeral I attended would only agitate the issue again.

On multiple occasions I tried to convince myself that hell wasn't real, but no matter what angle I approached it from, I just couldn't shake the lingering questions. Looking back, I see further evidence of God's calling on my life. When the Congolese math teacher would preach Jesus, we would laugh trying to convince

ourselves that the internal uneasiness about eternity was nonsense. With more exposure to the claims of Christ in his class, I slowly became convinced that hell was, indeed, a real place. Missing heaven for eternity didn't faze me much, but the possibility of entering hell gripped me. It became a growing concern that I couldn't shake and my math teacher wasn't making it any easier.

As the months passed in the persistent Wednesday afternoon Jesus sessions, my heart became more and more convinced that I needed to do something about my eternal destiny. The seeds that this man was planting in my heart were going to bear fruit in the near future. While it would be several more years before I surrendered my life to Jesus, it was this season of spiritual planting that God would honor later. The lesson I learned during this season of my life still guides me today—share the Word of God and believe the Lord to cause it to grow in people's hearts and lives.

In 1989, when I turned 16 years old, the famous German preacher Reinhard Bonnke came to Bujumbura. The meetings lasted for three days with massive crowds estimated in the tens of thousands. The city of Bujumbura was being shaken. Out of curiosity, I decided to attend and hear what this evangelist was saying. I watched as he prayed for the sick and many people testified of being healed. He shared the gospel powerfully and called people to come forward for salvation, however I didn't respond. The opportunity was in front of me to make this important decision, but I attended the meetings simply out of curiosity. My heart simply did not yet believe. I watched and listened with no faith in my heart. It would be several more years before the claims of Christ would finally pierce my stubborn heart.

Recently, when I was preaching a crusade in Abidjan, I told the crowd in attendance that if I had died during these teenage years, I would have gone straight to hell because my heart was totally unconverted even though my mind knew all of the facts about the gospel. This is why every Friday on the *Kanguka* podcast I always give an invitation for people to embrace Christ. I want people to make a personal decision to respond because I understand only too well how easy it is to miss an opportunity to do so.

During this time, masturbation and pornography ruled my inner world—it was all very secretive. People thought I was a saint because of my projected external self-righteousness. For years until I met Jesus, I was enslaved to these sins, even though from the outside I looked like my life was put together. However, I am also grateful for the Lord's protection over my life during this time. God's kindness kept me from destroying my life through destructive relationships with the opposite sex and substance abuse. It wasn't because I feared God or had some kind of inner moral principle, as I was in bondage internally. Rather, it was simply because I was so shy. I liked girls, but I was just too intimidated to actually talk to them, ensuring that I remained a virgin. I tell people that God kept me through my timidity and pride. If I was going to get into a relationship, it would have to be an almost perfect woman and most of the girls I knew simply didn't fit my stringent requirements.

Around the age of 18, I was introduced to the National Basketball Association (NBA). I knew nothing about basketball since I had lived in Burundi my whole life. Most Burundians played football (soccer) or ran long-distance. Basketball was virtually unknown at that time. As a 6' 5" adolescent approaching full autonomy, I fell in love with Michael Jordan. Someone gave me an

article about his athletic exploits and a new idol was formed in my heart. Jordan had replaced Jackson, but the underlying motivation was the same—Jordan was different from other players and was making an impact beyond just the field of athletics. I read that he was making forty-some million dollars a year. This gripped me. What could I do to help poor people in Africa with that kind of money? What could my life accomplish with that kind of impact?

The oft-repeated adage during the time was, “*Be like Mike*” and I implemented this as my new goal with one slight adjustment: I wanted to be more than Mike. Looking back, it’s preposterous to think about because I had no innate talent for basketball. Truthfully, I didn’t even have a passion for the sport. I just wanted to be like Mike to leave an impact on the poor and hurting of Africa, and if basketball could accomplish that, then I would give it my all. This meant I would wake up at 4:00 AM to exercise and practice the basics of basketball. I trained for hours, trying to cultivate dribbling and shooting skills that I simply did not possess. My life revolved around cultivating basic footwork, strength, jumping, and dribbling skills that took me nowhere. What does any of this have to do with my journey towards Christ? My desire to be like Michael Jordan led me to Jesus. Let me explain.

The more I strived to be like Mike and find some kind of inner force to release basketball talents that I simply didn’t have, the more convinced I became of my own powerlessness. This frustrated me greatly and provoked my curiosity as to where inner power could be found. I started studying yoga, spiritism, reading self-improvement books, and searching for some kind of external key to unlock my inner potential. Yet, I just kept failing. After several months of futility and reading the latest inner-potential book, a

voice in my mind popped up: “*What if you tried God?*” I resisted that voice immediately as I was still more comfortable with my belief system devoid of God.

For more than seven years, I had been an atheist convinced that God didn’t even exist. I was steeped in evolutionary explanations for the world, and science was my default for reality. No matter how much I’d rationalize about humanistic philosophy and naturalistic explanations for humanity’s existence, the voice would just keep on speaking to me. “*Why don’t you try God?*” This wasn’t even a possibility for me. Yet, I could not argue with my own natural limitations—yoga failed me, positive thinking failed me, and inner strength failed me; I needed a supernatural power beyond myself. Please understand that I wasn’t looking for Jesus at all; I was looking for power, because no matter what I tried, I just couldn’t be like Mike, let alone exceed him.

Everything came to a head after repeated internal arguments with myself regarding the reality of God. “*What would I lose if I tried God?*” The thought gripped me. If God really had power, then why not give Him an opportunity? On October 21st, 1993, Melchior Ndadaye, Burundi’s first democratically elected president, was assassinated after only three months in office. Our whole country was shocked and went into immediate mourning. Schools were shut down during this time as political violence shook the country. As I mentioned in chapter one, I grew up in a Catholic family that attended mass faithfully. As the country mourned, I decided to start attending the daily mass held at the cathedral near our house. Both morning and evening, I would attend the Catholic services hopeful of discovering an inner power. This was the first time in my life I had experienced any real desire for God.

During the 90s, Burundians viewed the idea of being “born-again” with disdain. Evangelical Christianity was for the poor and downtrodden, not for the sophisticated and elite. Moreover, I had mocked my family consistently regarding their belief in God and willingness to attend church. I had articulated my atheism clearly to my father on multiple occasions. Now I found myself being swept into a personal spiritual hunger to find God’s power, and I felt shameful regarding the whole affair. What would people think? What would my family think? What would my father think? I decided to wake up early and get to church before it was daylight so no one would see me and I would leave unnoticed before the service was over.

One morning, I arrived early in the morning to find a group of people bowing in prayer, with their rosary beads in hand, in front of the statue of Mary. Immediately, my mind went back to my Congolese math teacher. Explaining Exodus 20:5, he had instructed us clearly that it was a sin to pray to any statue—even one of Mary. Even though I had mocked him years earlier, the words had stuck in my mind: *“You shall not bow to them (an idol or statue). For I, the Lord your God, am a Jealous God”*. I knew these people weren’t worshipping God the right way. As I took my seat, I quietly prayed, *“Lord, I know you are a jealous God and that I’m not supposed to bow down to a statue. I’m here to worship you, not a statue. I want to find you.”*

After two weeks of hiding my newfound religious interest with nothing of significance happening in my life, I was discouraged. The third week it felt so meaningless that I decided to abandon going to church completely. It simply wasn’t working for me. I remember being alone in my bedroom at home rationalizing my

recent experiences. What could I do? Yoga hadn't worked for me. Spiritism had offered no solutions. The Catholic Church had provided no solutions. The voice that had instructed me earlier spoke again: "*Go and try the Evangelical Church.*" My sister had started attending *Église Vivante*, a new Evangelical church in Bujumbura, and I had mocked her for not only believing in God, but becoming a crazy, born-again person.

The inner voice persisted: "*Go and try that Church*". I objected. I argued. I countered. I rationalized, but nothing seemed to work. Finally, I concluded that I didn't have anything to lose if I just tried attending one time. Maybe the power of God I had been searching for would be there.

A few days later, my cousin, Olivier Muco, came to our house to talk to my aunt who still lived with us. He had just started attending *Église Vivante* and had recently been baptized. I thought he was crazy. Burundi was still in mourning, so I was around our house the day that he came to visit. I sensed that he could help me with my internal questions. As he approached the house, I immediately engaged him in conversation: "*I need to talk to you, now!*" Taking him to a back verandah of the house, I started bombarding him with questions. We spent two hours discussing my recent experiences, God, salvation, *Église Vivante* and above all my need for secrecy with my newfound spiritual interest.

Olivier thought I needed to experience salvation to find an assurance of heaven, but I was still searching for personal inner power. During that conversation he shared two things that I still remember today. One is the verse in I John 1:9, "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*". He emphasized the power of the blood of Jesus to

cleanse and forgive humanity. And the second was an illustration based on this verse, where God looks at anyone who accepts Jesus as his or her Savior as if through the lens of the blood of Christ. There is no longer any accusation from heaven; the individual is now viewed by God as being sinless because of Jesus's blood.

Olivier took me to the church later that afternoon as covertly as he could. I asked him not to bring any attention to me specifically from the other young people from my neighborhood that might be there. As soon as I walked into the church building, though, some of my friends from school saw me and began shouting, "*Chris! Chris! Chris! We're so happy you're here*". I was mortified with embarrassment, but I had no choice at this point. It was a special conference and to my surprise, David Ndaruhutse, the pastor at *Église Vivante* during that time, was emphasizing the power of the blood of Jesus. He shared everything my cousin had shared and even more. I still had no interest in heaven—I just wanted power, but as Pastor David continued to share, the concept of heaven became more real to me than my need for personal power. He described the beauties of heaven: the joy of being in God's presence, the removal of sorrow, tears, pain, and the reality of eternal life. My heart was moved. My nature is that once I decide to do something, I pursue it wholeheartedly. For the next several days, I walked several kilometers to and from the church to hear more.

My cousin gave me a small New Testament and taught me how to invite Christ into my heart through prayer, repentance and confession during this time. I was twenty years old and I was so transformed that I decided to invite Jesus into my heart everyday—on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and so on. For the first couple of weeks or so, I kept inviting Jesus into my life. No

one told me that once a person receives Christ, His salvation is freely and fully given. My perspective had changed. I was no longer just searching for power, now I wanted the reality of Christ's blood and the beauty of heaven. Being born again is simply the best gift that anyone has ever given me. It's better than any other gift I've ever received.

Schools were closed for a solid two months and this gave me the perfect opportunity to pursue my new faith in Christ. I spent almost every day reading the Bible, attending prayer services and spending time with other Christians. I learned so much during this time for which I am still very grateful. My only objection was the idea of baptism. In my mind, I had already been baptized as a child in the Catholic Church so why should I be baptized again? I felt that to be baptized in full immersion would be a betrayal of my Catholic upbringing. After two months, however, a pastor explained the meaning of Romans 6:4 to me, and I understood that baptism was necessary in order to fully experience the new life that is available in Christ. I needed to die to my old life and experience the fullness of Jesus's new life. My pastor helped me discover that the Greek word "*baptizo*" means to fully immerse or submerge, completely changing my perspective. When it fully sunk in, I grabbed his shirt and said, "*Please let's go to Lake Tanganyika right now so I can be baptized.*" My pastor objected saying that they were planning a special baptism service that I could join in a month. "*A month? No! That's too late! Please let's do it now*" I retorted. He finally convinced me to wait for the next church baptismal service. Next to salvation, the day I was baptized in water was the second best experience of my life. Jesus's presence was so tangible that day!

I conclude this chapter with two verses. The first is John 15:16 where Jesus says, “*You did not choose me, but I chose you*”. Jesus will use any means to find you. He will find you even when you’re not looking for Him. For some He uses prison, for others it’s a friend, and for me it was a passion for NBA basketball. As I mentioned, it had little to do with actually playing basketball and much more to do with the NBA being a means to accomplish my dream. Yet, Jesus used all of this to save me. The second verse is John 6:44, which says, “*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.*” The Father drew me and I understood that He was going to raise me up on the last day, with the promise of heaven. If Jesus can do this for me, I’m sure He is going to do it for you too.

Chapter 3: The Worst Trial of My Christian Life

*“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.
When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned,
Nor shall the flame scorch you.” –Isaiah 43:2*

I have been a Christian for thirty-two years now, and during this time, I've been through several very challenging moments and seasons, but nothing compares to what I endured immediately after my salvation. On April 24th, 1995, my mother passed away suddenly. I have already described how close the bond was between my mother and I earlier in this book. The connection between us ran very deep. It's not that she was an extraordinary person per se; it's that she showed me such an extravagant love and kindness, while my father was that harsh. Mother comforted me, encouraged me, advocated for me, counselled me, and inspired me to keep going in life. My dream was to one day do something truly meaningful for her.

After a few months, the political situation in Burundi subsided and schools resumed. I finished high school and enrolled in the national university where I pursued mathematics. I still hated

school, and the only reason I continued my schooling was because I wanted to please my mother. America was still my dream, but being the first-born son enrolled in college gave my mother a lot of joy. She was so proud of me and would often brag about me to others. As the months went by, I slowly began adapting to the rigors of university life.

About halfway through my first year, something remarkable happened. It was the middle of April 1995. I was in the process of preparing for an exam when one of my friends came to see me. He wanted to talk to my mother. He told me that he had bumped into her about a week earlier, and she had requested that he come and talk to her about a personal relationship with Jesus. He accepted the invitation and spent over an hour sharing the reality of what it means to know Jesus. I had often prayed for my mother, but I had no previous indication that she had experienced a personal saving faith in Jesus. I'm so thankful for that brief interaction with my friend, because two days after he visited me, my mother fell ill.

She was admitted to the hospital with a strange form of malaria. In my mind, this was not a big deal as she regularly went to the hospital. Growing up, she was frequently admitted for malaria treatment. Looking back on it, I see how unusual this really is, but at the time it seemed normal to me. I kept focused on my studies and after a few days, I happened to ask someone who had just visited her in the hospital if she was feeling any better. Much to my shock, he responded that she was in critical condition. I immediately rushed to the hospital to see her. Finding my father there, I tried to talk with mother, but sadly she was out of her mind and couldn't carry on a sensible conversation. Cerebral malaria can make people go delirious. Rushing home, I entered

my room and began to pray fervently. I could sense it was a life-or-death moment. Tragically, around 8 PM that evening, I received a call from my aunt saying that she had passed away. The news hit me hard—so hard that I refused to accept it. “*My mother??? Dead??? That’s impossible!*” I shouted as I slammed down the phone. I said it so loud that everyone in the living room heard me.

I turned around to see my family members and will never forget the grief that seized them. My father had rushed into the room when I took the call. He was now flailing his arms over his head in desperation. My sister was shouting while uncontrollably sobbing. My little brother was beside himself with grief, while I just stood there in disbelief. I had sensed such strong faith that she would be healed. I had been reading books by David Yonggi Cho on the dimension of faith through prayer. Earlier that day, when I had left the hospital with my father, I had boldly announced to him, “*There’s no way she will die. She will be fine. I have faith.*” I even laid hands on her and prayed for healing. Even though I hadn’t visited her in the hospital, I had been praying fervently for her healing for several days, and I was convinced that she would be well soon.

As everyone else continued to shout and weep in the house, I quietly excused myself and went to my bedroom. I picked up my Bible and looked up to God and said, “*This is your Word? Really?*” I’m ashamed to admit it, but I threw my Bible into the trashcan in the corner of my room. I shouted, “*I’m done with you! There’s no way mother could die if you are real.*” My newfound faith was being badly shaken. I had agreed earlier in the day with my friend who had shared the gospel with my mother the previous week that we would pray and fast for mother all night. I called him. “*Where are you?*” I asked. “*I’m about to pray for your mother in the garden of*

our house,” he responded quietly. “Don’t bother,” I retorted angrily. “She just passed.” The silence on the phone was deafening. I finally quipped, “Hello?! Are you still there?” His voice was muffled, “Yeah... umm... I’m still here.”

What followed next was remarkable. My friend had crazy faith like I did. He immediately said, “Chris, don’t forget John chapter 11 where Jesus resurrected Lazarus. He was dead for four days. We had a plan to pray for your mother tonight, right? So why should we stop just because she passed away? Death can’t stop our prayers. Jesus can still raise your mother back to life”. His words hit my despair with renewed hope. I could hear the wailing and sobbing coming from other parts of my house as the neighbors arrived to engage in traditional African mourning customs. The audible demonstration of grief was loud and piercing. “I can’t pray here. It’s too noisy,” I muttered. “Can I come to your place so we can pray together?” Sheepishly, I returned to the trashcan in the corner and picked up my Bible again and said, “Lord, I’m so sorry that I didn’t have any faith. I still believe you can raise up my mother.”

Someone drove me to my friend’s house. The crowd of people in my living room was still sobbing uncontrollably when I left. Slipping out the backdoor, I didn’t say goodbye to anyone. Arriving at my friend’s house around 10 P.M, I was received by his visibly disturbed mother. She couldn’t understand what I was doing at their house when I had just lost my mother, or why I wanted to pray with her son. We spent the entire night in the garden seeking God. We cried out for His power to be released, and my mother’s life to be restored. It was intense as we poured out our hearts to heaven in faith. Around 4 A.M., we decided to walk to the hospital to go and pray for my mother to be raised from the dead. It was the

dead of night and only packs of stray dogs were running around the streets of Bujumbura. Neither of us looked at each other—we both knew the mission.

As we arrived at the Prince Louis Rwagasore Hospital, we asked for the key to enter the mortuary. Under normal circumstances, the hospital would never let anyone have access to the morgue, but because I told them who I was, they gave me the key. Upon entering, we found the refrigerators containing at least fifteen different corpses. Every corpse had a tag on the outside of the fridge door. When I saw my mother's name, I told my friend, "*This is it!*" We opened the door full of faith. We were sure that God had heard our prayers earlier, and we were about to experience a miracle of biblical proportions.

I grabbed the handle on the fridge drawer and pulled it open. As I set eyes on my mother's body, my first thought was that she was peacefully sleeping because her face seemed at rest. My friend, by contrast, let out a yell and almost ran away in shock. It amazes me when I think about the crazy faith we had. Once we regained our composure, we prayed together like Jesus did outside of Lazarus's tomb, before I grabbed my mother's hand and called in a loud voice to her, "*Theresa, rise up! In Jesus name.*" Nothing happened. I shouted as I held her stiff hand. Nothing. I shouted louder with more energy and intensity. I did everything I knew how to do. After ten minutes with nothing happening, my friend just sat down on the ground. He told me that he had a dream the night before, in which he saw my mother going to heaven. "*I don't care about your dream! I want to talk to my mother again, now, even if it's just for a few minutes,*" I responded angrily.

I kept shouting and praying with nothing happening. After another ten minutes, my friend said, “*I have to go home.*” I thanked him for coming to pray with me. As he walked out, I kept praying desperately. Finally, after an hour or so, the hospital staff finally entered the morgue to see what I was doing. At that moment, I knew it was over. My heart sank into my chest as despair flooded me. It was the worst moment of my life. I wanted to die because it felt as though I had nothing left to hold onto. My faith seemed totally shaken and useless. I will never forget the 24th of April.

The shock persisted right up until her burial service. I harbored a secret hope that just maybe she would come back to life, until I actually saw her body being lowered in the coffin into the ground. Seeing her gone felt like I had died too. For the next several years, I became a very bitter person. I hated life. Many days I just wanted to die. The only thing that kept me from suicide was the realization that hell was a real place, and I didn’t want God to send me there because I killed myself. The grief was simply too much to bear. The question kept coming to me, “*Why am I still in this world? What do I have to live for?*”

My father had lost his job prior to my mother’s death; her salary had kept the family going for quite some time. With her passing, finances became very tight. It reached a point where we were actually desperate as a family because no one had steady income. The gap my mother had left in our family became more and more pronounced. My biggest regret was that I wouldn’t be able to repay her for the kindness and love she had demonstrated so faithfully towards me.

During my first year of university, every student had been given a small monthly stipend from the government to offset

our living costs. Since I still lived at home, I had taken the little amount of money and bought my mother charcoal to cook the family's food. It wasn't much, but it made mother so happy to see that I had a desire to help her. Looking back, I'm so thankful that I capitalized on this small opportunity to serve her, even though I regret that I missed many others because I thought you had to be rich in order to do something significant. My advice to anyone reading this book is to make sure you verbalize your love and demonstrate your appreciation for the people close to you right now while you still have the opportunity to do so. Express your gratitude and affection while you can no matter your income level—life is just too unpredictable.

Going back to school became almost impossible for me emotionally. As much as I tried, my heart and my mind just weren't in it. To make matters worse, the political tensions that had gripped the country the previous year resurfaced. This time it happened at my university where ethnic killings became commonplace—Hutu and Tutsi students began attacking and killing each other. This forced the university to completely shut down. With the reemergence of political violence and the closure of the university, I decided to leave the country. Burundi was no longer a good place for me to live.

Around that time, I met a guy with some connections in South Africa, who suggested that I go there to attend university. He wrote me a letter of recommendation to be considered for an academic scholarship at a university there. It was by no means a guarantee of any academic assistance, but I didn't care. It was a faint glimmer of possibility, but even a remote chance of a different life compelled me to pursue something entirely new. I just wanted to get out of

Chapter 3: The Worst Trial of My Christian Life

Burundi as soon as possible. I had wanted to leave the country since my teenage years. My pastor confirmed the whole matter to me. He had received a dream in which he saw me leaving the country to go to South Africa. I didn't see it then, but now I know how much God loves us, even when we are broken and confused, and that His plans are always to take care of us, even during great challenges.

Chapter 4: Leaving Burundi

*“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season.
Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching”
–2 Timothy 4:2 –Paul to Timothy*

Leaving Burundi required a great deal of determination and courage, as my family was skeptical about the idea. I showed my father the official letter of recommendation to attend university in South Africa. The YMCA Burundi office recommended that the YMCA South Africa office provide an academic scholarship for me. However, nothing was assured or guaranteed in the letter. In my heart, I sensed that it would never develop into an actual academic opportunity; however, it was my chance to pursue an adventure with God. As time went by, the sense only became stronger—I knew I had to go as far away as possible from Burundi for a season.

My father finally agreed, but because of our family’s economic situation, we had no money to pay for the plane ticket. Remarkably, a very close friend, Mrs. Julienne Kamwenubusa, heard about the opportunity and generously agreed to buy the ticket for me. Saying goodbye to my family was not easy, but the conviction kept

intensifying—South Africa was my next step. This became even more pronounced through Pastor Moïse, as I mentioned at the end of the last chapter. I hadn't told him anything about South Africa and one day he received a dream from the Lord in which he saw me going to South Africa to purchase military weapons. In the dream, I was dressed in fatigues and camouflage and, I was doing everything I could to secure heavy artillery from South Africa, to bring back to Burundi. He shared the dream with me, and the interpretation he gave me was simple—God was sending me to South Africa to prepare me spiritually to shake Satan's kingdom in Burundi and beyond. I was amazed that God would speak to my pastor in such a clear way to bring confirmation for my upcoming trip.

