

The Road to Reconciliation:

17th Commemoration of the Genocide Against the Tutsi



Decatur Discovery Academy, Indianapolis, USA

April 23, 2011

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'The Indianapolis Model', employed at the commemoration of the Genocide Against the Tutsi on April 23, 2011, was a unique demonstration of the power of a reconciliation event to open the way for change in relationships between Hutu and Tutsi Rwandans in Diaspora.

Described by Bishop Rucyahana as "...very strong for the promotion of unity and harmony", and by Ambassador Kimonyo as "a model bringing Rwandan kids together with a unifying message", this model is based on the notion of commitment to action, and not just words.



Bishop Rucyahana described the 17th Commemoration of the Genocide Against the Tutsi held in Indianapolis as "...very strong for the promotion of unity and harmony"

In 1991, African American victim of police brutality Rodney King famously said "Why can't we just get along?" It was a profound and moving statement and a plea for peace in the battered streets of Los Angeles. But in 2011, and thinking of Rwanda, we turn this statement of general condemnation of the human condition into something positive. We ask of ourselves and each other "Tell us about your commitment to reconciliation? What will you do, personally, to build a peaceful and prosperous Rwanda?"

Organizing Committee of the Indianapolis Commemoration



Kizito Kalima



Ian McIntosh



Cathy McKay



John Musiine



Stacey Kalima

Kizito and Stacey Kalima, John Musiine, Ian McIntosh, and Cathy McKay, the organizing committee of the Indianapolis commemoration, are guided in their reconciliatory thinking by our belief that ‘we can all get along’, and by a number of key principles inspired by the words of

“We cannot turn the clock nor can we undo the harm caused, but we have the power to determine the future and ensure that what happened never happens again.” *President Paul Kagame*

“Strong leadership shines a light into the darkness, but the people must bring it to life and make it happen.” *Bishop Rucyahana*

“In order to heal, you must forgive... You forgive in order to be free, to have a clear mind, and to be able to work hard.” *Mufti Habimana*

Rwanda’s President Paul Kagame, Bishop Rucyahana, and Mufti Habimana.

The hallmark of our commemoration, which attracted a very large group of over 200 (including



many American high school students from Decatur Discovery Academy and university students from Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, and Martin University), was a panel comprised of a majority of Hutu youth all of whom spoke with strong personal commitments to reconciliation. Individually, the panelists described their current projects both at home in Rwanda and in Diaspora, for this greater common goal of unity and

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harmony. Jean-Michel Habineza , for example, spoke of his leadership of 'Walk to Remember', a series of commemorative walks and related discussions around the world designed to raise the profile of Rwanda's history and current trajectory as the most progressive country in the region. As he said, "Rwanda is not perfect, but it is a miracle!" Ornella Umubyeyi talked about her 'Soul Survivor's Project' for Hutu and Tutsi orphans in one of the new 'peace villages' in Rwanda. And then the famous actor and star of 'Long Coat' Edouard Bamporiki spoke of his continuing work in prisons and around the country to promote our common vision of reconciliation, guided as he is by the famous line of one of his poems, 'Their sin is my shame.' The seven panelists, drawn from across the US and also Rwanda, including a number of genocide survivors, are already actively working on projects together in the wake of this event. This is the promise of our Indianapolis model – creating opportunities for networking and inspiring an ever-increasing number of people to become actively involved in the cause. We all know, for example, that what happens in Diaspora has a direct and immediate impact on what happens in Rwanda in terms of peace and security. By building these links of friendship

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America and elsewhere, the potential for Rwanda's continued growth and prosperity is assured.

One of the objectives of the 'Indianapolis Model' for the April 23 Commemoration, and the lead up events around the capital city (Office of the Mayor, Sagamore Institute, Martin University, Indiana University, Indiana History Society, Indiana Interfaith Alliance etc) was for it to be the launch point for a whole range of new and motivational events of a reconciliatory nature across the USA, wherever our network of contacts extended. For example in South Bend, Indiana, there is a very high concentration of Tutsi, and in neighboring Michigan and also Dayton, Ohio, a majority of Hutu are living in considerable numbers. By what means can we



and cooperation in North

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bring the divided communities together and open the way for rapprochement? This is our task, and as we describe below, we are exploring ideas and opportunities there, and also in Montreal, Canada, San Antonio, Texas, and Atlanta, Georgia.