I arrived in Johannesburg, South Africa, and stayed with a family friend of mine who had a small apartment on the outskirts of the city. He was gracious to provide me with lodging, as the letter of recommendation to study never turned into an official scholarship offer. The first few months were really challenging. I didn't know that my friend was struggling to pay the rent on his apartment before I arrived. One day, we returned home to find the door locked, with an eviction notice posted on it. The landlord even confiscated all of our possessions inside the apartment. In a matter of moments, I had lost literally everything that I had brought to South Africa with me. I spent the night sleeping on the streets of Johannesburg—one of the most dangerous cities in Africa. After some discussion with the landlord, I was finally able to secure a copy of my high school diploma that had been locked up in the apartment and went looking for a new place to stay.

The Burundian community in Johannesburg tried to help me. Most of them were refugees struggling to make ends meet and living in desperate circumstances. I was invited to share a one-room apartment with seven other Burundians. To say it was crowded would be an understatement. To make matters worse, I was the only one who was born-again with a personal relationship with Jesus. My roommates regularly participated in open sexual immorality, drug use, and alcohol abuse. Often when I would return home, I'd find the door locked because one of my roommates was having sex with a woman. Several of them told me straight out, "*We give you two to three months maximum before you abandon this crazy Jesus stuff and you become just like us.*" It was a horrible environment.

I knew that prayer was essential under such circumstances; without seeking Jesus regularly, I would die spiritually. When I wanted to spend time with the Lord, I would lock myself in the bathroom—no space could be found anywhere else. It was a shared bathroom with several other apartments. On multiple occasions, my roommates would return from the nightclub to find me locked in the bathroom in the early hours of the morning, spending time with Jesus. My routine was to wake up at 4:00 AM before anyone else was awake, in order to seek the Lord either in the bathroom or in the hallway leading up to it. One of our neighbors was a Chinese guy who had this weird habit of walking to the bathroom totally naked. One morning, as I was kneeling in the bathroom hallway seeking the Lord, I felt a hand on my shoulder and a voice saying, "*Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!*" I turned around to see a fully naked Chinese man, who barely spoke English, making fun of me.

Despite these challenges, prayer became my lifeline, my protection, and my weapon. Surprisingly, my roommates soon

embraced my prayerfulness as some kind of benefit for them. If I hadn't awakened by 4:00AM when they returned from the nightclub, they'd rouse me from my sleep saying, "*Please go and pray for us*". At first, I thought they were mocking me, but I realized that they were in a desperate spiritual place, and recognized the power of prayer even while in deep sin.

I kept wondering what I was doing in South Africa as life was so miserable. I had no job, no transportation, and no way to pay rent. I was dependent on other really poor people, my living arrangements were horrendous, and I was often harassed on the streets by some of the roaming gangs, only for them to discover that I had no money at all. The only consolation I had was the little church I used to attend, pastored by a faithful Congolese brother. The situation was so bad that I finally decided to go back to Burundi.

Someone at church told me about the Red Cross's operation in South Africa so I went to the office to explain my situation. I knew things were bad in Burundi with the political upheaval and my father still being unable to find a job, but it seemed much better than my situation in South Africa. I asked the Red Cross office if I could return to Burundi. In those days, the Red Cross used to provide a small stipend to any refugee willing to return to their home country in addition to the costs of the plane ticket. I called my father to tell him how difficult the situation had become in South Africa and that I would be returning to Burundi soon. My father responded, "*Don't come back. You're too late to join university and there's nothing for you to do here because the situation is bad.*" I explained again that I had no money, no job, and no scholarship. His answer remained the same, "*Don't come back. Try and find*

something there in South Africa.” In my heart, I had already resolved to return to Burundi; I just wouldn’t live at home if father would be difficult.

I decided to call my pastor in Johannesburg as I sensed the urgency of the decision I was about to make. He invited me to come meet him in person. I shared my current challenges as well as the dream my pastor in Burundi had told me before I left. *“I see no way forward and I feel I need to go back to Burundi,”* I concluded. He listened patiently before responding, *“If that dream from your pastor in Burundi is really from God and you are supposed to acquire spiritual weapons for the ministry in the days ahead, then how can you give up on it after only a couple of months?”* His response startled me and caused me to rethink my decision. He continued sharing that he believed the spiritual weapons in the dream meant that I needed solid spiritual training. *“If you go back to Burundi after such a short time, you will go back empty-handed and your situation might even be worse. I think you need to stay here and be trained,”* he summarized. I walked out of his office convinced that I would stay in South Africa no matter how difficult things would get.

If you have heard my message on Kanguka called *“The Place of God”*, it was during this season that it was birthed in my heart. It’s based on 1 Kings 17 where ravens sustain Elijah in the wilderness of Kerith during a terrible drought. How did Elijah experience supernatural provision in a terrible situation? He was in the right place at the right time under God’s provision. The Lord spoke to me clearly, *“This is your Kerith and if you go back to Burundi things will be even more difficult for you.”* I cancelled my application with the Red Cross and headed back to my apartment knowing that one way or another God would make provision for me.

Around the third month in South Africa, a remarkable shift took place in my roommates. They had gone from outright mockery to cautious respect, and now they began to demonstrate spiritual hunger for the things of God. Several of them started attending church with me. A couple of them even surrendered their lives to Jesus, repented of their sin, and are still born-again today. This encouraged me, as I still couldn't find a job in Johannesburg no matter how much I tried. I decided to focus on being a faithful witness and dedicating myself to even more prayer. I changed my prayer pattern to wake up at 3:00 AM and spend as many hours as possible with the Lord.

One evening, I decided to spend the whole night praying. My seven roommates were invited to some kind of overnight function and I chose not to attend. I sought the Lord for hours. Around midnight, I was given a vision from the Lord. It was the first time I had experienced an open-vision. Up to this point in my Christian life, Jesus usually talked to me through His gentle voice, a scripture passage, or a dream, but this time it was a clear vision. I saw the ministry Jesus was giving me as I felt the Spirit speaking to me that I would serve Him in three primary ways: evangelism around the world, helping the poor as described in James 1:27, and building intercessory prayer networks. Then, I was given the name of the ministry from Joshua 22:10-34. This passage describes the suspicion and infighting among the Israelites when the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh built an altar to the Lord. The other tribes incorrectly assumed that the altar was established for idolatrous purposes. Instead, the passage reveals that the altar was erected as a witness between the tribes of Israel. After much explaining, the Reubenites, Gadites, and people from Manasseh finally convinced

their fellow tribes that it was not an altar of idolatry, but rather one of consecration to the Lord.

The Spirit showed me that in a similar fashion other Christians would fight against my ministry initially, but with time God would convince them that it was a legitimate, heaven-sent ministry destined to be a blessing to many. At the end of the passage in Joshua, the Reubenites and the Gadites name the altar “*A Witness Between Us that the LORD is God*” or *Ed* in the original Hebrew. So I decided I would call my ministry *Ed* as well. It wasn’t until 2018 that I felt the Lord leading me to change the name to Kanguka as you know it today. Amazingly, other Christians openly resisted my ministry for years as I tried to develop prayer movements and launch an evangelistic platform. Jealousy and suspicion characterized the attitude of many towards me. However, with time the Lord has convinced most people that my ministry is heaven-sent and many are eager to partner with us now.

As the vision ended, I was still spiritually immature and thought that I needed to launch my new ministry immediately. Later that morning, I went on a 7 day fast to ask the Lord for a spiritual breakthrough. I wanted the ministry to materialize overnight. I could hardly wait. This was my moment—the real reason I had come to South Africa! However, it wasn’t until 2006, many years later that my ministry, *Ed*, actually began to gain momentum. I still needed much spiritual preparation in order to receive the spiritual weapons that the Lord wanted me to receive and to be a faithful minister capable of preaching the word in season and out of season, but at least I now had a sense of my specific calling.

Chapter 5: Traveling to Lubumbashi

*“The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in
From this time forth, and even forevermore.” –Psalm 121:8*

I spent another six months in Johannesburg after the Lord convinced me that His purposes for my life did not depend on my circumstances. The vision concerning my ministry placed new hope in my heart, but that didn't mean that my financial situation improved. I still couldn't find a job. I had hoped that the vision regarding *Ed* would open doors for me, but nothing happened. The dream to be like Mike (Michael Jordan) was still there—I longed for financial independence and the ability to help people so I prayed and fasted regularly for a breakthrough. One day, I decided to write a letter to David Yonggi Cho, the pastor of the world's largest church located in South Korea. At that time the church had 700,000 members. His books had strengthened my faith so I decided to share the vision of *Ed* with him.

In the letter, I detailed the various aspects of the vision: evangelism, helping the poor in Burundi, and mobilizing prayer. I even asked him for five million dollars to help launch the ministry. Some two months later, a response arrived in the mail

signed by Pastor Cho himself. I couldn't believe it. In the letter, he said that he was not able to help me financially because they were in a building program and had taken a loan from the bank. He also mentioned that the Holy Spirit didn't tell him to help me. This startled me because I had naively assumed that a vision from God would release finances immediately, especially for someone like Pastor Cho. In conclusion, he encouraged me to pray and seek God for myself in order for the vision to materialize. I have no idea if he actually wrote the letter, but I'm grateful that someone did because it really helped me understand the importance of obeying the voice of the Spirit and persevering in prayer.

I kept seeking the Lord to provide finances for the ministry. One day, a Congolese friend who spoke almost no English came to see me. He told me about two Bulgarian businessmen who wanted to go to Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) to develop a trading business. My friend had agreed to start the business with them and they were searching for a fourth business partner who could speak both French and English. They would cover all my costs. I accepted the offer and quickly found myself in Lubumbashi, Zaire. The name of the country was changed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in late 1997.

Lubumbashi is the second largest city in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is known as the mining capital of Congo. Gold, silver, precious stones and other minerals are harvested in and around this area. The four of us went to see the governor of the province. So much money was flowing out of Lubumbashi back then that the governor felt more like a president with journalists flanking him. In fact, some of the journalists decided to interview the two Bulgarians as I translated. I felt very important. My goal was

to make a lot of money and use it for the Kingdom of God. What I didn't know is that God had very different plans. I thought this was the land of my breakthrough, instead it proved to be the land of my wilderness. The children of Israel spent 40 difficult years in the wilderness; I would spend 14 hard months in Lubumbashi.

Initially, I felt like an up-and-coming business star staying in luxury hotels, translating for Congo's elite, and negotiating lucrative financial deals. The Bulgarians intended to start two large supermarkets in the city that would be stocked from South Africa. They returned to South Africa to organize the first shipment of goods by truck. My Congolese friend and I stayed on the ground in Lubumbashi to facilitate the importation process. I was twenty-three years old and I expected to become a millionaire at any moment. Inside my heart, I had convinced myself that this was God's plan. I would get rich quickly and be able to return to Burundi and to start the ministry.

What I did not know is that during the period of time that the Bulgarians had returned to South Africa, political instability was rocking the country as rebel factions attacked Eastern Zaire. They had strong support from the neighboring country of Rwanda. This was the beginning of my personal nightmare. The Zairean government quickly identified Rwanda as the enemy. Even though, I am not Rwandan, I look Rwandan because Burundi is home to the same ethnic groups as our northern neighbor. Mobutu Sese Seko's government announced on the radio that Rwanda was the enemy. In Kinshasa, the capital, many Rwandese were either arrested for being possible spies or killed outright. The ethnic violence began to spread across the country. My friends in Lubumbashi advised me to go into hiding immediately.

My Congolese partner had returned to South Africa for a short business meeting just days before the hostilities. At the time, the primary means of communication was a fax machine. I prepared a letter to fax to my two business partners asking them to send me money so that I could get out of Zaire through the Zambian border near Lubumbashi. I would then continue south by road until I reconnected with them in South Africa. I went downtown to find a public service to fax my letter.

I was walking by myself when suddenly two men approached me in civilian clothes demanding my documents. After I showed them my Burundian passport, they harshly escorted me to a nearby secret service vehicle. I knew I was in serious danger. They drove me to a military camp on the outskirts of town. I knew that God had shown me that I would start a ministry. It was so certain in my heart that I had no fear of these men killing me, but the thought of being tortured sent shivers through my frame. The two undercover soldiers confiscated my passport and the fax accusing me of being a Rwandan spy. I tried to explain that I was Burundian and had written to my business partners, but they wouldn't listen. They proceeded to take what little money I had and place me in a detainment cell guarded by five soldiers. I could see some Rwandans locked up in a different area, but I was in a maximum-security zone.

The soldiers began looking for an interpreter to read my fax as they were still convinced I was a Rwandan spy, but no one spoke English. After several hours, a translator finally corroborated my story. I hoped this misunderstanding would be behind us, but even after my claims were proved accurate, the soldiers refused to return my money. One of the men who had arrested me took

me to the back exit of the camp, handed me my passport and said: “*If you want to live, run for your life!*” I had never run so fast in my entire life.

Life changed radically from this moment. Up to this point, my time in Congo had been like a sweet dream— a good job, stable finances, and high-level connections. Now I was a political fugitive. I ran as fast as I could to find my Congolese friends. Their only advice was to go into hiding immediately as the situation in Congo had steadily deteriorated. I did so for four months. The first two months I lived with a family of five orphaned brothers and sisters. We could only afford to eat one meal a day. To help make ends meet, I sold almost everything I owned including all my clothes and personal possessions. Once that money ran out, the real problems started.

As I mentioned in chapter one, I had grown up in a relatively affluent family in Burundi that never lacked for anything. We had plenty of food and even enough for pocket money and clothes. Now, I found myself sleeping on a dirt floor on a small mattress in clouds of dust. I could no longer go outside during the day due to the risk of someone turning me into the authorities. I was a prisoner of circumstance. To make matters worse, we had a lice infestation that embedded itself in the one pair of clothes I still owned. Even South Africa seemed like a promised land compared to this arrangement.

One day, one of the young men I lived with came running into the house, “*Chris, one of the big pastors here in Lubumbashi, Pastor Kiluba, heard about you and wants to meet you, now.*” He was a very influential pastor with lots of connections. “*We think he can help you,*” my roommate continued. The five brothers and sisters were

terrified to keep me in their home any longer for fear of being discovered by the military. I responded rather dubiously, “*How exactly am I supposed to go meet this man without being noticed?*” They responded immediately, “*We will find a way.*”

They managed to find enough money to hire a taxi driver who pulled up next to the house. I ran and jumped into the back seat of the vehicle like a criminal. I laid below the window line on the back seat in order to stay concealed en route to the church. When the driver pulled into the church compound, I ran out of the taxi and into the church building as fast as I could. The secretary was waiting for me and promptly opened the door to the pastor’s office.

The pastor looked at me intently, “*Please sit down*”. Nervously, I obeyed. “*This morning I had a dream,*” he continued. “*The Lord showed me a Burundian hiding in this city,*” so I found a way to get a message to you. “*In the dream, I saw that your life was in great danger,*” he continued. I was listening intently now. “*It’s not the Congolese that want to kill you, it’s the devil because he knows you are a great man carrying a powerful vision from heaven.*” I couldn’t believe my ears. I was frail from barely eating, my clothes were in tatters and I was hiding for my life. I didn’t see anything great about God’s vision, but it reminded me of what the angel told Gideon when he was hiding, “*You are a mighty man of valor*” (Judges 6:12). Pastor Kiluba told me that he would protect me.

Later that afternoon, he took me to his home—a beautiful mansion with many rooms where I was provided three sumptuous meals a day. After two months of almost starving, I had suddenly found a place of abundance. In Burundi, I had taken the ease of my life for granted. Now every bite of food was marked by extreme gratitude for God’s provision. For three weeks, the pastor took

meticulous care of me ensuring that I had everything I needed. I'd ride with him in his vehicle wherever he went during the day so that he could keep an eye on me. Things were going very well until Pastor Kiluba announced that he was going abroad for some meetings. He would be gone for an extended time, but he welcomed me to stay in his house. I accepted the offer until one night the Lord spoke to me clearly, "*You must leave this house now.*" I tried to argue with the prompting, "*But Lord, where will I go?*" The prompting intensified, "*You must leave now.*"

The instability within the country had subsided greatly. The average Congolese no longer believed that Rwanda was invading the country. Instead, they understood that it was a specific rebel group meaning that I was no longer in danger. I had a wonderful life at pastor Kiluba's house. Why would the Lord want me to leave so suddenly? I had everything I could need and more. Philippians 4:12 says, "*I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.*" God's purpose was to teach me His sufficiency in every circumstance of life so I obeyed.

I returned to the house I had previously lived in with the five Congolese orphans. They welcomed me back, but it was a very difficult period. I tried everything I could to find a job to earn some money. I applied as an English teacher, nothing. I searched for business opportunities, still nothing. The main challenge was a lack of food. Often we survived on one meal a day of boiled cornmeal or grilled crickets. Breakfast and lunch were not an option. It was the hardest moment of my life. When all seemed hopeless, God started teaching me about His miraculous provision.

I call it “*manna*” (see Exodus 16:1-36). To my amazement, on the days when we could find no food God would send strangers to our door with dinner.

Specifically, I recall one night around 9 p.m. as we were about to go to bed without eating. I prayed quietly, “*Lord, my friends and I didn’t eat today, I guess you forgot us.*” Within minutes, a Christian lady was knocking at the door with a full meal. “*I felt prompted to bring you guys food,*” she exclaimed. I was stunned. These experiences taught me the meaning of living by faith. When I could see no provision from my limited vantage point, God would supernaturally provide *manna* and it built my confidence to trust Him.

God’s peace overwhelmed my life during this time despite having almost no connection to the outside world. My family had not heard from me because the communication lines had been so severely disrupted in Congo. For fourteen months, they had no idea if I was alive or not. Despite the isolation and hardship, God encouraged me greatly during this time. I would have dreams in which I could see the ministry God had spoken about in Johannesburg becoming a reality. During these experiences, the Lord would regularly highlight the word *Internet*. I didn’t even know what the Internet was back then, but God was preparing me for an online ministry.

One night I had a dream about a massive company called *Internet*. In the dream, I was the director of the company. When I woke up, I asked one of my roommates if he knew of a company called *Internet*. He said he had heard of it, but didn’t know what they did. This was 1997 and the Internet was still almost largely unknown in Africa. In another dream, I saw a powerful angel

speaking to me, “*God is going to lift you up. Make sure you glorify Him.*” Still another dream showed me that I was going to feed the world the word of God. In that dream, I saw a huge cake that I was sharing with people across the world. It’s amazing to me that God was speaking so clearly to me in dreams even when I was sleeping on the ground with the dust and the lice.

When my flesh was breaking during the day due to hardship and poverty, God was encouraging me powerfully at night through dreams and insights. I learned the power of God’s word in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. It says, “*Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things, which are seen, but at the things, which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*” The Holy Spirit was encouraging me that my painful challenges in Lubumbashi were producing something glorious in and through my life that I could not yet see. I sensed that my season of affliction was only temporary, and on the other side I would see God’s eternal purposes come to life.

Let me encourage you: if you’re going through a tough time in your life—maybe you’re unemployed, barren, or dealing with an illness—this promise in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 is for you. In *Kanguka*, I always encourage listeners not to complain about their current circumstances because through faith God will bring about His eternal purposes for your life as you start praising Him! Remember nothing is wasted in God’s hands—no pain, no challenge, and no hardship. These are all temporary; God’s promise is eternal. I used to praise and worship the Lord even during my

season of affliction. God's promise in Jeremiah 29:11 is still your promise today, "*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope*". God still has a great future for you!

You may be reading this and wondering how someone can praise God during a difficult season. I had that same question many times in Congo. Romans 12:12 became critical for me: "*Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer*". The key is learning to rejoice in our future hope in Christ! We don't rejoice in our present circumstances — we rejoice in Jesus's faithfulness and promise to us. This gives us the courage to be patient and continue steadfastly even in the face of adversity. People may fail you, situations might disappoint you, and circumstances may overwhelm you, but God still has a hope for your life! Many Christians complain as if their current situation is the end of their life. It's not! Be patient in your tribulation. Please don't give up so easily—keep seeking the Lord in prayer.

Since the political situation had calmed down, I was finally able to start moving around freely. As I would walk around town, I started experiencing something remarkable—God placed great favor on my life. By this point, I was a walking skeleton and I think this moved people with compassion towards me. Strangers would speak kindly to me and even give me unsolicited gifts. I began to sense that I was a burden to the five orphans even though they would never say so. Even as strangers would take care of us, I desired for God to open a new chapter in my life. One day, another Congolese brother named André Ilunga came to see me and invited me to live with him and his family to alleviate

the pressure on the orphan family. He was married with a baby. I accepted his offer.

I discovered that his house was a small single room studio apartment, which lacked concrete floors like the orphans' home. André and his family slept on one side of the room and I was given the other side, the "sitting room". The two areas were separated only by a curtain partition. In order to sleep at night, we would move the few chairs in the "sitting room" to the side and André would make a makeshift mattress for me out of old clothes. They didn't have an extra sheet so I would use the curtain separating the room, but at least this kept me off of the dirt floor. Every ten minutes or so, I would have to turn over due to the pain from an emaciated body lying on the hard ground. Left side, right side, left side—all night long I turned over repeating the process.

To use the toilet, I had to get up and walk a long distance outside . The outhouse didn't have a roof. I remember looking up at the moon from within the outhouse in the thick of night asking God, "*Lord, when will I get out of this situation?*" The answer was always the same, "*I am with you. I am with you.*" Most mornings I was woken up from dew dripping off the corrugated iron sheet roof into my ears. I'd start praying silently for hours so as not to wake up my hosts. André and his family sacrificed their privacy so that I could have a place to live and I'm still grateful for their kindness and friendship toward me.

Chapter 6: Leaving Lubumbashi

“Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.” –Deuteronomy 8:2

I sensed my time in Lubumbashi was coming to an end. The Lord dropped Deuteronomy 8:2 into my spirit one day except that instead of forty years, I felt that He was saying fourteen months. My wilderness season was almost over, but I had no means of leaving the country. I still had no contact with the outside world due to the limited communication options and the fact that I was totally broke. The rebel movement in the East had swept through the whole country meaning that I was totally free to move around without any restraint.

I decided to visit the UNHCR office to see if they would be willing to help me leave Congo and return to either Burundi or South Africa. After explaining my situation, they refused, saying I did not qualify as a refugee. Honestly, I couldn't believe it. For nearly two weeks, I sought the Lord every morning in prayer before returning to the UNHCR office to plead my case. Sometimes,

I would spend the whole day there hoping someone would listen to me. One day, a young Rwandese lady noticed me in the waiting area and spoke to me in Kinyarwanda thinking I was also Rwandese. The languages are similar enough that I understood her, but I responded that I was Burundian. As we continued chatting, she asked me about my story. I told her everything that had transpired since I came to Congo including how my life had been in grave danger and that I wanted to return to Burundi or South Africa. She listened quietly before responding, *“I can’t help you return to South Africa, but I can help you get to Rwanda and from there it will be easy to cross the border back into Burundi.”* I shouted with excitement, *“Yes! That would be wonderful!”*

She laid out her plan to help me: her brother had friends in the military. She would ask him to put me in touch with these soldiers to escort me to Rwanda. *“If that’s ok with you, then meet me tomorrow and we will get things moving.”* I learned her name was Stéphanie Kayitesi. *(I have not seen her in almost thirty years. Stéphanie, if you happen to read this book, please reach out to me on the Kanguka app as my family would like to say thank you for what you did for me!)* I thanked her profusely for her offer and went running back to the orphans’ house to share the news with them. God had answered my prayers!

The next day I went to see Stéphanie and she promptly took me to meet her brother. At first, his instructions to me didn’t make sense: he pointed out a nearby military camp and asked me to share my story with the soldiers on duty. That sounded crazy as I had nothing but bad experiences with the Congolese military, but just like the four lepers in 2 Kings 7:3-20 who risked everything to approach the Syrian camp, I decided to do it. In verse four the

lepers said, “*If we say, ‘We will enter the city,’ the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die.*” That is exactly how I felt. If I stayed any longer in Lubumbashi, I felt like I wouldn’t make it because my life was so miserable so why not take a risk?

I slowly walked to the military camp and told the soldiers on duty that I wanted to talk to the chief. The soldiers laughed at me, “*Who do you think you are? You can’t see the chief of the camp.*” I told them my full story without any concern on their part. Even though they mocked me, I decided to wait at the front gate all day. In the evening, the chief arrived in his vehicle. As the gates opened for him, I just walked in behind the vehicle. No one could believe what I had just done – including myself. As the soldiers were about to tackle me to the ground, the chief said, “*Wait, what do you want young man?*” I quickly responded, “*Sir, I must talk to you.*” I proceeded to share some of my story before he shouted in response, “*Leave now! There’s nothing I can do for you.*” I quipped back, “*Sir, If you kick me out, I will sit at the gate as long as it takes.*” He paused for a moment before ordering the soldiers to take care of me until the next morning when he would have more time to listen to my case.

The next morning, I met a second commander on the base. I told him my full story—I wasn’t Rwandese, people tried to kill me, I’d been suffering greatly, no finances, no job, and I just wanted to leave. He was a major in the Congolese army and he stared at me with great compassion before answering, “*Here is ten dollars as pocket money and I will get you a ticket to Eastern Congo so you can*

cross the border back into Burundi safely.” God moved his heart to take pity on a walking skeleton in total desperation.

I returned home to see my friends one last time and share the news with them. We all wept together at the thought of my imminent departure. The next morning I flew from Lubumbashi to Goma via a layover in Kinshasha. On the flight to Goma, I attempted to sit next to another passenger who abruptly refused saying that someone else was already sitting there. I discovered later that he was lying because he despised people who look like me. However, I ended up sitting next to a very friendly Congolese man named Michel Kabwe. I discovered that he was a soccer coach traveling back home to Goma. “*Where are you going to stay in Goma?*” he asked inquisitively as we chatted. “*I plan on crossing the border immediately into Rwanda,*” I asserted confidently. He looked at me incredulously, “*We will land in the evening and the border will be closed.*” This was the first time I had ever considered this reality and he could see the perplexity on my face. “*Don’t worry. You can spend the night at my house with my family and then I will help you cross in the morning,*” he reassured me. He and his family treated me like royalty that evening. Once again I saw the Lord’s kindness and compassion through a total stranger. (*Michel, if you happen to read this please reach out to me via the Kanguka app*).

The next morning was a Sunday and we discovered that my Burundian passport had expired ensuring that I would have difficulties when crossing into Rwanda. Michel suggested that we go to the nearby military camp on the border and request a special travel document called a *feuille de route* since the Major in Lubumbashi had organized the trip. Michel headed to church as I explained to the soldiers my case all over again. As we were

talking, the general in charge of the entire province of North Kivu suddenly showed up at the camp. All the soldiers on duty immediately stood at attention. I remained seated, as I didn't know what was happening. The general thundered in my direction, "*Who are you? And what are you doing here?*" He was obviously surprised to see someone like me at the camp. "*My name is Chris,*" I responded in total exhaustion. Some of his bodyguards shouted at me, "*Are you sick? Why are you not standing at attention?*"

I feebly stood up and began to explain my story all over again. I concluded saying, "*I just want to go back to Burundi.*" The general mistakenly assumed I was part of the Rwandese military because of a grey T-shirt I was wearing under my coat shirt and asked for proof that I was really a Burundian. I showed him my passport and the initial Congolese entry visa. "*What about the T-shirt?*" he asked. I took off my shirt and he could see my frail frame. Today, I weigh 205 lbs., but at that time I weighed 118 lbs. I was literally skin and bones. The general's face instantly changed towards one of compassion. He turned to the surrounding soldiers and asked with compassion, "*Have you fed him yet?*" I didn't want food; I just wanted to leave. God's favor was upon me and within moments the soldiers escorted me to the border and just like that, I was across into Rwanda.

I took a bus to Kigali, the capital of Rwanda arriving around 8 pm. I didn't know where to go. All I could think of was that my father had a friend who used to live there. I got off the bus at a random stop and walked insecurely towards a little shop. "*Do you know if there are any Burundians in this neighborhood?*" I asked sheepishly. The shop owner answered as she pointed across the street, "*Yes, right over there.*" I knocked on the door of a total stranger

and explained my story once again asking if they happened to know my father's friend. The Burundians in that house offered to let me spend the night and take me to find my father's friend the next day. Let me share a funny story from that evening.

My hosts offered me the guest bedroom in their small house. The washroom was outside behind the house. Keep in mind that I had been wearing the same pants, same shoes, and same shirt for almost 14 months. Amazingly, they had all held up very well except for a small hole on top of one of the shoes. It reminds me of God's promise to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 29:5, "*During the forty years that I led you through the wilderness, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet.*" I didn't own any socks, however, and this ensured that my shoes always reeked from the stench of my sweaty feet.

I needed to take a bath desperately, but I also knew that my feet stunk. As I slipped off my shoes to put on a pair of slippers provided in the guestroom, the stench immediately wafted throughout my room and spread into the whole house. I could barely breathe as I heard my host complaining through the wall, "*Can someone please check the baby's diaper? I think she needs to be changed.*" I was mortified. I often tell people that God puts us in embarrassing situations to test our hearts according to the verse I shared at the beginning of this chapter Deuteronomy 8:2. He definitely allows situations to humble us and test us in order to know what is in our hearts. The Lord really tested me that evening, to help me grow in humility from my smelly feet.

The next morning, my host took me to a local church called *Inkurunziza* that regularly hosted ecumenical prayer meetings at noon. My host knew that many Burundians would be attending.

Amazingly, we discovered a Burundian musical group called *Shemeza Music*, led by the talented gospel musician Apollinaire, hosting a gospel concert there. Unbelievably, both my uncle and my cousin Olivier Muco, who first took me to church, were present with the group. At first, I couldn't believe my eyes and thought I must be dreaming. When we finally locked eyes, my uncle shouted, "*Chris! Chris! Is that you? Are you really alive?*" We embraced tightly for an extended period of time. Everyone thought I was dead.

My uncle took me directly to a public phone service so I could call home. My sister, Francine, picked up shouting, "*Chris, oh my goodness! You're alive.*" She quickly called the rest of the family into the living room so I could chat with them. Everyone was well!

Burundi was under trade sanctions and it was very difficult to travel into the country. I spent a few weeks in Kigali with some family friends to rest as I gathered all the necessary travel documents. I became reconnected with my father's old friend, Jean de Dieu Basabakwinshi. He has been instrumental in my life in many ways. He still travels with me for my *Kanguka* gospel crusades around the world. One day I bumped into an authentic prophetess at his house. I've met many false prophets during my life, but this lady was legit! As soon as she saw me, she began to speak with great precision about my life. She said, "*You have traveled from far and you are headed back to Burundi. You think that you are going there to settle permanently, but it's actually temporary. God's plan is for you to leave Burundi and settle in another country.*" I was shocked. I had had enough adventure for one lifetime. I just wanted to go home. She continued, "*Someone will try to convince you to stay in Burundi, don't listen to that person or you will miss God. It will be tough, but God will give you victory as you obey.*"

Remarkably, things played out as she described. Returning to Burundi was a huge sense of relief for my whole family. Even though the country was in turmoil, I felt much more stable. I spent almost two months at home before the Lord's voice spoke clearly one day, "*You need to go back to South Africa.*" I absolutely did not want to return to a land full of crime, racism towards foreigners, violence, challenges and poverty. When I told my father, he objected vehemently trying everything he could to convince me to stay in Burundi. "*Chris! No! You almost died there. Don't go.*" I quietly responded, "*Father, the voice of God is telling me to return.*" He couldn't understand, "*Voice? What voice? Are you crazy?*"

I could understand my father's concern, but I had to obey God, especially with the confirmation from the prophetic word in Kigali. Everyone wanted to know what I would be doing when I returned. My only answer was that I wasn't sure what the next step would hold for me. In quick order, God provided a ticket to return to Johannesburg and I started preparations.

Chapter 7: **Back to South Africa**

*“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,
these are the sons of God” –Romans 8:14*

My return to Burundi seemed miraculous. For fourteen months, most of my family and friends in Burundi thought I was dead. The last communication I had with them was when I moved to Lubumbashi. After watching the news coming out of Congo, everyone assumed that I didn't make it. My father even wanted to organize a traditional mourning ceremony for me, but other family members talked him out of it, suggesting that I might still be alive. People were so happy to have me back and eagerly listened to my testimony of God's faithfulness. The situation in Burundi, however, was not good. The country was in the midst of international trade sanctions due to a successful coup that overthrew the government. No flights were allowed to enter or exit the country. The economic reality on the ground was dire. The vision God had given me about the Internet and generating income for ministry seemed impossible in this kind of context.

As I have already mentioned, I heard God's voice so clearly telling me to return to South Africa. I often reflected on the

prophecy given to me in Kigali about going to another country—Dubai would be good, Europe would be awesome, and America would be incredible. South Africa, though, was not on my list of countries to ever visit again. As I struggled with the thought of going back there, God’s voice became even more convincing. I made numerous excuses to the Lord: no finances, no invitation, no ticket, nowhere to stay, etc. I have learned that when the Lord speaks, He expects obedience not excuses. Often, His plans and purposes don’t make rational sense to our minds, but those are the moments we must obey to see miraculous provision. I have proved this to be true over and over again in thirty-two years of walking with Jesus.

The challenge for some people is that they try to force God’s provision. They hear God’s voice leading them to the United States or Canada, and instead of waiting on God’s timing and provision, they try to make it happen in their own abilities. I know of several Burundians who have lied on visa applications, misrepresented personal information, and used outright deception to strive for refugee asylum outside of the country all in the name of God’s promise. I have learned that if it’s really God, then you don’t have to lie, you don’t have to strive, and you don’t have to force something to happen.

It reminds me of God’s promise to Abraham regarding a son through his wife, Sarah. After twenty-five years of waiting, God’s promise had not materialized. One day, Sarah suggested that Abraham impregnate his maidservant Hagar to ensure that there would be an offspring—they wanted to help God. The result was Ishmael, not Isaac. Ishmael was not the son of the promise. They tried to force God’s promise and in so doing created a giant mess.

The ongoing conflict in the Middle East is the result of this couple trying to make a promise happen.

I did not want to force God's hand by taking a loan or lying to people. I resolved that if God was leading me to South Africa, then He would open doors of supernatural provision for me. I needed six hundred dollars for a ticket to South Africa. Within just a few days, people gave me the resources necessary to travel. Remember that God is the source of your provision. Just be obedient and watch how He will move on people's hearts in the right time and the right way to fulfill His leading.

I already described my father's reaction to the news of going back to South Africa. It was a really difficult conversation. He wanted me to stay in Burundi and return to university, but he was already tapped out financially. I knew he wouldn't be able to support me and, besides, God's voice was clear: *Go back to South Africa*. My father was so disappointed with me. It hurt me to see his reaction, even though I understood him.

It reminds me of 2 Corinthians 5:7, "*We walk by faith, not by sight.*" My father wanted me to walk by sight with tangible proof of God's leading—an invitation, a job, a place to stay, a concrete plan etc. All I could provide was an increasingly clear conviction in my spirit that God would open the right doors at the right place at the right time. This is the essence of faith. I knew it would happen because I was obeying God's voice! My father told me that there are only two paths in life towards financial success: a college degree or selling drugs. Since I was doing neither, he could see no way for me to succeed. He tried to reason with me, but I kept going back to the prophetic word from Kigali.

I decided to share the vision God had given me for *Ed* regarding taking care of the poor, mobilizing prayer, and preaching God's word globally. I hoped he would understand God's leading. His reaction was insightful: "*Chris, these are revolutionary ideas. Do you know what happens to people like that?*" Before I could answer, he responded, "*People kill them*". I could see we were getting nowhere in the conversation. He finally looked at me and said, "*You're 25 years old. You're a grown man. I can't keep you here in Burundi. If this is what you've decided on, then go, but I do not support it. Good luck.*" However, I could tell it was a good luck of disappointment not of heartfelt agreement or excitement.

Later that night, I felt a strong sense of remorse regarding the conversation. Was my father right? Or was I right? I loved my father and wanted to honor him. Almost immediately, I felt God's voice whisper to my heart so clearly, "*I'm with you.*" The Holy Spirit then led me to Matthew 10:34-35, which says, "*Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.'*" What caught my attention was the part describing how obedience to Jesus could potentially create conflict between a father and a son. It is important to honor and obey your parents, but when they become an obstacle to obeying God's voice, then the choice is simple: please God or please your family. I wanted to please God.

The next morning I boarded the bus to Kigali. I stayed with a family friend while I purchased the South African Airways flight to Johannesburg. I still had no idea of what the next step would be upon reaching South Africa. The night before the flight, my friend's teenage son started asking me questions. "*Chris, are you*

sure you're going to South Africa?" I responded immediately, "Yes I'm sure." He continued, "Why are you going there?" My answer was the same as it had been for weeks, "God told me to go there." He persisted, "Will people come to get you at the airport?" I knew no one would be there. "Do you have someone to host you?" he pressed. I had no one. "Do you have money for a hotel?" he insisted. I responded, "I have \$20 in my pocket that your father gave me." Tears filled the young man's eyes as he really thought I was going to die. "Don't cry, God has taken care of me in every season and I keep trusting Him," I reassured him.

On the plane the next day, I started praying, "Lord, I trust you, but I don't know what to do once this airplane lands." A Rwandese girl was sitting next to me. We started chatting for a few minutes before she asked me, "Who is going to pick you up at the airport?" I answered, "God knows," before asking her the same question so I didn't have to go into too many details. She said, "My brother is meeting me."

After going through immigration at the airport and walking into arrivals, I suddenly heard a voice shouting, "Chris! Chris! Chris!" I looked around before recognizing an old friend named Justin standing beside his wife, with tears in the eyes. He was there to pick up his sister—the same girl sitting next to me on the plane. "Where are you going to stay in Johannesburg?" he asked inquisitively. "Ummm...maybe with a friend...I don't really know," I finally blurted out. "No! You will stay with us," he responded definitively. What a miracle! Only God could have orchestrated this.

I stayed with them for several days, which gave me enough time to reconnect with my old friends in Johannesburg (see Chapter 4). Sadly, my friends' living situation had not improved since I left for Lubumbashi. Times were very tough for foreigners in

Johannesburg. South africans would not give anyone from outside the country a job, even labeling us as “invaders.” One day, I found out about a Christian charity that was helping students in the area. I applied for a job, but they didn’t have any openings.

Out of the blue, an idea came to me. I made a suggestion, “*Can you create a job for me?*” Everyone was stunned by my boldness, but allowed me to continue. “*Your organization helps students attend college by providing a place to sleep and three daily meals, right?*” Everyone nodded before I continued, “*What if I volunteer to clean the dormitory in exchange for a room and food to eat? You wouldn’t need to pay me a salary.*” They thought for a moment before responding, “*That’s a great idea!*” I was so happy because I had a place to stay that didn’t require me to be on the streets of one of the most dangerous cities in the world.

My new janitorial job started every morning at around 5 am with emptying the trash and cleaning the building. It was really hard work. When work subsided, I’d pray and ask God, “*Lord, why did you bring me here?*” He would respond the same way every time, “*You still have a lot you need to learn.*” I spent several months working at the dormitory before I got a different job with an import-export company earning an actual salary. I agreed with the manager of the dormitory to let me stay in my room, but I’d cover my living expenses with my new salary. Prior to starting this job, I ventured into a cyber café and saw a sign about the Internet. I couldn’t believe it—I didn’t really understand it, but the dreams from Lubumbashi flashed into my mind again. This was still the key to my ministry.

On the first day of the new job everyone in the dormitory was shocked to see the “trash guy” dressed nicely and heading to

work. In the office, I met a Senegalese Muslim named Moussa. He was very friendly and extremely tech-savvy. It was the year 2000, and technology was just starting to catch on in Africa. South Africa was at the leading edge and Moussa's assignment was to teach me about technology—computers, email, IT, servers, and the INTERNET! I knew Moussa was the reason why God had brought me back to South Africa. I learned so much from this man who laid the foundation for the online ministry the Lord has entrusted to me today. In fact, if you have seen the *Kanguka* logo with a computer on it, you will understand the symbolism from this season. The surrounding red arrows symbolize Christ's blood, the blue arrows indicate heaven, and the four directions imply a global communication of God's Word. It happens via the Internet and thanks to Moussa's patience in teaching me.

Sometime later, God's voice spoke clearly again, "*It's time to go back to Burundi.*" I couldn't believe it. For the first time in my life, I was actually starting to make some money and develop stability. Life was good in South Africa and I didn't want to leave. God reminded me again of the passage in I Kings 17 regarding Elijah and His supernatural provision in Kerith, which I described in detail in chapter 4. I knew that the Lord was leading me to trust Him once again. A friend in South Africa agreed to help me go back to Burundi and start a business there to support myself. I boarded a plane and headed back home.

Chapter 8: **Back to Burundi For Good**

“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.” –Ecclesiastes 3:1

Going back to Burundi meant one sure thing—I’d be staying at my house with my family. While I love them dearly, it felt defeating to return from a great adventure only to resume a normal life routine. I just didn’t have the resources to be able to live on my own. My friend in South Africa gave me two computers—one for my personal use and the other to generate business income. I’d sell the second machine and then wire him the money so he could send me another one to sell. It was early 2001 and technology had not yet entered the country so it looked like a great business venture.

Upon returning to Burundi, my father had remarried and his new wife was pregnant. Our home was big, but with the changes in the family, I decided to move into a cottage on the back part of the property with three small rooms. I lived in one room and used the other two rooms for my new computer business. Initially, I made money by teaching people how to use Word and Excel. It sounds ridiculous now, but back then anything IT related was a totally unknown concept in Burundi. I was making just enough

money to sustain myself when the Lord spoke to me, “*Now is the time to start Ed.*” I knew He meant supporting widows and orphans. I protested, “*Lord, I only have enough for me, how can I take care of others?*” The Lord led me to Zechariah 4:10, “*Who has despised the day of small things?*” I knew God was asking me to be faithful with the little that I had even though it seemed insignificant.

The next day in prayer I sensed I was supposed to visit a nearby hospital that regularly served the poorest populations in Bujumbura. I asked a nurse on duty if she knew of a widow with no help. “*I’m glad you asked, I know of one in desperate need,*” she responded immediately. In short order, she introduced me to an HIV-positive widow with a small child who had been living in the hospital for several months based on the charity of a doctor. She had nowhere to go and no one to take care of her. This was the beginning of my ministry.

People know *Kanguka* for its public ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing through various broadcasts and crusades, but what many don’t realize is the work we do to serve the poor and the downcast. From day one, I felt the Lord instructing me not to publicize our charity ministry. Matthew 6:3-4 says, “*When you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.*” Jesus doesn’t want charitable deeds to produce pride and arrogance in our lives.

The Holy Spirit reminds me of this often ensuring that our charitable work is done discreetly. Matthew 6 promises an eternal reward as a result. This is why you won’t see anything on our social media pages promoting our good works—I want the full measure of God’s reward not man’s empty applause. When people discover

your good deeds, they start talking about it and thanking you for it and making a big deal about your actions. That's man's reward—it's fleeting and temporal, but I want God's reward, which endures for all of eternity! Obviously, people close to you will know what is happening, but I'm talking about intentionally seeking publicity. Preaching, teaching, healing, and praying is important, but we must not forget the poor! It's imperative that the Church remembers the downtrodden, the destitute, and the forgotten of society.

I am mentioning how my ministry started with one widow so that you don't fall into the same trap that I almost fell into. I assumed incorrectly that if I was going to start a ministry, then I would need abundant resources and a surplus of money. I discovered that with my limited means, I was able to get this widow discharged from the hospital and moved into a small rented room for her and her son. She was so grateful that someone cared. The Lord prompted my heart, "*This is the beginning of helping thousands of widows and orphans. One day you will build houses for them, but you must be faithful in the little.*" If there is something I'm passionate about it's learning to take the first step of obedience towards implementing a vision. So many people wish they could do something big for God, but He is asking us if we are willing not if we are wishing. Are you willing to start with a little right where you are? Maybe you need to help someone with school fees, maybe it's orphans, or maybe it's widows? What's required is to step out and show God that you have a heart to help others. Do what you can with what you have right now. Before feeding the five thousand, Jesus took the little—two fish and five loaves—and multiplied them to be more than enough (Luke 9:16). This is

how the Kingdom works—we start small and God multiplies our faithfulness.

Remember the vision I received in Johannesburg in 1996 included three things—a teaching/preaching ministry, intercession and caring for the poor. The two other arms of *Ed* also started around this same time. Invitations began to appear to speak at home group fellowships around Bujumbura. Often it would be ten to twenty people, and the primary reaction I received was that my gift was one of teaching God's Word. This confirmed the calling on my life. I would often arise at 4 AM to seek the Lord. I felt it was necessary to start an intercessory prayer ministry. There was a home fellowship at Kabondo (near my father's house) that I felt would be a great place to start the intercessory arm of *Ed*. I selected ten people and invited them to meet me at 5 AM to pray.

I called the prayer fellowship *Kumusozi*, which means “on the mountain”. Often I preach and teach about Abraham and Isaac going up to the mountain of God (see Genesis 22). The promise God gives Abraham is that, “*on the mountain of the Lord it will be provided*” (verse 14). This is the place where Jesus gave me strength to launch my ministry. We began to meet every morning at 5 AM to praise God for His faithfulness and intercede for the vision of *Ed*. I'd leave my place by 4 AM so I would have a few moments by myself in prayer before others joined me. Sometimes it was pouring rain—it didn't matter. Other times packs of stray dogs would confront me—I'd throw rocks and chase them away. Occasionally, others couldn't make it—I didn't miss a day for four years. I sensed my very life depended on seeking God in prayer! I was pregnant with a ministry that had to be birthed. People often ask me why I

love prayer so much—my answer is simple, my ministry was given to me through prayer on the mountain of God.

I know many churches organize early morning corporate prayer meetings. Praying with other people is really important, but I also want to challenge you regarding personal prayer. God loves private prayer because it's the backbone of intimacy with Him! Personal prayer is cultivated in the secret place. It's like a home full of children with mother and father, some guests, and lots of pets. The home is healthy with lots of activity, but it's important for the husband and wife to have time alone to cultivate their relationship. I've met people who spend all of their time praying in a corporate setting, but for some reason they have no time to be alone with Jesus. Find a way to get alone with God.

This principle is also important for married couples; they need to find time to seek the Lord individually. Yes, pray together and often, but don't neglect personal, private time with Jesus! I know it can be challenging and over the course of my life I've had to be creative in this aspect like praying in the toilet in Johannesburg or praying silently in Lubumbashi with the dew dripping in my ears. What I have learned is that you need time to praise and seek the Lord individually.

My business grew during this time so I decided to expand by getting a loan from the bank to convert the cottage into a cyber café. With the money, I bought six computers and started *BlueNet* with the exact same logo *Kanguka* still uses today. I knew that technology was critical for the expansion of the ministry, but I still didn't realize just how powerful and far-reaching the Internet would really prove to be. In my mind, my new business model

would generate lots of money and create a sustainable method for expanding *Ed's* ministry.

Unbelievably, within just six months my business totally imploded. When I left Lubumbashi, I thought my wilderness season had come to an end. I anticipated unlimited blessings and promises following me back to Burundi. After all, I was now helping several widows and orphans, I was praying with a group of like-minded believers daily, and I was teaching God's word faithfully as invitations came. This was the fulfillment of the vision. How could the business fail when I was just starting the ministry? Why would the Lord allow this to happen? To make matters worse, I now had the pressure of repayment from the bank with no way to do so.

My plan to redeem the situation was to get a second loan to expand the cybercafé by moving the location to downtown Bujumbura. I also doubled the amount of computers and even secured some new technology from Dubai. This time I was sure that things would work out, because people with less tech experience were doing the same thing around town and making a lot of money. Looking back, if I had succeeded during this season it would have been easy for me to claim that my success was due to superior business or technological abilities. I'm sure I would have boasted in my own business acumen. Initially, my new cybercafé seemed pretty solid, but within a few months it was floundering again. It felt like a powerful airplane on the runway awaiting takeoff to soar through the sky, yet somehow it never got up off the ground.

I met an American working at the U.S. embassy who introduced me to the idea of online trading. He had books and resources about the subject that I devoured. I was convinced that this was my future source of financial independence and freedom. I would

be able to make loads of money trading stocks, pay off my debts, and use the rest to build my ministry. My problem was that I was really impatient and I made some foolish trading decisions that cost me dearly. I borrowed money from people with the promise that I'd be able to multiply it online. As deals kept falling apart, people began to doubt my character thinking that I was a crook. God was behind all of it preventing me from becoming self-reliant and prideful, but I wrongly assumed that God had abandoned me.

In my confusion and desperation, I turned toward prophecy. I have learned that if someone is always chasing the prophetic, it is a sure sign they have lost confidence in their relationship with God. I had reached a point where I was so desperate because of the financial pressure that I couldn't see God's Hand humbling me. The devil used the opportunity to cause me to doubt God's character. My solution was to chase after prophets with the hope that one of them had a direct line to God to help me find my way again. Sadly, most of the people I followed during this time were false prophets. You can always spot a false prophet because they require some kind of payment before they will give you a prophetic word. I kept hoping that one of them would give me a prophetic word, and sure enough, several of them did, but it was nothing more than empty promises and false hopes because God wasn't in it at all.

Under the Old Testament, the people of God had to listen to the voice of the prophet without question. Their role was to wait and see if the prophetic word came to pass, but things have changed under the New Testament. If you are genuinely born again, then you now possess the Holy Spirit inside of you. This is different from the Old Testament where the Holy Spirit only came

on certain people at certain times for certain purposes. Because of what Jesus did at the cross, we can all receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit! And if you have the Holy Spirit, then you have a responsibility to test every prophetic word. I Thessalonians 5:20-21 tells us, “*Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good.*” Under the Old Testament there was no measure of discernment for the average believer, but in the New Testament discernment is not only possible, it is expected. The Spirit gives us insight and confirmation to know which prophecies are legitimate and how they apply to our lives.

Let me give you an example from the Book of Acts. It’s interesting that most of the New Testament does not mention much about prophecy. In fact, I can only find a few people who are specifically called prophets—Agabus is one of them (see Acts 11). Why aren’t more prophets mentioned? It’s because the Spirit empowered every believer to hear from God directly. Romans 8:14 says, “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*” This is totally different from the Old Testament where the prophet led the people of God. In verse 28, Agabus released a prophetic word about a terrible famine that was about to come. The next verse says that the disciples made a decision to do something with the prophetic word (i.e., mobilize food distribution for the churches in Judea), but please note that Agabus never told them what action to take. Why not? Each disciple possessed the Spirit and discerned what step needed to be taken in accordance with God’s plan. Remember, if you are born again, you have the same Holy Spirit living inside of you that a prophet does and you need to test the prophecy—reject what is bad and hold on to what is good.

Chapter 9: The Beginning of My Teaching Ministry

*“Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season.
Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching.”*

–2 Timothy 4:2

My teaching ministry started reluctantly across the home group fellowships in Bujumbura. I hesitated to accept the invitations due to my lack of confidence and extreme shyness. As a teenager, I remember the challenge of standing before my high school class to present. Making eye contact with any of my classmates terrified me. Sometimes I would tremble with apprehension. The girls loved to make fun of me, teasing me mercilessly. This condition persisted until I really gave my life to Christ years later. Jesus did a powerful work in my heart and life to deliver me from paralyzing self-awareness. However, some effects lingered in my life as the first invitations started coming from different home groups. I mentioned the *Kumusozi* prayer group in the previous chapter and how much of an impact it had on my life—one of the main ways was a renewed sense of confidence.

As I shared in the various contexts, people would remark on how my teaching gifting blessed them. This confirmed my calling

and gave me more confidence to keep developing it. *BlueNet*, my Internet business, was struggling, but somehow God helped me keep it going for another five years before I finally shut it down for good. The financial challenges during this season forced me to do a lot of inner soul-searching regarding God's voice and character. Nothing was working out for me. My commitment to the ministry was unwavering—supporting widows and orphans, helping other ministers, and pressing into the Lord in prayer. I was obeying God and I assumed that God would automatically bless my efforts.

I used to blame the devil for my challenges regularly, without realizing I was accusing God. One day, some employees came to me and said, "*Chris, we are in a tight place and you're giving all your income towards these widows and orphans with no indication of harvest.*" I was listening intently as they continued, "*Maybe you need to find more fertile ground to invest in so that God can actually bless your endeavors.*" I was shocked, as I knew it was God's purpose to help the poor even when others couldn't understand it. However, his point was valid—why wasn't God blessing my efforts? How could I keep going? It was a season that required great perseverance. Interestingly, II Timothy 4:2 describes the need for the teaching ministry to be coupled with longsuffering. God was using all of the challenges and problems in my life to give me the character to endure trying times and teach His Word faithfully.

Many people think that God can be manipulated or forced to do something immediately—we give something in the offering today and expect to reap a harvest tomorrow. That's not how God operates; He is far more concerned about forming your character. I have learned that if you are committed to God then He will provoke situations to accomplish His purposes. I had to learn that

even when things weren't going well, God was still on my side shaping the inner contours of my heart. II Corinthians 4:16 helped me in this regard. Paul says, "*Therefore, we do not lose heart.*" We know that Paul was going through some really tough times (just read II Corinthians 11:24-28), yet he continues by saying, "*Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*" Honestly, my outward man was falling apart, especially financially, but internally God was doing a powerful work. He was teaching me that He is in control of my circumstances—not me.

Even though I couldn't explain why the cybercafé seemed to be floundering so much, God's favor remained on my life and He would supply supernaturally at just the right moment to keep me going for those five years. *Manna* became a very real concept in my life again (see Chapter 5). People would find out that I was the only Christian cybercafé in Bujumbura at the time and decide to make a random financial gift, or someone in Europe would unexpectedly send me a Western Union transfer. One of the more remarkable means that God used to provide for me was Mike, an American tech guy working at the embassy who wasn't even born-again. We became friends at the cybercafé, and he offered to teach me how to do online trading, as I detailed in Chapter 8. What I didn't mention is that he would pay me to learn the basics of trading at his house. Even more surprisingly, he offered to fix any broken computers in my café at his own expense. "*Chris, what do you need?*" became his favorite question. If I needed a new motherboard, additional RAM, or even a computer replacement, he would take care of it, for free! Never excessive, but always just enough to keep me going. For the two years he lived in Bujumbura, God used him to sustain me day by day—the exact definition of *manna*.

In 1 Corinthians 10:4 Paul says, “*And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.*” A rock doesn’t have legs to follow someone, it is fixed and yet this is not just metaphorical language. Paul is saying that God’s provision in our lives is mobile, finding us when we need it the most in the person of Christ. If you are in the will of God, God’s provision for your life will follow you until the day you enter the Promised Land. I entered the Promised Land with the launch of *Kanguka*, which I will discuss soon. What I’m getting at now is that God’s provision sustained me through unexpected and surprising ways prior to the fulfillment of His specific promises for me. I was still in the wilderness, but God orchestrated circumstances to sustain me.

In 2005, Mike moved to Brazil. I thought that he would continue to support me since we were friends. Over night, the finances disappeared. It reminded me again of Elijah in the wilderness. I mentioned God’s supply for Elijah through the brook *Kerith* and the ravens—what incredible provision! Yet, sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that the provision will last forever. We miss what I Kings 17:7 says, “*It happened after a while that the brook dried up.*” God’s provision in the wilderness has an expiration date. Mike stopped responding to my emails because God was moving closer to fulfilling His promises for me. When the brook dries up, the lesson for you and me is to be ready to move with God! So many people want to stay camped out near a former reservoir of divine provision, but we must stay in step with the Lord to continue to see His faithfulness.

I often teach that when a door closes in your life, there are two critical steps you need to take. First, you need to discern who is

closing the door. If it's the devil, then pray and rebuke him so that God's supply will keep flowing. If God is closing the door, though, then the second step is to find where He is opening a new door for you. So many people get stuck in an old season of provision and miss the new thing that God is doing. I felt betrayed when Mike just stopped responding, but he had accomplished his mission for my life during those two years. It was me who missed God's cue—a closed door requires a shift in our mindset.

I'm not proud of the next season of my life. I took many debts attempting to make money online through trading. I became more and more indebted as my financial desperation intensified. I owed money to the bank as well as to many people around me. God allows the outward man to pass away in order for the inward man to be renewed (II Corinthians 4:16). We tend to believe that inward renewal only happens during external abundance, but Paul says that it's often in seasons of hardship and lack that God teaches us to be renewed in Him. Mike leaving me was for my spiritual benefit, though I couldn't see it initially. The thought hit me hard one day: "*You made Mike an idol in your life in this past season.*" God wanted me to rely directly on Him again.

At the end of the previous chapter, I shared with you how I became a slave of false prophets. In *Kanguka*, I teach regularly about the danger of relying on prophetic words and chasing false prophets. The reason I'm so passionate about this is because it was a snare that consumed my life during the difficult times that followed Mike's departure. I tell people that chasing false prophets is no different than going to a witchdoctor with money to try and manipulate spiritual forces. We have already discussed the

importance of Romans 8:14—you and I are supposed to be led by the Spirit of God, not someone else’s spiritual gift.

Let me share how God delivered me from the bondage of being a slave to false prophets. A false prophet from Congo came into my cybercafé one afternoon. I was ecstatic to see him and I asked him to help me. After we prayed together, he started finding small charms and amulets hidden all over my cybercafé. This really stunned me and I asked him, “*How in the world did those get into BlueNet?*” He responded smoothly, “*Oh witchdoctors have a way of infiltrating God’s people.*” I was so amazed that I took him to my house to search there also. Unbelievably, he found amulets throughout my home as well. “*We must burn these immediately,*” he commented. Of course, everything had a small fee attached to it. I was so grateful that someone had finally discovered the reason for my spiritual blockage that I invited him a week later to come back to *BlueNet* for one last spiritual scan before he left the country. I wanted to make sure I was clear from all witchcraft!

He prayed again and unbelievably he found more witchcraft paraphernalia in the cybercafé. It was too much for me and I blurted out in disbelief, “*How is this possible? I thought you cleared everything out last time?*” I knew most of my customers and I had been around all week. His answer was sly and smug, “*Witchdoctors have the ability to send these amulets through the air to attack God’s people daily.*” It was like a spotlight from heaven hit my deceived heart. Suddenly, I could see through the shenanigans and I realized I was being played. My follow-up question was straightforward, “*What can I do to keep them from attacking me daily?*” I knew he was leaving the country soon. He answered slowly, “*Well, ummm.... It requires a lot of specialized prayers.*” The Holy Spirit hit me hard,

“Prayer is still your solution, Chris—not false prophets.” That night I went home and sought the Lord all night long asking him to set me free from the bondage of false prophets. God delivered me in 2005 and I’m still free today!

This sparked a prayer revolution in my life, based on the authority and dominion of Jesus! Ephesians 1:20-22 tells us that, *“God raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And God put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church.”* Do you see what Scripture is saying? Jesus has all power and authority. I no longer had to pray in my strength or authority or some prophet’s because I had Jesus’s. My new favorite verse became Luke 10:19, *“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”* I was no longer a victim of witchcraft, satanic schemes or false prophets. I had authority to be a victor in Christ Jesus through the secret place of prayer! If a real prophet had a message from heaven for me moving forward, they would have to call me—I was done chasing them.

With this new insight, the Lord spoke to me to start writing down my teachings and sending them via email. He instructed me to go to my email inbox and identify every French speaker I knew. I was to start sending them my teachings via email in French. *“French? Are you sure Lord? My French is terrible,”* I quickly protested. I mostly used Kirundi in Burundi and only English in South Africa. It had been years since I studied in French. The Lord encouraged me, *“Use the level of French that you have and start writing now!”* I sent

my first email with a short verse and some brief teaching using my best possible French. Much to my shock people wrote back saying they loved the format and sensed the Lord speaking to them. This must have been the Lord using them to encourage me to keep going because it was pretty rough. However, I continued the second day, and the third, until I had released a teaching Monday through Saturday of the first week. I repeated the process for the second week and the third week, etc.

Unbelievably, people started adding their friends to the distribution list. I started with about twenty emails, then soon it was fifty, and then a hundred, and then two hundred and then three hundred and it just kept growing! It was the start of my online teaching ministry. I followed this online format from 2006 right up until 2015 when *Kanguka* launched. Let me close this chapter with this thought. If God is using someone's teaching to encourage you spiritually—a pastor, a minister, a teacher, an evangelist, or a missionary—please send him or her a note of gratitude. You have no idea how much this will encourage them, especially in the initial stages of launching the ministry. It means so much to me that people reached out back in 2006 to encourage me and that many still continue to do so today!

Chapter 10: The Call to Serve Full-Time

*“And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you.
He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you;
do not fear nor be dismayed.” –Deuteronomy. 31:8*

My online ministry continued to grow rapidly through the email platform. People kept writing to encourage me in my teaching efforts. This encouraged me with even greater passion to expand the distribution list. *BlueNet* was still struggling, when one of my employees contacted me. He received a note from someone named Alphonse, a Burundian living in Canada, who stumbled onto my daily email and wanted to talk to me. We arranged a call and he told me that he owned a website called *outofthewar.org* with the purpose of mobilizing Burundians to end the ongoing war in our country. “*Would you be willing to let your teachings appear on our website?*” he asked. Of course, I wanted to do so, but I was totally broke. He continued, “*You wouldn’t have to pay anything.*” This was a huge breakthrough. Once I discovered how analytics work, I discovered that more than a hundred people a week were reading the daily teachings on the website.

At the beginning of 2007, the Lord spoke clearly, “*Chris, it’s time to close BlueNet and serve me full-time.*” I loved the thought, but I had no means to support myself. In addition, what would I do with all the cybercafé equipment? I quickly dismissed it, but it kept coming back to me regularly. For six months, I refused the direction of the Lord. During this time, my clients slowly diminished ensuring finances became even tighter. God was steadily reducing my business. I have learned not to fight God when He speaks. When Peter walked on water, doing the impossible it was because he simply obeyed Jesus’s voice immediately (Matt. 14:22-33). We need to learn to obey Jesus unconditionally. My disobedience was nothing short of pride because I thought that I knew better than God. I really wish I had obeyed God immediately, but instead God forced me into His will, which I’m very grateful for. But the best approach is to obey immediately.

Spiritual pride is dangerous. It was behind the devil’s fall. Scripture is clear: God hates pride (Prov. 16:5, Jam. 4:6-7). I didn’t think I was proud, I thought I was helping God understand my situation properly. I’d argue with Him as to why shutting down the business didn’t make good financial sense. As the business continued to falter, the pressure intensified—the bank loan needed to be repaid, rent costs for *BlueNet* increased, and I had to pay my employee’s salaries. When the landlord sent a letter to inform me that rent would be increasing rather significantly, I knew it was the end. I couldn’t pay my current rate let alone an increase.

I grabbed the letter and headed outside into the busy streets of Bujumbura to clear my head. A young lady that I knew saw me walking and said politely, “*Hi Chris, is everything okay?*” I wanted to shout in response, “*Of course it’s not okay—there’s the letter, the*

financial pressure, nothing is working...” Instead, I responded, “*Why are you asking me that question?*” She responded honestly, “*I was watching you walk this way for a while and you were mumbling to yourself.*” I felt ridiculous that the level of confusion and depression I felt was evident to other people.

I informed my employees that we had to close the business, but I didn’t know what to do next, so I just sat in front of my computer the rest of the day staring at the screen hoping for a miracle. Suddenly, a message popped up on *Yahoo Messenger*. It was from a brother who had left the country a year earlier. He wanted to know how I was doing to which I quipped “*Oh, I’m doing fine.*” His response caught me off guard, “*Really? Please tell me the truth.*”

I told him about the letter and my other financial struggles. He shared with me that I’d been a great blessing to him and that he wanted to do something for me. His next question took me off guard, “*What has God said about what’s happening?*” I decided to be totally transparent with him, “*God told me that I should close BlueNet and serve Him full-time.*” He persisted with the questions, “*And what would you need for that to happen?*” I thought about it and told him that I needed an office for the ministry and a place to pray. “*And how much does that cost?*” he asked. “*It’s \$300 a month and I need to pay four months in advance,*” I typed my answer slowly unsure of where this was going. “*I’ll wire \$1200 to you this week and I’ll send \$300 every month.*”

I almost shouted at the top of my lungs, as I just couldn’t believe what I was reading on the computer screen. “*Lord, are you doing a miracle that easily?*” I finally managed to say under my breath. Later that day, I shared this testimony with two other brothers living outside of Burundi. One of them offered to cover my telephone bill

and the other committed to take care of my personal needs. In less than 48 hours, I had three solid commitments to help me launch the ministry. I sensed direction for the next step. I quickly found a place in Kinindo to rent and kept four computers for my new *Ed* office and I gave the other six computers to a local Christian organization. Within a week my business was no more and I had an office for launching the ministry full-time!

I was living in Kinanira 3 in the suburbs of Bujumbura in a shared house with my brother-in-law. He worked upcountry most of the week, but we shared the rent. I still lacked the rent for my personal housing and even though the funds were coming in regularly for my ministry, I was two months behind on paying the rent. I could sense that the ministry was on the verge of taking off, but if I didn't pay my rent it would cause serious challenges. Without warning, all three of my partners who had supported me for four months contacted me within forty-eight hours of each other saying that they could no longer support the ministry. I was devastated—without any notice, I no longer had any source of income.

As I tried to pray about these challenges, I felt so much confusion. *"If God was really supplying for my ministry, why did the funds suddenly dry up? And why wasn't He supplying for my rent?"* Suddenly, I heard a voice, *"Do you think that God really accepts your charity and gifts to the poor and widows?"* It was a condemning voice from hell that left me feeling even more confused. I knew it was the devil, but I felt empty and defeated.

My reaction to the devil's voice was to attempt to rebuke the devil immediately and command him to be quiet. I knew what he was saying was not in agreement with Scripture. Yet, the voice

persisted with intensity, *“Have you actually read the scriptures, Chris? Remember what Matthew 7:22 says”* The words of this passage were so clear to me at that moment. *“Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”* The lying voice continued, *“Do you think Jesus even knows you?”* I couldn’t believe the level of deception being used against me. The devil was using God’s Word against me to bring total condemnation and confusion upon me. I cried out to the Lord immediately, *“Lord, please I need you desperately! Please confirm that what I have done for you so far is not in vain.”*

It was early in the morning. Normally, I went to the office around 7:00 am, but I decided to head that way at 5:30. I needed God to give me a tangible sign of His favor as I was badly shaken from my interaction in prayer with the devil. I prayed one more time in desperation before I started walking towards the office, *“Lord, I’m headed to office now as I just can’t stay in the house any more. Please I need you to come through for me today.”* I stepped out into the darkness.

Normally, I would have started writing my daily teaching as soon as I arrived, but I was still shaken, so I kept praying and waiting on God to do something. I felt like I had an appointment to keep without knowing what was going to happen. My expectation level was high. Around 9:00 am, someone started knocking on the office door. To my surprise, two of the four widows that I supported regularly were standing there with big smiles on their faces. *“What are you doing here?”* I blurted out as they rarely came to the office. They radiated a deep joy as they answered, *“We met each other and*

decided to come visit you today to give you a gift." They handed me a bag full of fruits, eggs, etc. I knew they could barely provide food for themselves. This simple act of generosity touched me deeply because I knew the sacrifice they were making. Instantly, I felt the Lord nudging my heart, *"You wanted a sign that you were on the right track?"*

It reminded me of when people asked Jesus the question, *"When did we visit you? When were you hungry? When were you sick or in prison?"* (Matt. 25: 37-40). The answer Jesus gave was simple, *"Whatever you have done for one of the least of these you have done for me."* I sensed the Lord reminding me that what I had done for these widows was really done for Him and He was answering my prayers from earlier in the morning. As we walked into the prayer room in my office, the two widows asked how they could pray for me. I opened my heart fully, *"I am totally confused. Without God's intervention I'm going to have to close the entire ministry down."* The widows were in total shock. One of them looked at me and said, *"There is no way God is going to let that happen! We are going to pray for you now!"*

I will never forget that prayer time. They shouted, wept, and interceded with such fervor that even people walking on the street outside the office stopped, trying to figure out what was going on. *"Remember Chris, Lord! Remember what he has done for us,"* they cried out to the Lord with tears streaming down their faces. I just sat there staring at the ceiling and every now and again I'd say, *"Yes, Lord, listen to these widows. Yes Lord, do you hear what they are saying?"* I was so discouraged that I couldn't think of anything else to pray. As they finished one of the most intense prayers I've ever heard, I thanked them profusely. One of them said, *"We have a message*

from the Lord for you that He gave us before we arrived today, it is found in Acts 10:31". I opened my Bible to read, "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms are remembered in the sight of God."

One of the widows said, "*Chris, you are Cornelius. God has remembered your gifts to the poor.*" It was one of the best days of my life—God had answered my prayer from earlier that morning. I felt a surge of spiritual strength flow into my heart. My prayer life had been reduced to almost nothing over recent weeks. It was the first time in a while that I felt the fire of God burning in my heart to seek His face. In His Kindness, God had definitely given me a sign.

I had to move out of the shared house with my brother-in-law because I was unable to pay the rent and I moved into the prayer room in the *Ed* office. I slept on the floor on a thin foam mattress, but the passion and zeal for prayer had returned and I knew that God had answered my prayers and something was about to happen. Nevertheless, it was a very difficult time because of financial strains. At one point, I was three months behind on rent and I would hide from the landlord. The bank was also trying to secure repayment. Each day was a miracle of survival. I'd often pray saying, "*When? Lord, when?*" The Lord gave me Isaiah 43:2, which says, "*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; nor shall the flames scorch you.*" I was definitely passing through a fiery trial and I thought for sure the waters would sweep me away at any moment.

I cried out to God intensely in prayer during this time, "*Lord, you know I need a miracle.*" My phone rang unexpectedly from a missionary friend of mine named Stephen Kuert. He was serving

as a missionary in Burundi. We used to pray and seek the Lord together on Saturday mornings at his house near my office. During one prayer meeting, I confided in him about my financial struggles. He prayed with me and said he would do something to help me when he could. On the phone that day, he told me that he needed to see me. When we connected, he handed me an envelope with enough money to catch up on my back rent at the office. I couldn't believe it! This became a pattern during this time—just when it seemed impossible God would send unexpected people to help me.

I really wanted to trust the Lord deeper and I knew that could only happen if my prayer life was strengthened again. It was a challenging season and my prayer life had been shaken. At one prayer gathering in downtown Bujumbura, I asked the Lord to show me what to do in order to regain my confidence in prayer. A friend of mine pointed out a Ugandan brother in attendance named Pastor Paddy Musoke. I had heard him on the radio several times and I knew that he was a man of prayer so I went up to him to introduce myself and ask for an appointment later in the week. During our meeting, he encouraged me so much that I decided to invite him to share my office space and give him one of the computers. He gladly accepted my offer. Most mornings, we would start the day praying together and he strengthened me greatly to seek the Lord. God was so faithful to help me during my weakness and answer my petitions for help time and time again.

Chapter 11: The First Major Breakthrough

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” –Hebrews 13:15

By the time 2009 rolled around, I had been through an extremely difficult year, relying on God’s miraculous provision just to survive. My dream was to get married, but my financial situation had been so chaotic that it seemed impossible to even let myself consider it as I turned thirty-five. I was still sleeping on the ministry office floor and I was months behind in my rent. My friend, Stephen Kuert, helped me again to catch up, but obviously I couldn’t count on him indefinitely. In order to make basic ends meet, I would borrow from a friend and then repay the first friend by borrowing from another friend. It was a horrible cycle of indebtedness.

In my spiritual life, I was praying, praising, and complaining all at the same time. I thought that was normal. At the beginning of 2009, I told the Lord that I wouldn’t acquire any more debt, as I just couldn’t handle this lifestyle anymore. One particular day, Pastor Paddy came into the office with a CD from T.D. Jakes

Ministries on the Power of Praise. He handed it to me and said, “*I think you need to listen to this message.*” I didn’t realize it at the time, but this message would end up transforming my life. It felt like a direct revelation from heaven—I listened to it over and over again. The message was based on Hebrews 13:15. The Holy Spirit gave me insight even beyond what T.D. was sharing in the message; it was a direct download from heaven for me. In a moment, I identified the problem in my life. I had a dynamic prayer life. I was a worshipper. I was a praiser, but I was also a complainer, big time. In a moment, the Holy Spirit showed me that my complaining had blocked my prayers from being answered.

I started shouting with joy because I was so happy that I finally received insight into what was off in my spiritual life. Over the course of sixteen years now, this revelation has sustained me. I repented before the Lord as I realized that the devil had access to my life because of my complaining. I decided to print a piece of paper that said, “*It’s forbidden to complain in this place,*” and I hung it up in my prayer room/bedroom. It was a direct message to the devil. I knew that praise and worship attract the presence of God, while complaining attracts the enemy. Psalms 22:3 declares, “*But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.*” I was convinced that my praise was His throne and I would keep myself as close as possible to His throne. I stopped complaining about my financial lack, hunger, overdue rent and other challenges.

The verse in Hebrews 13:15 says that we need to continually offer praise to God. I understood this was not a one-time activity, but it had to become my ongoing, regular lifestyle. I also understood that offering God praise is described as a sacrifice. This means it’s not easy, and it doesn’t always feel good to do it; rather, it is a

deliberate choice that costs you and me something. And it must be found on our lips! God doesn't want our money or some other sacrifice; He wants our praise even in the most difficult situations and challenges. I made it my regular practice to praise God as diligently as possible. Sometimes, I'd spend hours in praise just thanking God for His nature and character.

I shared my insight with Stephen Kuert, the missionary who lived near my office. On Saturdays, we would spend extended time praising God for His goodness and faithfulness. Throughout the week, I'd praise God for even the smallest details in my life! Sometimes, the enemy would whisper to me, "*Chris, you're praising God a lot these days, but you're starving, and you're going to die of hunger.*" He knew that my financial situation was unchanged, but I would respond immediately, "*Even if I die, I won't stop praising God because I know I'm going to heaven regardless of my external situation.*"

My heart posture had changed. Saturdays had become special days for me. If I didn't go to Steve Kuert's house, I'd lock myself in my room and spend six to seven hours praising God for His faithfulness and kindness towards me. I wouldn't ask God for anything during this time; it was a day reserved for giving myself to God in praise as Hebrews 13:15 describes. I'd recount even the smallest details of God's provision in my life, thanking Him for all that He had done for me. I understood that praise was my weapon. The Lord led me to II Chronicles 20 where King Jehoshaphat fought three different enemies simultaneously. Before engaging them in battle, He decided to put the praisers on the front lines to bless the name of the Lord. Verse 22 struck me, "*Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and*

they were defeated.” No battle ever took place as God showed up and defeated all the enemies in response to praise! Praising God produces victory.

Praise is more than singing or making melodies to God; it’s spiritual warfare, fighting for God to establish His purposes for your life. Praising God is confessing the character and nature of God through the work of Jesus in our hearts. As I made praise my first priority each morning, I received a vision one day—I saw a demon running with fear. I opened my eyes and said, “*Lord, why is He running?*” The Lord answered immediately, “*He is afraid of my presence.*” I understood that praise attracts God’s presence. If you want more of God’s presence in your life, spend more time in praise and worship.

Today, when I pray, at least 80% of my time is spent in praise and worship. Prior to this revelation, I used to spend the majority of my time talking about my problems thinking that God would have mercy on me. What I have learned is that God is moved by praise, not by complaining, or even tears. The more I praised God, the more I sensed that my breakthrough was coming even though nothing had changed externally. Some people think that when they praise God things must change immediately, but that’s not the reality. Months went by without any tangible evidence of a breakthrough, but I knew that it would materialize at any moment. Hebrews 4:16 states, “*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*” The more I came with confidence to praise God and practice His presence, the more I became convinced that I would receive what I needed. To this day Hebrews 4:16 and Hebrews 13:15 continue to drive my prayer life.

The problems you're facing as you read this may seem insurmountable in the natural, but I am sure that if you stop complaining about your troubles and challenges and start praising the Lord, the breakthrough will eventually come. Philippians 4:6 says, "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*" Don't tell God how terrible your situation has become, He already knows. Focus your time and effort on giving Him thanks. It will take time for the breakthrough to become evident, but God will work things out as you stay near Him.

I kept writing my daily teaching faithfully, while practicing praise for hours every morning before coming to work. My ministry exposure via emails and on outofthewar.org kept expanding as more people discovered my teachings. Many of the insights on praise I shared in detail during this time. If you're interested in reading my teachings from those early years, you can find everything archived on www.chrisndikumana.org. Most of them are in French, but there are many in English as well at the bottom of the page.

I regularly studied Hebrews 13:15, anticipating a breakthrough at any moment. As I read the verse again, my eyes landed on the following verse, which says, "*But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*" It hit me hard. Usually, I put the full stop at the end of verse fifteen, but verse sixteen continues with the same thought. It shows that God is pleased with two things: praising in verse fifteen and giving in verse sixteen. I had no problem with giving as I was regularly helping the widows and orphans. Whatever God put in my hands, I would be deliberate to share it with others even if I didn't have enough for my own needs. I'm saying this because praise isn't enough for a

breakthrough; we must also become generous people. I knew that I had to place an emphasis on both generosity and praise in my teachings.

If you need a breakthrough of any kind, giving is essential. Remember what Jesus says in Luke 21:3-4, *“This poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she, out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.”* As I have mentioned previously, being generous is not about having a lot of money; it’s about a heart posture. I ensured that complaining had been eliminated in my life, while cultivating praise and generosity. I’m convinced that if you implement the same three principles in your life, you will experience victory. I don’t know when, but I know God will do something for you. This is the reason I called this chapter *‘the first major breakthrough.’* These three principles have transformed my life.

In the middle of May 2009, I spent seven hours praising God on a particular Saturday. After I finished blessing the Lord, I lay down on my little mattress. Suddenly, I felt a huge wind blow through the room, and the windows shook. At the same time, I saw a vision of a white man entering my room with a briefcase. I opened my eyes thinking that it was literally happening, but I discovered nothing different about the room. *“What is going on?”* I asked inquisitively. I heard a voice in my spirit answer, *“I’m sending a powerful angel to take you out of your mess.”* Five months had passed since I first started praising and eliminating complaining. I knew this was the breakthrough I had been anticipating. Why five months? I don’t know. What I do know is that God tests our hearts to prove our motivations. Your breakthrough might take

longer or it might be shorter, the important thing is to pursue Jesus's presence and cultivate a heart of gratitude.

Since the beginning of the year, I had been asking the Lord to bring a wife into my life. Despite my financial challenges, I believed that the Lord would give me a godly, generous woman. These were my only two requirements because I knew that my ministry would be based on helping the poor and teaching God's Word. Some people get wrapped up in physical appearance and external realities, but to me these things were secondary. By faith, a few days after the vision, I told Pastor Paddy that I'd be getting married the following year. It's the only time in my life that I've seen him dance with joy—he's usually very even-keeled. He shouted with joy, "*Oh, Praise the Lord, my brother! What wonderful news!*" The next day he said, "*Chris, make sure you let me know how I can help you prepare for your upcoming wedding.*" I responded quietly, "*Pastor... I haven't seen the girl yet.*" His face showed his disappointment, "*Oh really? Were you speaking by faith? There's no girl?*" I responded, "*The just will live by faith.*" I also called two other friends and my pastor to inform them; I was stepping out in faith.

About a week after the vision, I received an email—it was May 29th, 2009. It was from a Burundian girl in Canada. She lived in Toronto and somehow stumbled onto outofthewar.com. The daily teachings had challenged her. I had no idea at the time that this girl would become my wife. Her email said, "*Thank you for the Word of God. May God use you more for His glory! Blessings, Nadia.*" My response to her message was robotic as I had a prepackaged response to anyone who contacted me. I didn't even have to type a response; it was a simple copy and paste. At that time, I didn't

realize the Lord had already answered my prayers, as life continued on as usual.

Two weeks later on June 13th at 10:18 am, I received a remarkable email from my missionary friend, Stephen Kuert. He had moved from Burundi to Tanzania. The email said, “*My friend, Andy Kennedy, just wrote to me and he wants to connect with you. He was a pastor for many years and worked as a businessman for the last 7 years. He is a man of prayer who hears the voice of God. He just came to Burundi for ministry and needs someone to translate for him and guide him.*” I had seen Andy one other time the year before when he was with Stephen in Burundi, but I didn’t have any personal connection with him.

When the Lord first spoke to Andy about Burundi, he and his wife, Amy, consulted a map because they thought that it was somewhere in Asia. He had resigned his business position in order to move to Burundi for three months without even knowing why he was coming to the country. The Kennedys also operated a ministry called *For His Glory International* on the side. Andy had asked the Lord, “*Why am I going to Burundi?*” And the Lord responded, “*When you get there I will show you.*” Steve gave me Andy’s cell number and told me to go visit him because he was staying in his old house near my office.

When I called Andy, I had no idea that this was the man that the Lord had shown me with a briefcase in the vision just a few weeks earlier. In our first appointment, Andy asked to visit my office. Upon entering the prayer room, he noticed some personal effects on the ground. Andy asked, “*Do you also live in the prayer room?*” I was so embarrassed as I responded sheepishly, “*Yes, I do.*” Andy persisted, “*Where do you sleep?*” Every morning, I rolled up

my mattress and put it in the cupboard against the wall. When I opened the cupboard and showed him the tiny piece of foam that I slept on, tears formed in his eyes. As he started to leave, he turned to me, held my hand, and said, “*Chris, in my spirit I feel that we are going to work together. I’m going to help you.*”

I will never forget that day. Andy is very sensitive to the voice of the Spirit and within a few days of arriving in Burundi, he had already discovered the reason he was sent there. For three months, I spent every single day with Andy: translating for him, introducing him to people, traveling upcountry, visiting small groups, and answering his many questions. I shared my full story with him including the pain and heartache that I had endured. He was so kind to listen to me and help me with my financial challenges.

On June 24th, 2009 at 4:20 pm, I received a second email from Nadia. She had taken a few days off from work and wanted to catch up on some of my teachings. Normally, she used her work computer to access the teachings, but once she was back in the office, her computer started having some technical issues. She decided to write to me about the issue. We exchanged several emails when I felt the Lord speak to my heart, “*What if she is the one you’ve been praying for?*” The next day I saw that she was on Yahoo Messenger so I texted her, and over the next few days, we spent several hours sharing our testimonies, goals, and life stories. God used a technical issue to connect us. Amazingly, God had answered two major prayer requests at the same time.

Over the course of the next month, God spoke to both Nadia and me about our future. On July 22, God clearly impressed upon me that Nadia would be my wife. In most Western countries, people get down on one knee and pop the big question. In Burundi, this

isn't normal. Instead, I sent her an email expressing my affection and intention to marry her. She had already sensed the same thing, even though we still hadn't met in person. We had a long-distance relationship for a year and two months and our main challenge was breaking the big news to her family, as cultural traditions can be strong. Nadia wanted to know where we would live. In my heart, I knew that it would be Burundi, but I didn't want to discourage her or her family so I replied, "*Let's pray about it.*" We prayed and fasted a full day about this matter. I asked the Lord to speak to her heart so I wouldn't have to force anything. The next morning, she called me with meekness in her voice, "*Chris, whatever God wants, I'll do it.*" I knew the Lord had partly answered our prayer, now we had to convince her family.

Before Andy returned to the United States in September, he asked me to write down an estimate of all of my expenses. I included everything I'd need to run the ministry, along with all of my personal needs. A week after returning, he sent an email stating, "*Chris, great news! Our board has agreed to cover all of your expenses on a monthly basis. And we will pay off your current debt with the bank.*" I shouted with intense excitement—God was fulfilling the vision He gave me. All of my needs were met every month, and the issues with the bank were finally resolved. For the first time in my life, I didn't have to worry about how to make ends meet week-by-week and sometimes day-by-day. I am so grateful to Andy and Amy Kennedy for their willingness to believe in me. On November 30th, 2009 my father passed away—it was a really sad moment in my life, but I thank God that He sent Andy and Amy to become my parents.

Chapter 12: **My Marriage**

“He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.” –Proverbs 18:22

In the previous chapter, I discussed how Nadia and I dated online for twelve months before we actually meet. I discovered early in our online relationship that she had been a frequent customer at *BlueNet*, my cybercafé, before immigrating to Canada. However, I was always so busy in my office that I never actually met her, even though she frequented my cybercafé several times a week. Several of my employees had even put her on the loyal customer list. I look back in amazement that my future wife was less than thirty feet from me several times a week as I prepared my teaching in the back office. Literally, a single wall kept us from actually ever meeting. I marvel that as my future wife surfed the web, I was in the back office frustrated with financial pressures. It's funny to me now because it illustrates how methodically God lines out His purposes for our life even when we can't see them at the moment.

It reminds me of Jeremiah 1:5, *“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I sanctified you; I ordained you a*

prophet to the nations.” God knew Jeremiah’s calling and life even before he was born. Again God tells Jeremiah, “*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope*” (Jer. 29:11). This promise tells me that God knows us even during our point of greatest need. You might feel abandoned or isolated, but God is thinking about you, even in this moment! And His thoughts towards you are good, pleasant and full of promise. He has a magnificent plan for your life!

Our online dating relationship continued to deepen, even though the technology at the time made it more challenging. I love to tease young people, saying that *WhatsApp* has made dating so much easier! We used *Yahoo Messenger* or made an actual phone call. Because she had a steady job, Nadia would buy a prepaid telephone card that allowed us to talk every day. I have made this a principle in premarital counseling—it’s important for a couple to talk everyday. And it’s imperative that you just be yourself every time you interact. Many times people present a false image of who they are because they want to impress the other person; this will only cause problems down the road. I’m so grateful that Nadia didn’t put on any pretenses when we talked and neither did I.

When we finally met, it was as if we had known each other for a long time because there was nothing concealed. In my opinion, this is why there are so many divorces among Christians; people present a false image of themselves during the dating phase. Once married, they suddenly change and become a completely different person. The other partner feels trapped, and divorce becomes a tragic option.

When Nadia informed her family that she was returning to Burundi, they were shocked. They had sent her to Canada to study and pursue a better life. In Burundian culture, a young girl is under her family's authority until she marries. Personally, I think this is biblical because in I Corinthians 7:38 Paul seems to be arguing in favor of the father's authority over his daughter's life. This is why my counsel is to heed the father's position when pursuing marriage. I told Nadia, "*I won't marry you unless your family is in agreement.*" Her father had already passed away, but I wanted her mother's blessing on our future marriage. Unfortunately, neither her family nor her friends were in agreement with the idea, so we intensified our prayers.

I discovered that people weren't really against our marriage; they just didn't understand how such an arrangement would make any sense. Let me explain: In 2010, Burundi was paralyzed economically and politically due to an upcoming election. Burundi was not safe at the time, and the poverty was stifling. No one could understand why Nadia would want to move back when she had a college degree, a good job in Canada, and a university scholarship. To make matters worse, her fiancé was a poor man sleeping in his office. As a parent today, I completely understand their concern and anxiety about her marrying me. The rumors about me didn't help. One day, one of her friends called her and said, "*I heard that Chris is HIV positive.*" I was so skinny from not eating that people believed the worst about me.

I decided to go to the hospital in Bujumbura and get a blood test. I scanned the negative test result and emailed it to her so she would know that it was nothing but baseless rumors. Still, her family refused to consider the idea of our marriage, so we

started incorporating fasting into our prayers. One evening, while seeking the Lord, I had a vision in which an angel asked me if I truly believed that Nadia would be willing to give up everything in Canada and move to Burundi. I shuffled my feet while staring at the ground before responding, “Yes, *I believe it.*” The angel answered, “*Look at me in the eyes and say it again.*” I looked into his eyes and said, “*I believe nothing is impossible with God.*” The angel answered me before disappearing, “*That’s all I wanted to hear.*” Once you believe something is possible, the angels will do the work. I believe doubt blocks angelic activity in our lives. Maybe your situation looks impossible today, but God still uses angels to accomplish His purposes for our lives.

It reminds me of the story of Mary and the birth of Christ. Do you remember how Gabriel came to Mary, a young virgin, with the announcement that she would give birth to a son—the Savior of the world? Of course, this was humanly impossible, so Mary responded in astonishment, “*How can this be, since I do not know a man?*” (Luke 1:34). To make it even more convincing, Gabriel announced that her relative, Elizabeth, most likely already well into her menopausal years, would also give birth to a son. This is shocking, but verse thirty-seven tells us that, “*With God nothing will be impossible!*” Please remember that angels are one of God’s primary means of implementing the impossible. Mary finally confessed in verse 38, “*Let it be to me according to your word.*” With that, the angel left to go and make the impossible a reality.

Our faith is the platform that enables angelic activity to succeed. As we prayed and fasted together regularly, I decided to visit Nadia’s mother. She received me at the house with kindness, but she was not convinced. They just couldn’t look past my poverty

and derelict living conditions. During this time, I was honest with Nadia regarding my situation. I tried to be as open as possible with her, sending her pictures of the house where I lived with no furniture. I told her, “*Don’t worry though, God will provide.*” I was so impressed by her response, “*Chris, who said I’m looking for nice furniture? I just want to be in the perfect will of God.*” Nadia showed great strength of character because none of her friends or family were speaking positively about our relationship.

As we kept seeking the Lord, I had a dream one night in which an angel was shouting at me from heaven saying, “*Pray! Pray! Pray!*” In the dream, giant stonewalls were standing in the way of the angel’s mission, but every time he shouted, “*Pray!*” one of the stones in the wall would collapse. It took more than three months of praying and fasting before my future mother-in-law finally gave me her blessing. Once Nadia’s mother agreed to the arrangement, the rest of her family and friends agreed to support our marriage—albeit reluctantly. People kept saying how impressed they were by our commitment toward each other. Through prayer, God had pressured people to accept His will and also opened their eyes to see that He was behind our relationship.

Four months before the wedding, I had another dream in which I heard the voice of the Lord say, “*Chris, I have already paid all the debts for your wedding.*” When I awoke, I was puzzled, asking myself, “*What debts is God talking about?*” The interpretation came almost immediately—God would supply everything we needed for our marriage. I called Nadia to share the dream with her, as she knew that I had no money. We decided to move forward by faith according to II Corinthians 5:7 which states, “*We walk by faith and not by sight.*” We set the date for August 6th, 2010 in faith. Later, we

discovered that this was also Andy and Amy Kennedy's wedding anniversary.

Nadia resigned from her job and returned to Burundi in June 2010. Many people assumed she had covered all the wedding expenses, but that was not the case. She used all of her savings to buy a plane ticket and purchase a few small things for our wedding, including her wedding dress. She carried the dress with her on the plane. Other passengers congratulated her on the upcoming wedding; what they didn't know was that she had still never met her soon-to-be groom. It was a total faith venture.

I remember calling Steve Kuert in Tanzania to tell him that I was going to marry a woman I had never met before. His response touched me, *"I know a couple who met online, and they have now been happily married for ten years, so I think it can work."* He's a practical guy and this really encouraged me because almost everyone else in my life was saying that it would not work. The common assumption was that you have to meet each other in person first, but for us, what really mattered was being in the will of God. She landed on June 20, 2010, but I didn't go to the airport simply because I didn't want to see my future wife for the first time in front of lots of people. I wanted to be discreet because I knew my emotions couldn't handle a big crowd.

She called me that evening to tell me that she had arrived safely. I know it sounds funny because she was less than a couple of miles from my office/house, but I told her that I had a detailed plan for how I wanted to meet my future wife. The next day, June 21st, I got a haircut in the morning before going to town to buy Nadia flowers. My best man loaned me his car, and I went to an upscale restaurant called *Belvédère* to make preparations for

Nadia's arrival. Another friend headed to Nadia's house to pick her up. As Nadia was getting ready that morning, her mother came into the room and said, "*Nadia, are you nervous to see this man for the first time? I mean, what if you are disappointed when you meet him and don't like his appearance? The wedding is only six weeks away and you have staked your whole life on this moment.*" The venue had already been secured and the date had been announced to everyone. Nadia looked at her mother with kindness before answering, "*Mother, I told you, it's not about emotions or looks. It's about being in the perfect will of God.*"

As Nadia arrived at Belvédère around 10 am, God performed a miracle in my opinion—there was not a single other person at the restaurant. That was highly unusual as it's normally jammed with business people. I looked at the waiter and asked him, "*Where is everyone today? What is going on?*" His inquisitive look told me that he had no idea either. I asked him to meet Nadia at the reception and escort her downstairs to where I was seated once she arrived. As she approached, I could hear the sound of her high heels coming down the stairs. My heart was pounding intensely as I was just a few moments away from meeting the woman of my dreams!

She came around the corner and my heart almost exploded in my chest. I stood up and walked towards her as she ran towards me to give me a big hug. As we embraced, the waiter just stood there gawking with a goofy grin on his face until I motioned with my hand for him to disappear. It was an emotional moment, we both finally managed to mutter almost simultaneously, "*It's like I've known you for years.*" Once emotions stilled, we shared a meal and then headed into town to walk around Bujumbura.

As the wedding approached, God honored His promise of provision to us. I shared in passing through my daily teaching that I was going to get married. The response was overwhelming. People responded generously, sending financial gifts from all over the world. Andy was scheduled to come for the wedding, but he had to cancel due to work issues. He called to say that he would send the cost of the ticket to help me pay the dowry. In addition, he promised to start paying the rent for our new house. We literally lacked nothing, including the funds needed for a honeymoon. Amazingly, Andy's organization, *For His Glory International*, supported us this way for nine years without ever missing a month.

God kept blessing us with great surprises. Two weeks after our wedding, someone offered Nadia a job as the new director of a school. This helped our financial situation greatly. Two weeks after this, Nadia got pregnant with our first child and two months later someone blessed us with an old car—it was nothing fancy, but it certainly helped us to get around. In early 2011, *Radio Ivyizigiro* invited me to start doing a national teaching broadcast every week. I called it *Ishimwe*, which means thanksgiving or praise, because I knew this was the secret behind God's blessing over our lives. The broadcast still goes out all over Burundi today. Then, on June 3rd, 2011 we were blessed with a beautiful baby girl named, Shima. Her name also means “give thanks or praise”, because our lives have been marked by praise ever since God gave me the revelation through T.D. Jakes's message.

Chapter 13: **The Second Major Breakthrough**

“And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.” –Exodus 14:13

As I described earlier in the book, the first major breakthrough in my life occurred when God brought both Andy and Nadia into my life almost simultaneously. The second major breakthrough involved international ministry and travel. From 2003 until 2013, I didn't leave Burundi. I had visited Dubai a few times for business purposes in the early days of returning to start my computer business, but that door closed firmly, so much so that I let my passport expire. This ensured that I did not travel anywhere; it was a closed door for me.

At the beginning of 2012, I sensed a heavy burden to pray and fast. The Lord led me to implement a fast until sunset every day. Most people start a fast with a particular timeframe in mind, such as seven days or twenty-one days, but I felt impressed to fast until the Lord instructed me to break it. I remember reaching the forty-day mark and experiencing a dizzy spell. Nadia was concerned and

asked, “How long are you going to keep doing this?” I responded, “I don’t know yet, but I’m continuing until the Lord gives me a breakthrough.” I’m not going to mention the exact nature of the prayer request, except to say that I sensed that something needed to break spiritually in my ministry. Around the six-month mark of my fast, I had lost so much weight that I was actually skinnier than when I first moved back to Bujumbura. My pants fell off me. Nadia became more and more concerned, but she respected my decision to keep going.

I didn’t know what was happening, but God was using my prayer and fasting in order to accomplish His purposes. I didn’t know it at the time, but He was orchestrating events so that I could travel outside of Burundi again. When you pray and fast, you are giving God space in your life to bring about a supernatural breakthrough. If you feel led to fast, please don’t miss that opportunity. God can use these moments to bring about things you are seeking as well as to accomplish things you don’t even know about. Sometimes, God even uses your prayers in an intercessory capacity to bring about a breakthrough for someone else. Romans 8:26 is clear: “*Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered.*” The Spirit will lead you during your prayer and fasting, just be obedient to pray.

Around the eight-month mark, I had a dream in which someone handed me a piece of paper that said, “*Nine months.*” I knew I had to fast one more month. The similarity between my fasting and the growth of a baby is interesting. I never planned to go nine months when I started, but I completed my fast in December 2012—exactly nine months later. When I finished, I expected something would

happen because I knew things had shifted in the spiritual realm. When you pray and fast, you should expect something to happen, even if it doesn't occur exactly as you anticipated. After my fast, I took my family to Kabale, Uganda, for a short vacation. On New Year's Eve, an intercessor named Beatrice from Holland sent me a note to wish me a happy new year. She then added something strange in her message, "*May the Lord bless all the trips you are going to take this next year.*" All the trips? What did this mean?

As I was asking myself the question, I felt the Holy Spirit speaking to me, "*Chris, you are going to travel to many countries this year, and the first one will be America.*" I started to chuckle, "*America? You can't be serious?*" I couldn't believe what I was hearing and, like Moses in Exodus chapter 3, I made excuses: "*Lord I don't have money for a ticket. Beyond that, I don't even have a passport, let alone a visa or an invitation.*" The Lord stopped me in my tracks and asked, "*What do you have?*" This question was very similar to the one He asked Moses. I thought about it and said, "*Well, I have a little money to pursue a passport.*" Immediately, the Lord answered, "*Do what you can. Go get your passport.*" As I continued to pray about the matter, the Lord revealed further details, "*I have appointed another American man, not Andy, to help you take the next step in ministry.*"

We returned to Burundi and within three days I had my passport. In those days, it was pretty easy. I made an appointment to apply for a visa at the US Embassy in Bujumbura. During my free time, I used to volunteer as a translator for American missionaries and missions teams in Burundi. I freely offered my time and translation abilities without expecting any form of compensation. I served one particular missionary, Jim Thacker, in this way for four years. From 2003-2007, we traveled together all over Burundi,

which helped me build a good reputation. Jim recommended me to Steve Kuert, who ultimately connected me to Andy Kennedy. I learned a valuable lesson about the importance of serving God's people freely without expecting financial remuneration: God will eventually bless you for blessing His people.

Generosity towards God's people opens doors for you. Rebekah became Isaac's wife because of her generosity (Gen. 24). Abraham's servant asked the Lord to confirm a wife for Isaac based on one characteristic—the girl who would freely offer him and his camels a drink. Generosity opens doors and connects Kingdom-minded people. I tell young people that you can't be stingy and selfish and expect the Lord to open doors for you. I have learned that God sends angels to open doors for generous people. From 2007 to 2009, I worked with many American teams without asking for any compensation.

Andy sent me an invitation letter so I could apply for a visa at the embassy. The day before my appointment with the immigration office, I met a man who had traveled to the United States regularly. He asked me a strange question, "*Do you have any previous visas in your passport?*" I said, "*No, it's a brand new passport.*" He chuckled before responding, "*Good luck to you.*" I knew it was a slim chance to get an American visa in those days, especially without any other Western visas in my passport, but I also knew what God had spoken to me.

In fact, around that same time, I had a dream in which I saw myself standing in line to meet with the embassy officer. The agent was denying everyone ahead of me, but when it was my turn, the officer approved my application. On the day of the appointment, I was certain that I'd receive the visa. It turned out exactly as I had

seen in my dream—refusal, rejection, and denial for all the other applicants. When it was my turn, the officer asked me the big question, “*What is your profession?*” I answered, “*I’m a preacher and teacher of God’s Word.*” She continued, “*Do you know any Americans?*” I answered by describing how *For His Glory International* supported me. Her final question was simple, “*Do you have any children here in Burundi?*” My answer was straightforward, “*Yes, I do have a little girl.*” She approved my application and told me to come back the next day to receive a one-year multi-entry visa. I was expecting an intense interview and many complicated steps. Upon leaving the embassy, I was unsure where I’d find the money for the ticket. In fact, my face was so perplexed about this issue that many other applicants waiting in the reception area assumed I had been denied.

After I picked up my visa the next day, I drove to a nearby carwash, still contemplating how I would find the money for a ticket. I saw a friend of mine and showed him my visa. He was ecstatic and exclaimed, “*Congratulations! When are you traveling?*” I didn’t have \$1200 for a ticket, so I told him. My friend could see my concern and answered me, “*I know you’re a man of faith and I know your story. If God has led you this far, he will provide the money for the ticket.*” His words encouraged me greatly. He continued, “*I’ll give you half of the money now, under one condition: when God provides the full amount for the ticket, you reimburse me.*” I agreed without hesitation.

Later that night, I met another friend at the carwash and shared the news about the visa and everything that had happened. He didn’t hesitate, “*I’m going to help you with the other half of the ticket, but when you get the money, please reimburse me as well.*” In less than twelve hours, I had the full amount to purchase the ticket.

One of my father's friends lived in New York and he was willing to let me stay with him. I flew to JFK and spent two days with him, not knowing what the next step would be. All I knew was that God had said, *"I have appointed an American man to help you"*. Finally, an email came from Matt Pridgen, one of the missionaries I had served back in Burundi. He lived in Charleston, South Carolina. The email said, *"I heard you're in the US and we would love to see you. Please come visit us. We will pay for your ticket and set up a get-together with other people in the area who have visited Burundi."*

That same night, after the ticket was purchased, I received another email from a different Western missionary who still lived in Burundi. Somehow, he had found out that I was headed to Charleston, as word had spread through people on the ground about my visit. Essentially, he didn't want me to visit Charleston—especially the churches that supported his ministry. The email hit me hard, as I didn't want to create any conflict. I went to prayer and the Lord reassured me, *"I am sending you to Charleston because the man you're looking for is there."* I responded to the email by offering my assurances that I wouldn't visit the churches in question and would not become an obstacle to this person's ministry, but I had to obey the Lord.

This missionary wasn't pleased, but there was no way he could stop me. I spent four wonderful days in Charleston as the missionaries there showed me great hospitality. I was supposed to leave Thursday, February 14 2013 at 5 pm. I still hadn't met anyone who fit the criteria God had given me, which created confusion in me. Had I really heard God's voice? I felt the Holy Spirit respond, *"Just trust me."* The friend who bought my ticket asked me to attend the men's group that met at 6 am on the morning of my

departure. We had a good time talking and sharing God's word together, however, one of the regulars—the man I was supposed to meet, Mel Miles—didn't attend that morning.

The leader of the men's group mentioned Mel Miles' name in passing, which sparked conversation among the other men. Clearly, people appreciated this brother. As his name was mentioned, I felt the Spirit nudge me, "*He's your guy!*" I whispered to Matt, my host, and said, "*Do you know this guy they are talking about?*" He responded, "*Yes, of course I do.*" I continued under my breath, "*Please, can we meet him after the men's group?*" After the meeting, Matt called Mel's phone, but it was turned off. He left a message saying that a Burundian brother named Chris wanted to meet him before he left Charleston later that day. I had to leave for the airport at 4 pm. Around 2 pm, I asked Matt if he had heard anything back from Mel. "*Sorry Chris, I haven't heard anything.*" I followed up with urgency in my voice, as I knew time was short, "*Can you try to call him again?*" My host cleared his throat before answering, "*Chris, that's not how we do things here in the United States. If someone doesn't respond, you don't force communication.*"

I started praying, "*Lord, I guess I didn't hear you right. I thought you brought me here to meet the man you told me about in the vision.*" I was getting ready to head to the airport when Mel called at 2:45 pm, asking to meet me. Ten minutes later, he showed up at the house where I was staying. Mel started talking, "*I hear that you felt that God wanted you to talk to me?*" Matt had filled him in on what I had sensed in the men's meeting. In five minutes, I shared a full summary of my ministry and a couple of brief highlights from my story. We exchanged contact information before he shook my hand the same way that Andy did, and then added, "*Chris, I'm convinced*

that I'm going to work with you! For the last three to four weeks, the Holy Spirit has been telling me that I'm going to help someone from far away and I'm sure it's you." Mel was a very successful businessman, and he asked me to send him an email with more details about my ministry as I headed to the airport.

Returning to New York, the first thing I did was to send Mel an email with more information. He responded almost immediately asking what I needed before I left America. I shared what *For His Glory International* was doing to help me, but because of the ongoing electricity issues in Burundi, I needed a converter, a generator, and the money to repay my two friends who had helped with my ticket. He readily agreed and said that he would also support me monthly. Amazingly, the money to repay my friends made it to my Burundian bank account before my return. I returned to Burundi and repaid my friends with joy. Later that year, in the month of July, Mel helped me come back to the USA for another ministry visit. I also visited South Africa, Belgium, Sweden, the Netherlands, and France that same year, exactly as the intercessor from the Netherlands had told me.

A secular newspaper based in Belgium called *Bujumbura News*, which was followed by many Burundians, liked my teachings and started posting them on the front page of their publication. This boosted my reach significantly. From that point, God opened many doors for me to travel internationally, as Andy Kennedy and Mel Miles continued to stand with me. It was a season of amazing breakthroughs propelling *Ed* to the international scene. I learned that when God opens a door, the door stays open and no one can shut it! Praying and fasting had opened a door spiritually, and there was no longer any hindrances in the natural.

Chapter 14: The Birth of Kanguka

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” –Habakkuk 2:3

I marvel at how God has connected me with American missionaries over the years. This included people like Jim Thacker, Stephen Kuert, and Andy Kennedy. In May 2014, God brought another American couple, Ron and Terri Neal, into my life. Ron was a pastor in Indianapolis, Indiana, who operated a ministry among deaf people in Burundi. I helped them regularly, and they invited me to preach there a couple of times a year. This opened up the door to more relationships with ministry partners, as people resonated with the vision of helping the poor and the widows. Additionally, many of them kept encouraging me to trust God for a greater ministry reach.

In 1997, while in Lubumbashi, the Lord often gave me dreams about future international ministry involving airports, layovers, and travel. However, nothing materialized until 2013 and 2014—almost 16 years later. Visiting the countries I described in the last chapter was an amazing fulfillment of the vision God had given

me, and yet, in my heart, I kept asking the Lord if this was the full extent of the ministry. I strongly sensed that I was supposed to communicate the truths of God's word to the whole world, not just through specific ministry invitations. In 1996, while in Johannesburg the Lord showed me that my ministry would impact people from all backgrounds—Muslims, Catholics, different Christian denominations, agnostics, and secularists, all over the globe. The ministry would break down dividing walls and be easily accessible to everyone. This is why I had placed a lot of emphasis on the radio ministry through *Ishimwe*, but I still couldn't see the global teaching aspect becoming a reality.

When I went to the Netherlands and Belgium, I tried to get connected with Burundian congregations in those countries. A couple of them invited me to speak, but most did not know me and refused to open a door for me. It's interesting that the anointing on my life was the same then as it is now, but it simply wasn't God's timing yet. If people don't open a door for you, don't get frustrated even if you think you are ready and have what it takes. It just means that it's not the right time. Remember that David didn't invite himself to fight Goliath (I Sam. 17). Rather, God orchestrated the circumstances of that battle. Similarly, when Samuel came to anoint the future king of Israel, David wasn't even considered a candidate, and after he was anointed, he still had to go take care of the sheep (I Sam. 16). God's timing for David hadn't yet arrived. People often think they are ready in their own eyes, but in God's eyes, they're not. God was still preparing me by expanding my teaching ministry through platforms like *Bujumbura News*, as I mentioned.

In 2014, I secured my own website *chrisndikumana.org*. I uploaded my teachings there in both French and Kirundi, as my reading audience grew. Thanks to the added support from new friends in Indianapolis, like the Neals, I was able to employ two full-time assistants to help me manage the workload. This allowed me to focus on teaching the word and prayer as my primary calling (Acts 6). I continued traveling globally and sharing God's Word at various conferences and churches while still uploading daily teachings to the various platforms. Then, on April 16th, 2015, God blessed us with a son named Joshua Senga.

Ten days after my son's birth, a tragic event unfolded in Burundi that would significantly contribute to the birth of *Kanguka*. On April 26th, the president of Burundi decided to stand for a third term. The opposition mobilized demonstrations across the country, resulting in numerous deaths. It was a dark time in Burundi as many decided to flee the country. In May, a thwarted coup attempt made the situation even more difficult. From our home in *Kinanira III*, we could hear the gunfire throughout the night in surrounding neighborhoods. Nadia, my wife, struggled to breastfeed Joshua due to the added stress and anxiety, meaning my son was malnourished. The situation became so unbearable that I decided to move my family to Kampala, Uganda, in early November. I would go back to Burundi for a month at a time, then return to Uganda for two weeks. I did this in order to encourage christians on the ground, as the situation in Burundi was terrible.

We added *WhatsApp* as a distribution platform for the daily teaching. In 2015, *WhatsApp* groups were restricted to one hundred members. I created three groups, meaning that every day we would send the teaching out via *Facebook*, my website, email, and

WhatsApp. During this time, most *WhatsApp* feeds about Burundi were reporting how bad the situation was in the country—chaos, confusion, arrests, and killings. Something inside of me kept telling me that this was the moment for the ministry to be fully released. I still didn't know how this would happen, but I knew we were on the verge of something massive.

It was like a woman about to give birth to a child who is past due. In fact, the political instability, the suffering, and the separation from my family were like birth contractions. I could feel the pain of my family and my nation. I would get up early and walk to our nearby office and spend hours with the Lord in the quiet before my two assistants arrived. If my family had been in Burundi during that time, I'm not sure I would have heard God's voice so clearly about *Kanguka*, given the pressure of making sure they were stable under these difficult conditions. Being by myself created a yearning inside of me to catch His whisper and hear what He was saying during that turbulent season. Many people living in Africa remember the days of trying to fine-tune their radio frequency to catch the news stations like BBC or RFI—a slight turn of the dial and you could miss the shortwave frequency (SW) entirely. This is what was happening in my heart—I would listen so intently for the slightest whisper from heaven.

I knew something major was on the horizon and I didn't want to miss what God was about to do. Isaiah 30:15b says, "*In returning you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength. But you would not.*" The parallel between quietness and confidence gripped my heart: I needed that strength and didn't want to miss out! On November 16th, 2015, as I leaned into the stillness of God's presence early in the morning, *Kanguka* was birthed. Let me explain

further: I could feel the heaviness of Burundi—the loss of dreams, the death of loved ones, people displaced from our country, and the overwhelming heartache and sorrow. Suddenly, God’s voice resounded, *“You need to encourage your people.”* I thought about it and responded, *“Yes, of course. I encourage them every day as I write my teachings.”* God’s voice immediately responded, *“No, many of them don’t like to read or can’t read. From now on, you’re going to speak with your voice to encourage them.”* Just two days earlier, a friend had sent me a *WhatsApp* audio of his preaching. It was the first time I realized that preaching was possible via *WhatsApp*. The Holy Spirit reminded me of this and continued, *“Just send a short word of encouragement as an audio. People are so desperate.”*

I took my phone and asked the Holy Spirit what He wanted me to share. He led me to Psalms 139:15-16, which says, *“My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed; and in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.”* I recorded a seven-minute audio about God’s tender care and providence for each person’s life, based on these two verses. Then, I shared the audio via the three *WhatsApp* groups I had created. Since all the people in these groups were Burundians, I recorded the audio in Kirundi. I went about my routine for the rest of the day, not giving any more thought to the audio.

The next morning, I woke up to a miracle. It reminded me of when God brought *manna* to the Israelites (Exod. 16:15), and they all said, *“What is this?”* In amazement, I opened *WhatsApp* and found thousands of messages waiting in my inbox. The three hundred people on my main distribution list had forwarded the audio to all

of their friends, who similarly forwarded it to their own friends. Messages were pouring in from Burundi, across East Africa, Europe, Asia, America and everywhere the global Burundian diaspora had settled. Even non-Christians somehow appreciated the message. I still have the audio as a memory. Amazingly, I made a mistake in the recording that morning and the audio quality was terrible. If you listened to it now, you'd concur with me that there was nothing special about it. Yet, God took it and somehow caused it to ignite people's hearts. It's like when David killed a massive giant named Goliath with just a small stone—how can that happen? God knows how to take the smallest thing, at the right time, and do the impossible.

The messages kept pouring in for days. People were deeply moved by the audio and began sharing the pain and heartache they were experiencing on the platform. Many wanted additional teaching and insights to encourage them in their pain. Almost everyone was saying the same thing, "*We want more!*" Honestly, I was afraid at first when I started listening to all these messages. How could this happen in such a short period of time? What was going on? Suddenly, the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart, "*Chris, this is it. This is what I've been preparing you for since 1996.*" Kanguka had just been launched.

I immediately went into a quiet room and recorded a second message also about seven minutes in length. This time, the quality was really good. The main challenge was that *WhatsApp* only allowed one hundred members per group at that time. Today, I believe it's around one thousand twenty-five contacts per group. My existing three groups were already full and several thousand additional people were asking to be added. With the help of my

two assistants, we started creating new groups, but it was hard to keep up. As soon as we'd get a group set up, we'd find hundreds of new messages had arrived asking to also be added to a group. It was so exhausting that I called two of my friends and asked them to help me. We secured additional phones in order to expedite the data entry process as I sent out the second audio. The response was again overwhelming.

We started responding to people who wanted prayer, or were ready to give their lives to Christ, or desired follow-up with additional teachings. Sometimes, I wouldn't sleep as I stayed up all night responding to people online. Today, you can disable responses from members on a *WhatsApp* group, but back then everyone could comment and respond. This frustrated some people, as they only wanted to hear from me—not from random other people. Honestly, these groups became total chaos. It felt like an online revival was taking place—one that was impossible to manage. About a week later, the Lord instructed me clearly, “*You need to call this daily audio project Kanguka.*” In Kirundi, this means, “*wake up.*” Many Rwandans also started joining the groups, as the two languages are similar. After a month or so, the Lord gave us insight on how to bring the situation under control by hiring more people, mobilizing volunteers, and implementing better management tools.

The time constraints and pressure of the newly formed *Kanguka* forced me to stop doing my daily writing. This was really hard for me as I loved writing so much, but the Holy Spirit said, “*Forget about writing for now, it's time to speak my word.*” Many people were coming to Christ through the audios. I loved taking calls from those ready to receive Jesus and praying with them so they

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could enter the Kingdom of God! It encouraged me so much to see the result of my teaching ministry in real-time. The fire of revival was burning strong among the Burundian community, and I could sense that this was going to be even bigger than I had originally imagined it to be.

Chapter 15: The Healing Ministry

*“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead,
cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”*

– Matthew 10:8

By the time 2016 rolled around, the pressure of keeping up with the ministry had reached a breaking point. Our listening audience increased significantly and we couldn't keep up with the number of people responding on the various groups. I added more volunteers to help the ministry manage the pressure, but it just didn't seem to be enough. To further complicate matters, Burundi's network was weak and sometimes the teaching audios wouldn't send. It was a joy to see so many people being touched by the ministry and coming to Christ, but it was also exhausting in every way—physically, spiritually, and emotionally as so many people were dealing with major issues. I also missed my family as they were still in Uganda, but I took advantage of being alone to spend extended time with the Lord.

One day, He led me to Matthew 9:37-38, which says, *“The harvest truly is plentiful but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”* I recognized that

the harvest through *Kanguka* was great, but I also urgently needed more help. I felt challenged to hire more people for the ministry, but I didn't have the financial means to expand any further. Our financial support from *For His Glory International*, Mel Miles and other friends in the United States was consistent, but it wasn't enough to add more employees.

When I traveled internationally, I carried the main phone we used for transmitting the audios. Before each trip, I'd apologize in advance for the interruption while I was in the air, and ask people to pray for my journey. Sometimes, while traveling to Europe or America, I'd go two days without communication, depending on the length of the trip. Even when I traveled to see my family in Kampala, I'd miss a day and once I reunited with my family, I still had to spend time recording new teachings and responding to people. It really wasn't easy and I thank God that today, we are blessed with the *Kanguka* app which allows us to schedule the release of the daily audio teachings—so no one even knows when I'm traveling.

The burden for stability and structure within our ministry kept intensifying. Remember, *WhatsApp* didn't have group admin features back then like it does today. People often responded to my teachings with all kind of inappropriate messages, confusing our *WhatsApp* group with their personal chats. Often drunkards would post outrageous rants on the groups and back then we had no way to delete their messages like we can today. Our faithful followers were gracious, but they didn't appreciate all the absurdities. It reminds me of Jethro counseling Moses on how to delegate and manage the challenges of leading a large group of people

(Exod. 18). I needed great wisdom on how to administer an expanding ministry.

In April of 2016, while visiting my family, I felt the Lord speaking to me about preparing a crusade in Kampala, as many Burundians and Rwandese lived in that city. I had no idea how to organize a large gathering, but a friend of mine connected me to a Burundian pastor in Kampala who served on staff at a Ugandan church. This brother offered their church building as the venue and asked me, *“How many people do you think will come?”* I thought about it and said, *“Two hundred seats will be enough.”* He was taken aback and said, *“We are in Uganda, not Burundi. Are you sure two hundred people will come?”* I was convinced we could do it. He continued, *“I’ve lived here 17 years and getting two hundred people without massive advertising will be a challenge. How will you find that many Burundians?”* I took my phone out of my pocket and showed it to him. He laughed thinking that I was joking, but I could see the country codes, and I had counted over ninety Ugandan numbers among the people who followed me daily.

My idea was to inform those with Ugandan numbers about the meeting and ask them to invite at least one friend. With that approach, I felt pretty confident we’d have two hundred people show up. He just laughed and said, *“So you want to organize a meeting on your phone, without any additional advertisement?”* I simply nodded my head and said, *“Yes, they will come.”* We planned the meeting for Sunday, April 24th, 2016, so that people would be free over the weekend. The day before the meeting the devil started whispering to me, *“This is a terrible idea. No one will come. And besides, April 24th is the day your mother died. You are going to fail miserably.”* Not once during the planning process did I realize it was the anniversary of

my mother's death. My mother's passing was definitely the darkest day of my life.

Yet, the day arrived for the crusade and as I walked into the building my heart leapt with gratitude because every single seat was taken. By the time we filled the overflow section, around three hundred and fifty people had gathered. Many people surrendered their lives to Jesus, but we faced a challenge: most of those present were Kirundi speakers, and we didn't know how to connect them to English-speaking churches in Kampala. So, we decided to launch a special Kirundi service at this brother's local church—a service that has continued for the last nine years. I was so encouraged to see that a crusade can give birth to a new church.

By the time May rolled around, the situation in Burundi had started to stabilize. I was tired of being separated from my family and considered moving them back to Bujumbura. Finally, the Lord spoke to me, making it clear that it was time to return my family to Burundi. We organized their travel and I went to help them move. We were overjoyed to be together again in our home in Bujumbura.

Around that same time, I saw a brother post on Facebook about his recent ministry trip to Brussels, Belgium. He had traveled around the country preaching in different Burundian churches. As I read the post and saw the pictures, I felt the Spirit saying it was time for me to organize another crusade—this time in Belgium and in Sweden. I was startled because I had never thought about organizing a crusade in Europe. My connection in Sweden was through a sister who had been following my teachings on *WhatsApp*; and she had offered to help me organize meetings there. Back then, it was easier for me to have direct access to people via *WhatsApp*

because I didn't have as many contacts. As I write this book, I have almost 24,000 contacts on *WhatsApp*, and communicating with anyone on a personal level is a great challenge because of the volume of messages that I receive daily. We organized the crusade in Brussels for November 12, 2016.

I used the same approach that I had taken in Uganda to invite people to the meeting: I identified those with Belgian phone codes and sent them a group invitation. For Brussels, I suggested that we secure a venue for 700 people. My hosts were shocked that I wanted a place this large based solely on *WhatsApp* phone numbers. "*How can you be sure people you've never met personally will come?*" they asked. I told them not to worry because I knew that I was already connected to these people on a daily basis. Even today, the reaction to my approach is the same. For example, when I held the meetings in Douala and Abidjan recently, my local connections wanted to know how I'd gather hundreds of thousands of people without any public advertising. My response is still the same, "*I'm already connected with these people every day through the teachings. They will come.*"

Evangelists and big-name pastors have to advertise for meetings because they don't actually have a personal connection with the people in the city where they are ministering. By contrast, when I go somewhere for a crusade, I'm going to meet the people that I've already been ministering to every day. This is what people don't understand about my approach: I ask people to confirm in advance that they are coming and I request that they invite at least one friend. I'm grateful that the Brussels meeting gathered more than 700 people from across the region.

Up to this point in my ministry, I had never prayed for sick people simply because my gift is teaching. I focused on sharing God's Word clearly, giving people the opportunity to repent of their sins and receive Christ. Then we would organize follow-up through local churches for ongoing discipleship. The idea of integrating healing into the ministry hadn't occurred to me at all.

As soon as the meeting was over in Brussels, I had to fly to Stockholm, Sweden for the second crusade. This time around, some 350 Rwandese and Burundians were waiting for me because I used to only preach in Kirundi. When I arrived in Stockholm, I discovered that my host, a lady named Digne, had terrible back pain. As I was about to fly back to Burundi, she said, "*Chris, I need you to lay your hand on my back. I'm in a lot of pain.*" I wasn't sure if she was joking because I didn't pray for sick people and it felt like she expected me to heal her. Before I could answer, her teenage son chimed in, "*Mother, Chris can't do anything for you. It's all about your personal level of faith.*"

When the young man said this, I heard a strong voice in my spirit, "*Chris, it's time to start praying for the sick.*" My first reaction was to reject the voice outright because I didn't want a healing ministry. My greatest fear was that people would start thinking that I'm the person who heals instead of giving glory to God. Two of the most difficult spiritual gifts to navigate in ministry are healing and prophecy because people often attach your personality to the operation of the gift. Let me remind you that real prophets are not God—all they can do is say what God shows them, nothing more. People try to force a prophetic word thinking that the gift is unlimited and unrestricted, when in reality, a true prophet only says what they hear and if they don't hear anything they don't force

something. This is why I regularly remind people on *Kanguka* and in my crusades that I can't heal anyone, only Jesus can.

Sadly, people have even referred to me as “the healer” at times. This is why I didn't want the gift; people get really weird. I've seen so much manipulation and spiritual abuse with these gifts that I had no interest in creating a circus atmosphere in my ministry. If I were really a healer, I'd make sure that no one in my family would ever get sick again. If you've listened to *Kanguka* for a while, you may remember one Saturday when I asked you to pray for my wife who was hospitalized in critical condition. If I controlled the gift of healing, I'd have healed her instantly and not asked anyone to pray about the situation. Remember that only Jesus is the Healer and He heals when He wants and how He wants without consulting you or me.

I boarded my flight back to Burundi in late 2016. When I returned to Bujumbura, I heard the same voice in my spirit as I had in Sweden, saying, “*Chris, it's time to pray for the sick.*” I rejected it again, chalking it up to my emotions. The voice spoke to me the same thing a third time and I responded to the Holy Spirit, “*I will do it on one condition—I need confirmation of actual healings as a result of the prayer or I won't ever pray for the sick again.*” During the broadcast on that Saturday morning, December 3rd, 2016, I made a sudden announcement, “*The Holy Spirit is compelling me to pray for the sick.*” I truly felt like I was being forced to do something I didn't want to do. I prayed for about two minutes before saying, “*If you have faith, place your hand on the area where you are suffering.*” I felt like Jonah being forced to go to Nineveh against his will (Jonah 1).

Amazingly, the next morning, I found testimonies of people who had been instantly healed. A woman testified regarding an

issue in her finger that Jesus had healed, and several others testified about their backs being healed, as the testimonies kept pouring in from around the world. This encouraged me that I was truly in God's will and gave me the willingness to keep going forward, but the Lord still had to teach me about how healing ministry operates, as I had no prior experience in this area. For example, I started learning about the word of knowledge. While praying for people, I'd feel pain in a part of my body, like my eye or my back, and initially I didn't realize it was an indication that someone was being healed in that area.

When it first started happening, I thought I was suffering in my body for no reason. After the prayer time, though, people started testifying that they had received healing in the exact part of the body that was hurting while I was praying. It took me a solid month to understand how Jesus wanted to release healing through me. One of the biggest misconceptions is the confusion surrounding the gift of prophecy and the word of knowledge. Many times when I'm praying, I'll call out, "*Someone is being healed of an ulcer or back pain or a stomach issue.*" People think I'm a prophet because I say these things, but I'm not—it's the word of knowledge, where I'm given specific insight in that moment for a specific person. I Corinthians 12:8 describes this well, "*For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another a word of knowledge through the same Spirit.*" It's the Spirit who comes upon a person to share a specific message or word for someone who is suffering in that moment. At first, I was afraid to speak when I sensed something, but I slowly gained confidence, as people testified about being healed when I shared the insight the Spirit would give me.

These days, I operate with much more confidence. Whatever the Spirit says or shows me, I just speak it out. Even if it's a serious issue like HIV or cancer, if the Spirit says it—so do I! This gives people faith to believe God for their healing, and it's the main reason why I insist on repeating it regularly: I am not the healer, Jesus is! If He doesn't say it, I can't make anything happen in my own strength no matter what I say or do. He still heals today according to His purposes and for His glory!

Chapter 16: **A Calling to the nations**

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the
Son and of the Holy Spirit.” –Matthew 28:19*

Kanguka continued to expand globally through the daily teachings and international crusades. When I looked at the various country codes of people in the groups, I realized that the ministry was reaching countries all around the world. At the time, we were using nine different phones to respond to over fifty groups of people. Our goal was to organize people into groups according to the country they lived in—Canada, Belgium, Sweden, the United States, etc. Our team grew with the addition of several new employees, as regular listeners supported us financially to help fulfill the vision. At the same time, the Holy Spirit kept challenging me to reach the nations through crusades in these various places.

To return to places like Belgium or Sweden was pretty straightforward, as I had solid contacts in those countries. Places like Canada, however, were much more challenging as I had never been there and I didn't know many people personally. On March 6th, 2017, while pondering how to do a crusade in Canada, our

PayPal account informed me of a contribution from an old friend of mine from the 1990s named Rodrigue Mubamba. Aside from a brief email exchange in 2007, I hadn't really heard from him in many years. I knew that he followed the teachings online, but I had lost touch with him.

As I reviewed his contribution, I felt a nudge in my heart that I needed to talk to him, so I reached out via *WhatsApp*, and soon we were connected. It was the first time we had talked in over twenty years and we chatted for over an hour. Immediately, I sensed that this was a divine connection, but at the time, I didn't realize how big Rodrigue's role in our ministry would become. As I shared with him about the burden to hold crusades globally and come to Canada to do one, I asked him if he would be willing to help me. Today, he manages all of our crusades globally, but initially he was reluctant to be the leader, saying that he would assist me, but preferred that someone else took the lead.

After the initial conversation, we began to connect almost daily—either through *WhatsApp* messages or calls—to discuss the logistics of the crusade. God helped us formulate a plan rapidly and within two months I flew to Canada for the meeting. On May 20th, 2017, we held our third major Kirundi crusade in Ottawa, with over one thousand Rwandans and Burundians in attendance. It was remarkable to see how God moved.

Then a few months later on September 16th, 2017, we held another meeting in Brussels. At the previous year's crusade in Brussels, I had personally greeted nearly all seven hundred participants after the meeting. In good Burundian fashion, we hugged and took selfies together before everyone went home. That meeting had felt intimate and I expected the same in 2017.

What I didn't anticipate was the difference praying for the sick would make. In the first meeting, people came because of a hunger for the Word. But by the second meeting, we had been regularly sharing healing testimonies on *Kanguka*. We rented a venue with a capacity of 1,500 people, but a few hours before the meeting, more than 2,000 had already gathered from the surrounding countries: France, the Netherlands, and of course Belgium. The crowd became violent and the mayor of Brussels almost shut down the event based on the police report.

I was inside the meeting hall preparing, when someone informed me that the venue was already full. Due to strict regulations, around five hundred people were unable to enter and refused to leave the grounds despite the rain. I felt really bad for them standing outside in the rain, so once the meeting concluded, I decided to slip out and greet those who were waiting outside. I was so naive, thinking that I'd be able to talk to them in an orderly fashion. What happened next is hard to describe—as soon as the people saw me, they rushed toward me. It was total chaos, and if two brothers hadn't followed me outside, I would have been trampled. Everyone was trying to touch me, and I remember one woman grabbing me so tightly that I couldn't breathe. Some were shouting, and others were pushing as I made a sign to the two brothers to get me back inside.

Without those two guys, I'm not sure I would have made it. It was the first time I realized, I needed to be prudent in how I interacted with people. My ministry now carried a different level of influence, and I needed to be wise in how I exercised it. Two weeks later, we held another crusade in Kigali, in a venue that could accommodate five thousand people. I was still traumatized

from what happened in Brussels so I asked for police protection during the meeting. A friend of mine responded, “*This is Rwanda—that won’t be necessary.*” As the event unfolded, I discovered that he was right and people stood in line patiently without any incident.

The Kigali venue only provided 2,500 seats, even though it had the capacity to hold 5,000 people. We rented an additional twenty-five hundred seats from a lady who was intrigued with what we were doing. “*What are you guys doing with all these chairs?*” she asked inquisitively. I explained briefly and invited her to the crusade happening the next day, September 30th, 2017. She responded, “*I know everything that happens in Kigali when it comes to large gatherings, and I haven’t seen any publicity about this at all.*” She continued, “*I can guarantee you that no one is coming to this meeting without advertisement.*” She didn’t understand our system. I had already personally confirmed with thousands of people via *WhatsApp*. This gave me a pretty good idea of how many people to expect. That’s why we didn’t need to spend extra money on publicity—*WhatsApp* gave us accurate metrics regarding turnout. Even a friend who helped me organize the Kigali meeting later admitted that when he saw how large the venue was, he began to have doubts too. But the next day, every single chair was filled and we had to add more. Many people were even standing around the perimeter of the venue.

Following the crusade in Kigali, my heart was burning to do more crusades, as I saw many people getting saved and healed. We have connections with local churches in all of these places, so when someone comes to Christ at a crusade, our team gets their details and connects them with my contacts on the ground. In this

way, *Kanguka's* ministry serves to strengthen the local expression of Christ's body in every city where we hold meetings.

A few weeks later we held a second crusade in Stockholm, Sweden. Then the following year, on May 18th, 2018 we organized a second crusade in Ottawa with about 1,600 people in attendance. A week later we also held a crusade in Edmonton, Canada. I still conducted the crusades in Kirundi, but for the September meeting in Brussels, I felt that we should add a French crusade as well. We organized one on September 14th, 2018, with around seven hundred people in attendance. I'll share more about *Kanguka's* French ministry in the next chapter. On September 15th, 2018, we did the regular Kirundi crusade with an estimated three thousand people registered for the event. We could only find one venue in Brussels large enough to accommodate that many people, *Le Forest National*. It is known as the venue of the stars—artists like Bob Marley and Céline Dion have performed there.

The rumor was that a Christian had never booked *Le Forest National*, and because it was so exclusive, it was hard to get in contact with anyone. We tried to reach out in several different ways, but they showed no interest in letting us use their facility. It became even more challenging when they found out that I was an African Christian and planned to hold a free event—that was unheard of and they doubted our ability to pay. My contact in Brussels, Gloriose Mbonyingingo, refused to give up on the negotiations, and kept insisting that we were good for the money. The normal deposit is five thousand euros with the full payment due after the event, but in my case they were insisting that we pay everything up front.

We prayed and fasted for many days, before God finally gave us favor with the venue organizers. On the day of the meeting, the spiritual atmosphere was really heavy. I could feel the spiritual opposition as I preached, but God gave us a great breakthrough, with many hundreds of people coming to know Jesus. I believe something shifted in the spiritual atmosphere over Brussels as a result of that crusade.

After the meeting, I took the train to London for a Kirundi crusade on September 22nd with the Burundian and Rwandan diaspora there. Then, I held a crusade in the United States on May 4th, 2019, in Dallas. During this season, Romans 10:14 encouraged me greatly. It says, *“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”* Today, when I see people in Ottawa, Edmonton, Brussels, and other cities who gave their lives to Jesus during the crusades, still faithfully serving Him, it gives me such encouragement to keep preaching Jesus and His glorious gospel.

It’s imperative that we preach the gospel—it’s the only way that people can be born again. The verse in Romans demonstrates the connection between preaching and the faith that someone needs to be born again. I know that there are still many more people who need to hear the gospel globally. During crusades, God sends a special grace for conversion. Our daily *Kanguka* teaching is mostly for discipleship and helping people strengthen their faith. While we do emphasize repentance on Friday, it’s during the crusades that the Spirit strongly convicts people of their sin. This is why I love preaching at crusades so much—it stirs faith in people’s hearts and draws them to receive Christ as their Savior.

The Kanguka Story

I was planning another meeting in Ottawa for May 9th, 2020, and was about to return to Brussels again, but then the Covid pandemic shook the world, and I ended up staying in Burundi for almost two years. But nothing changed for *Kanguka* —we continued sharing our daily broadcast as usual. In fact, the ministry grew significantly because so many people were unable to attend church during this time and started following our broadcast. However, my heart was burning to start holding crusades again, as we had lost two years of opportunities to share the gospel. My greatest joy is to see people come to know Jesus and receive the guarantee of eternity with Christ. My second greatest joy is to know that I was able to play some part in that process. We must continue to preach the gospel so that more people can experience the joy of knowing Jesus!

Chapter 17: The French Connection

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

– Acts 1:8

When *Kanguka* started, it was exclusively in Kirundi. I had no desire to use French since my primary focus was on the Kirundi-speaking people. I had learned French in school, but English and Kirundi became my main languages. My written teachings were in French, which helped me maintain the language, but I just couldn't see any reason to preach in French.. In early 2017, *Kanguka* received a call from a Rwandan lady named Immaculée Nzitonda (a.k.a. Chouchou). She had grown up in Congo, and while she could understand most of what I said in Kirundi, she suggested that we start translating the audios into French. Honestly, I wasn't interested in the idea. As we talked on the phone, she reminded me that we had met at the first crusade in Brussels—I remembered her because of her vivacious personality and intense spiritual hunger.

Immaculée was a translator at her church, interpreting from Kinyarwanda or Swahili into French. She recognized the need for

my teachings to be accessible to the French-speaking world and offered to translate them for free. After listening to her, I liked the suggestion as it represented an opportunity to reach more people. We agreed that she would record the translation of my audio into French, and I would then send it to my IT guy for editing and production. Once everything was ready, we released the audios on *WhatsApp*, *Facebook*, and *SoundCloud*.

If you are familiar with *SoundCloud*, you can find the first French audio from January 3rd, 2017, under my profile—Chris Ndikumana. The title is *Le temps de Dieu* (God’s timing), and you can hear my voice with Immaculée’s dubbed over it. She connected us to our initial French-speaking audience in Togo. Immaculée helped us for two months without me having to do anything—the process of translation, production, and uploading worked well. Around March, however, we started receiving complaints from several West African listeners. They wanted me to speak directly in French, instead of Kirundi. No one had anything against Immaculée—they simply didn’t want translated audios. At first, I didn’t take the suggestion seriously, but as more and more people began asking for the same thing, I started to reconsider our approach. As I prayed about it, I felt the Lord prompting me to listen to what our audience was saying.

I called Immaculée to tell her that I felt God was speaking to me about preaching directly in French. I didn’t know what her reaction would be, but she responded immediately, “*Glory to God! I was going to suggest this to you as God has already put the same thing in my heart.*” I’m thankful that she served as a bridge, propelling me into a broader dimension of ministry and enabling me to reach more people. However, I have to admit that I didn’t

want to preach in French—it just didn’t feel natural for me, and I lacked confidence. In addition, the French-speaking audience consisted of only a few hundred people, and they weren’t usually as encouraging as the Kirundi audience.

In order to preach in French, my assistant translated the Kirundi audio and gave me the exact French transcript. For nearly four years, I would take this transcript and read the *Kanguka* teaching verbatim. As a result, the audios sounded a bit robotic and monotone, but at least I was taking small steps toward engaging the French-speaking world. My focus still remained entirely on the Kirundi-speaking world, because they were my primary audience with the largest number of listeners. I didn’t realize that God was actually opening the door to a much larger audience in the francophone world for the days ahead. Today, the *Kanguka* French listeners far outnumber Kirundi listeners, but I could not foresee that back then.

To my surprise, even though I often read the French transcript in a flat tone, and even made minor grammatical errors, the audience grew rapidly. In fact, the growth surprised me—from two hundred to three hundred, to well over a thousand listeners within a few months. We discovered that the French platform was expanding at a much faster rate than the Kirundi one, largely because far more people speak French globally. People subscribed from Togo, Cameroon, Gabon, and Ivory Coast without any effort on my part. This shifted my emphasis from Kirundi to French, as I could sense something major was on the horizon. By the end of 2017, it felt like the early days of *Kanguka*, when our ministry first experienced explosive growth—only this time, the French-speaking audience was even more engaged than the Kirundi-

speaking audience. To deal with the pressure, I hired another assistant to manage the French side.

On January 6th, 2018, I made the decision to start praying for the sick on the French broadcasts. Up to that point, we had only shared audio teachings in French, but when I started exercising the gift of healing and praying for people, the ministry reached a new level, especially in Togo. Due to the overwhelming response, I sensed the Lord leading me to organize our first crusade in Togo. The idea seemed plausible, but I didn't have any specific connections in Togo. As we prayed and sought the Lord, a Burundian friend connected me with a minister in Lomé, Togo, named David. He offered to help us organize the crusade, and we scheduled it for August 3rd, 2019, as our first outreach event entirely in French.

I didn't feel as comfortable organizing a crusade in Togo as I had in other countries. We estimated at least three thousand people would be present, so I sent one of my assistants to Togo ahead of time to work out the logistics with David and Rodrigue—our crusade coordinator. We decided to secure *Le Palais des Congrès*, which could accommodate about four thousand people. However, later on I sensed that the venue might be too small. David was shocked, “*Too small? Really?*” I asked him to negotiate with *Le Palais des Congrès* to let us set up an additional five hundred seats outdoors with a live video feed from the main crusade.

The crusade was scheduled for 3:00 pm, but by 1:30 pm, all the indoor seats were completely filled, and an additional two thousand people were sitting outside, mostly on the ground. It was a remarkable day! We uploaded the crusade to *YouTube* and today, the video has more than five million views, with many testimonies of healings and deliverance, even years later. Something happened

that afternoon, as I preached on “*Prends Ton Jéricho*” (Take Your Jericho)—God moved so powerfully, setting captives free from demonic oppression, healing the sick, and bringing salvation to many.

Before the meeting, around 10 AM, while Nadia and I were still at the hotel, I stood up and felt a sudden surge of dizziness sweep over me—so severe that I almost collapsed to the ground. Instantly, I sensed intense spiritual opposition and heaviness trying to stop me from preaching. I picked up my phone and called my team of intercessors back in Bujumbura, who had already started praying for the crusade earlier that morning. I shared about the dizziness and heavy oppression and asked them to intensify their prayer efforts. Within five to ten minutes, my strength had returned, and we headed to the venue—where a powerful anointing fell. This opened the door for crusades all over West Africa—Ivory Coast, Cameroon, and Gabon. The famous Kirundi song, “*Iyo Mana Ni Nziza*” (This God is good), spontaneously broke forth that day, and now we sing it every crusade.

What happened in Togo ignited a passion in me for the French-speaking countries, especially in Africa. By the end of 2019, my heart was burning to preach more crusades, but Covid shut the world down for two years. We were finally able to hold another crusade in Belgium. Back in Brussels, we rented *Le Forest National* again for two days. On September 17th, 2022, we held a French-only crusade. The following day, I preached in Kirundi as someone translated for me into French. French was necessary in both services, as the number of French-speaking followers of *Kanguka* had exploded. More than ten thousand people attended the two-day meeting in Brussels.

As I continued praying for the French-speaking world, the Lord spoke to me about the need to organize a crusade in Burundi, based on Acts 1:8. Our ministry had held crusades all over the world, but we had never done anything for my hometown, Bujumbura—my Jerusalem. We organized a crusade there on July 22nd, 2023, and it exceeded all expectations, as more than one hundred thousand people attended. Amazingly, French speakers from multiple countries flew in to attend the meeting in Bujumbura and thousands of people came to Christ. A few months later, we held another major crusade in Douala, Cameroon, with over two hundred thousand people in attendance. The number of participants was increasing significantly.

On July 6th, 2024, we conducted our first crusade in Libreville, Gabon. Based on the numbers from the *Kanguka* app, we expected eighty thousand people, but the largest stadium in the country could only accommodate forty-five thousand. To handle the expected overflow, we set up a large screen outside the stadium. On the day of the crusade, however, I was surprised that only about forty-five thousand people attended. I later discovered that Gabon's infrastructure is underdeveloped, especially the road system, which prevented thousands of *Kanguka* followers from being able to reach Libreville.

On December 7th, 2024, we held a crusade in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Based on the app metrics, we prepared for three hundred thousand people, but on the day of the meeting, no one on the team could believe what happened: more than five hundred thousand people showed up. As I stood on the pulpit to preach, I couldn't see the end of the crowd in any direction. It was by far the largest crusade we have ever conducted, with many thousands of people

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responding to receive Christ—so many, in fact, that it became impossible to call them forward during the response time. We asked people to provide their information via a *WhatsApp* chatbot displayed on the big screen, so that local churches could follow up with them. Only God can gather half a million people in one place to hear the gospel!

Chapter 18: **Ministry Stability**

“And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, “For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.” –Genesis 26:22

As *Kanguka* continued to grow internationally, so did our annual budget. When *Kanguka* began in 2015, it was mostly supported by various Americans. These included *For His Glory International*, Mel Miles, and others from places like Indianapolis. At the time, they made up nearly 85% of our total budget. Interestingly, none of them spoke French or Kirundi, and therefore didn't understand any of my teachings. It reminds me of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath, when the Lord instructed her to take care of Elijah sacrificially (I Kings 17). These people had no natural reason to help me, but when the Lord directs people to stand with you, they will do so until He tells them otherwise. God gave me great favor with these Americans.

At the beginning of 2017, the Lord told me that our source of support would be coming from people who followed my teachings. I didn't ask anyone to support our ministry, but I knew that the

Lord would touch people's hearts. By the middle of the year, people began to send money our way via PayPal, Western Union, and even bank transfers. At the end of the year, the support from listeners had grown to the point where I no longer needed financial help from America. I expressed my deep gratitude to these dear friends, telling them they no longer needed to help *Kanguka* unless we had an emergency. I wrote to Andy Kennedy, my spiritual father and the president of *For His Glory International*, to ask that they continue sending one-third of their original support for an additional year—this would give us time to evaluate the consistency of our new supporters.

During my wilderness season, I often had dreams of a beautiful city —marked by order, structure, and stability—hidden behind a large mountain. I could only catch glimpses of it, but it was magnificent! I sensed the Lord telling me that He was going to move the mountain out of the way and lead me into that city—a place of stability for our ministry. This reminds me of Genesis chapter 26. If you read the entire passage, you will understand the verse at the beginning of this chapter. Each time Isaac dug a well to provide for his family and flocks, he experienced great trouble, until he dug a well called Rehoboth, which provided enduring peace. This well provided stability.

Genesis 26 parallels my own experience of facing troubles and challenges on multiple fronts while developing the ministry. When we launched the *WhatsApp* groups, we had trouble with people misusing the platform. When I traveled for international ministry, we had to pause our broadcasts for a couple of days. And to release an audio teaching on all nine cell phones, we had to wake up at 4 am every day. It felt like Isaac digging wells, with trouble

following. However, this new season would be a place of stability where we experienced our own Rehoboth.

On November 26th, 2017, I received a Facebook message from a brother named Marius who lived in the United States and wanted to talk to me. He had just started listening to *Kanguka* on *WhatsApp* and felt compelled by the Spirit to help us develop an app. I had no idea what he was talking about—I had heard about apps before, but I didn't know how an app would benefit *Kanguka*. Marius built apps for a living and offered to build one for us free of charge. He was a nominal believer at the time, but he would later fully commit his life to Christ after regularly listening to the teachings. I replied to his message two days later via email, without realizing that this would be one of the most significant developments in *Kanguka's* history. God was digging a well of stability.

Marius explained the concept of an app to me because I was clueless in those early days. It would provide a landing point for all of my teachings. If people downloaded the app, they'd receive push notifications whenever a new teaching was released. On our side, we had the ability to configure the app to send those notifications at times adapted to different time zones, as far in advance as necessary. This would ensure that people in different time zones would be able to access the teaching every day at a specific local time. This time zone adaptation feature brought consistency and stability to *Kanguka*. It even allowed me to take my family on vacation without needing to get up at 4 am every morning.

Let me illustrate what a difference it made. One day, before the app existed, I went to Sweden for ministry. I chatted with my hosts late into the night without realizing how long we had talked. Around 2 am, I finally went to bed, but my alarm was already set

for 3:55 am so I could send the audio teaching at four. I will never forget that morning because I was so exhausted from travel and a very short night. I could barely open my eyes to access *WhatsApp*. For a few minutes, I fumbled around, half-asleep, trying to send the audio to thirty-five different groups, before collapsing back into bed for a couple of hours. When I woke up, I was shocked to see that I had somehow managed to send the audio correctly. With the app, that kind of struggle disappeared immediately.

At the beginning of 2018, I announced that we would no longer use *WhatsApp* and asked everyone to download the app instead. From that point forward, everything would be done via the *Kanguka* app, thanks to Marius and his willingness to help us. The app allows us to see how many downloads we have in a specific country. This information helps us plan the venues for our crusades. Marius did such a good job building the app that we eventually hired him to be our tech guy.

Andy came to visit us in March 2018 to see how *Kanguka* was progressing. He spent about a week on the ground, experiencing the ministry firsthand. God was truly blessing *Kanguka* during that period and our support level had increased significantly. I was thrilled to see Andy and share with him the good news about how God continued to grow our ministry. We never asked anyone for money—the Lord just moved on people’s hearts to give spontaneously. I believe this happened because we had faithfully sown seeds for years, consistently supporting widows, orphans, and other ministries.

II Corinthians 9:7 says, “*So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*” In the New Testament, giving is never forced or pressured; people

give as the Spirit leads them, with joy. If your giving is not joyfull, then it's not led by the Lord. If you are faithfully serving Jesus in ministry, He will touch people's hearts to support you, even if your ministry doesn't directly impact them. In my case, Americans stood with me for many years before *Kanguka* listeners began to support us.

People ask me why listeners support *Kanguka*, even though we never ask for money. My answer is simple: "*God knows that we have sown faithfully to bless others. This opens doors for His blessing on us.*" It's tragic that much of today's teaching on giving centers on obligatory giving or the risk of being cursed by God. This creates fear in people's hearts and minds and they give reluctantly out of guilt or fear of divine judgment. But giving for the sole reason of escaping God's judgment is not New Testament giving. Paul reminds us that giving is to be done with a joyful heart! In Galatians 6:7, Paul states, "*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*" God operates according to the principle of sowing and reaping. When you help the poor, take care of the widows, bless the oppressed, and support other ministries, God opens spiritual doors of provision for your life and ministry.

Andy was amazed during his visit to Burundi. Toward the end of his trip, we sat down and talked, and I personally thanked him for being such a blessing to me. For nine years, God used him to help the ministry in many ways: financially, relationally, and spiritually. From day one, *For His Glory International* helped us on the journey toward stability. They supported our personal needs, paid our rent, and facilitated other connections in the United States. The analogy I like to use to describe our partnership is that

of an airplane. *Kanguka* was born to fly, but it would never have taken off without Andy and *For His Glory International* building a runway. I asked Andy to use the remaining support he was still sending to help other ministries, since *Kanguka* was now financially stable.

Two years later, *Kanguka* registered as a non-profit organization in the United States and opened its own bank account. We needed a professional accountant to manage the books. As I was searching for someone, the Lord reminded me that Andy had been an accountant for more than forty years. I called him and said, “*I know you would become our accountant for free, but this time Kanguka is going to pay you.*” He has now served as our accountant for five years, doing a great job. During this time, *Kanguka* also made a commitment to become a financial supporter of *For His Glory International*.

I love being a blessing to those who first blessed us. Today, *Kanguka* is also a partner with *Involved International*, the missions organization led by Steve Kuert—one of the people who supported me during a very difficult time in my life. We try to bless everyone God brought into my life during the hard seasons.

In early 2021, God blessed *Kanguka* with the finances to purchase our offices in Bujumbura. We had been renting the space for many years, but now we own it—debt free! This property has been a great source of encouragement and blessing to us and I’m thrilled God opened the door for us to buy it. This has contributed to a sense of permanence and stability for our ministry.

Chapter 19: **Kanguka's Future**

*“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,
says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil,
to give you a future and a hope” –Jeremiah 29:11*

Kanguka started in Kirundi and gradually transitioned to French according to God's perfect timing. Over the years, many people asked if I would consider translating the teachings into English, as many faithful listeners are married to English speakers or have English-speaking friends. This is particularly true for those living in Canada and America. As we added French broadcasts alongside the Kirundi ones, we learned a lot about translation and production into other languages. As we felt more comfortable with the quality, we decided to try producing the audios in English as well. On March 23rd, 2020, we released our first English translation of the *Kanguka* broadcast. It was a good idea, but it also created a lot more work for us.

We used the same script, starting in Kirundi, then translating it into French and English. I previously mentioned how I read the script in French for four years. Similarly, I decided to read the English version in manuscript style. However, it became quite

exhausting. Many people don't realize that it's not just about reading an eight-to-ten-minute audio in three languages—follow-up is also necessary. This involves helping people in repentance, confession, prayer, and spiritual counseling. With three languages, we were receiving hundreds of phone calls every day. In the beginning, I used to do all of the follow-up personally, but it quickly exceeded my limitations. Today, we have dedicated phone numbers for each language, and a ten-member team of spiritual counselors who handle the follow-up.

This frees up my time to focus on preparing the teachings. We began to notice that my voice was wearing out from recording in three languages every day. I started drinking lemon and ginger tea regularly to try and help my voice, but I realized that it was too much strain on my vocal cords. Today, I use AI for all of the English teachings, while I still do the French and Kirundi teaching with my own voice. This has reduced the strain on my vocal cords.

People have asked us to expand into other languages, such as Swahili. What many don't realize is that adding a language is a major undertaking that requires a full team. It's not just about recording the audio for a few minutes; it also means providing the necessary support for the listeners' spiritual needs. I often compare it to the responsibility of bringing a child into the world. A man can't just leave his woman to fend for herself; he's responsible for providing a house, food, and other daily needs. In the same way, we can't just launch a new language without ensuring we're fully prepared to minister to the listeners adequately. I can't just speak without giving attention to the spiritual needs of those who hear the message.

The Holy Spirit used II Corinthians 10:14-18 to teach me the importance of serving within the boundaries God has assigned for my ministry. Paul had his own specific area of service in the Kingdom, just as *Kanguka* does. The Lord revealed to me that a revival was coming to the French-speaking world and we needed to be part of that harvest through our ministry. By contrast, the English-speaking world has already experienced multiple revivals. In fact, I can't think of a single major revival in recent history that didn't originate in an English-speaking country. English speakers have a rich spiritual heritage and an abundance of spiritual resources. This is even true for the African context—English-speaking Africans and missionaries have led the way on the continent. The French-speaking world, by contrast, is spiritually sparse. That's why God showed me that *Kanguka* needed to be a prophetic voice for the coming francophone revival.

In II Corinthians 10:14, Paul says, "*For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ.*" I like Paul's mindset in this verse. He was unwilling to overextend his influence and reach for the gospel. He knew his physical and spiritual limitations. God assigns each person a specific sphere and zone of service in His Kingdom, and for us, that is the francophone world. Paul continues in verse 18, "*For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.*" I always raise my hands in gratitude when I read this verse, because it reminds me that this ministry is not mine—it's His. Since it's His ministry, He is responsible for leading me where I need to be; and for this season, our emphasis must be on the francophone world.

Paul describes the expansion of his sphere of activity in verse 15. As we continue to emphasize French, we are also investing in English to reach more people. Our sphere of ministry is open for God's expansion—provided we don't neglect our primary mission: the French-speaking world. Currently, *Kanguka* operates a channel on *YouTube* called *Chris Ndikumana Teachings*, which focuses on sharing my conferences, translated into English. I see this as an open door for greater influence in the English-speaking world. I'm not looking to compete with any other English ministry, as many good ones already exist. Rather, my desire is to remain faithful to the Lord's voice and allow Him to define the boundaries for *Kanguka*.

Some people have suggested that I simply hire more staff to meet the growing demand for other languages. However, finding the right people, with the right heart and motivation, is not an easy endeavor. Let me illustrate this thought with an example from Philippians 2:20-22. In describing Timothy, Paul says, "*For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.*" I'm astonished when I read this verse because Paul knew many reliable co-laborers and co-ministers. Paul continues in verse 21, "*For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.*" Remember that Paul ministered with an apostolic team, and yet, he seems to be saying that the majority of those people were looking out for their own interests. Selfishness ruled in their hearts and lives. Finally, in verse 22, Paul commends Timothy alone as being truly faithful in the work of the Lord. This means that even if we had unlimited finances and ministry opportunities, we would still need to be led by the Holy Spirit in choosing the right people to partner with us.

II Corinthians 10:18 is clear, God is the one who commends the right people, not us. I was worn out from preaching and teaching every day and realized that I needed help, and I needed it quickly. Through prayer, God led me to a faithful brother named Esdras Biranguza. He had served as my translator at one of the crusades in Brussels, Belgium a few years ago. I recognized God's anointing and a heart for the Kingdom in this brother. We developed a tight friendship and on March 24th, 2024, he officially joined the *Kanguka* team as a co-teacher, handling some of the daily responsibilities. Initially, some listeners didn't respond well because they only wanted my voice on the broadcast. Some even unsubscribed from our channel. But over time, God has confirmed his ministry through many testimonies. The Lord has connected me with other faithful brothers and sisters and I give thanks for them every morning in my prayers.

I must also mention the importance of our intercessors. *Kanguka* has a dedicated team of people who intercede full-time for this ministry. Through the years, we have experienced attacks on every level and I am fully aware that intercession is the engine that keeps this ministry moving forward. We employ a full-time intercessory team, but I also regularly ask *Kanguka* listeners to pray for us, as we continually need greater spiritual stamina and vibrancy. Prayer is the only way that this ministry can accomplish anything of eternal significance.

Let me illustrate what I'm saying with a couple of stories. A high-profile witch from West Africa flew to Burundi, pretending to be a *Kanguka* listener in need of personalized counseling. I wasn't present at the time, but one of my employees received this person at the office. She shared fabricated details and events, trying to

gain access to our ministry. However, the intercessors had already been warned in prayer about this situation, and we were able to avert a serious problem. Prayer destroys the devil's strategies every time! On several instances, I've had to face witchdoctors possessed by evil spirits bent on killing me. Often when these spirits manifest, they scream out—*"We want to kill Chris."* When I first started ministry, I never envisioned a day when the devil would want to personally take me out. However, God protects my life, my family, and this ministry thanks to the countless prayers of faithful intercessors.

I'm closing this book by inviting you to stand with us in prayer. The devil is relentless in his attacks—physically, spiritually, and emotionally. If he can't attack me, he will go after my wife and children. I have learned that it's very difficult to focus on ministering God's word when my family is under attack. Over the years, the enemy has also attempted to use people to malign me on social media. Their slander and gossip have continued for more than seven years, and yet during this time, the number of listeners has only continued to grow. God is with us and He is helping us overcome through prayer.

Jeremiah 29:11 is still one of my all-time favorite verses, *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."* I love this verse so much because it describes God's plans for each believer's life. I'm aware of some of God's thoughts toward me as He has revealed them to me through the years, but I certainly don't know all of them. If He told us all His thoughts toward us, it would be too much for us to handle. God didn't tell Moses up front that in order to liberate the people of Israel from bondage, he would have to

live forty years in the wilderness. If He had, Moses might not have been willing to do it. Often, God doesn't share everything with us. He asks us to trust Him and to continue following His leading, because He alone knows what the future will hold.

People have suggested that I raise up a successor in case something happens to me. My response is always the same, "*This isn't my ministry—it's His.*" Nothing will ever catch the Lord by surprise and He loves souls far more than I do. This is why I ask the Lord to lead me every day into His perfect plan. I don't know what the future holds, but I do know the One who holds the future. Our desire is to continue winning souls and training disciples until Jesus comes back, so we can witness a massive global revival. But in order for this to happen, we need your help!

If you listen to the *Kanguka* broadcast regularly, please share it with someone else. You could be the connection that leads someone to receive Christ and get saved. It's great to be blessed by *Kanguka*, but remember that it's not enough to be blessed for yourself. God calls us to be channels of His blessings to others. Please also keep praying for us to be effective ministers of the gospel. This ministry is all about God's glory and I believe it will be used to impact lives until Jesus returns. *Maranatha*—The Lord is coming!