Potential Future Reconciliatory Activities

Sport & Reconciliation. Our team is well aware of the potential of sport to bring people together. The academic literature on this topic is supportive of the idea of working with youth and creating spaces in which the children of bystanders (or perhaps perpetrators) and victims in Diaspora, can come together in a friendly and non threatening environment. One of our youth panelists from South Bend, Indiana, genocide survivor Jen-Leonard Kagabo, is keen to take the initiative along with Kizito Kalima, in this reconciliatory activity. We will develop 'unity teams' of Hutu and Tutsi and through our strong university and community connections, host matches (soccer and basketball) with African and other teams in the US. The

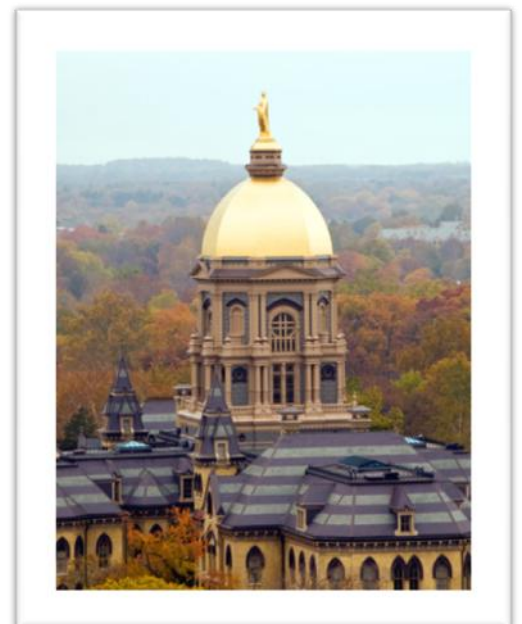


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dream goal is for the unity team to come to Rwanda and make appearances and play games against Rwandan teams around the country.

Unity Day. The concept of a 'unity day' or 'unity concert' was raised by Kizitio Kalima to be held in Notre Dame University, in the center of a very large and mixed Rwandan Diaspora community. We would have Rwandan poets like Edouard Bamporiki, singers like Kizito Mihigo, and perhaps

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theater, all with the goal of bring Rwandans together in an

environment of togetherness, reinforcing the fact that Hutu, Tutsi and Twa are members of the one Rwandan family.

Dayton Peace Museum.

We have been in touch with the Dayton Peace Museum, in Ohio, as the potential venue for a series of reconciliatory events and reaching out to the Dayton Rwandan community. The Catholic University of Dayton is also a potential venue for film screenings of 'Long Coat' and other



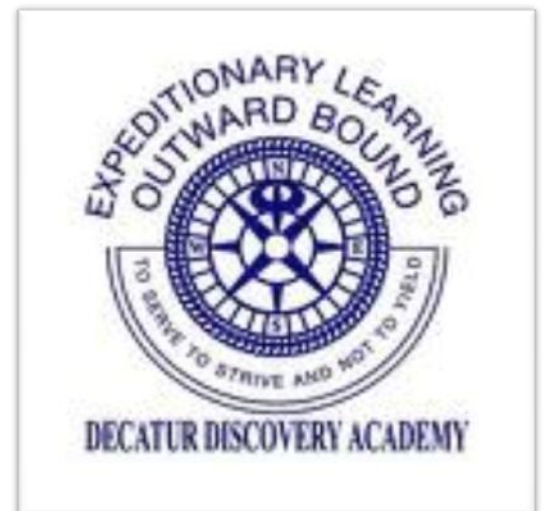
inspirational movies and also discussions on how the Rwanda of 2011 needs the contributions of those in Diaspora who have skills and experience vital to the growth of their homeland. Such events may open the way for the return of Hutu in Diaspora, based on the Rwandan model of

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'Come and See'.

Partnership between Decatur Discovery Academy and Gasoro Primary School, Nyanza.

For two years now, the Decatur Discovery Academy has been the host of Genocide Commemorations and students have become fully versed in the 'eight stages of genocide', and also in 'the eight stages of reconciliation'. In both years, donations were received from friends, family members, and members of the general public, for school supplies for Gesoro Primary School. Establishing a partnership between the children in these schools is the goal, and the delivery company FedEx has agreed to cover the costs of sending the donated goods to Rwanda.



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During the visit by the Rwandan dignitaries to Indianapolis, our guests had an opportunity to visit a number of key agencies and universities for discussions about collaboration and moving forward together.

Sister Cities. In a meeting with Indianapolis Mayor Gregory Ballard, the idea was floated for Indianapolis and Kigali to become sister cities, an important avenue for business development from both sides. Mayor Ballard had been seeking a potential sister partnership in Dakar, Senegal, but when he learned that Rwanda's economy is booming and that it has the least corruption, the cleanest streets in Africa, and is very business-friendly, he promised to investigate the possibility. We will keep in touch with his office via his international liaison person, Jane Gehlhausen, about this idea.



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University of Healing. At Martin University, a predominantly African American university 'of healing', there was great interest in extending their 'education for healing' mandate to Rwanda. We are investigating the possibility of having Martin University as a venue for our healing activities. President Charlotte Westerhaus, for example, made a commitment to be an envoy of unity and reconciliation on behalf of Rwanda, rallying other university presidents to send students to Rwanda, as well as hosting unity and reconciliation events on their respective campuses so that the truth about Rwanda's reconciliatory agenda can be seen in its correct context.



The President of Martin University, a predominantly African American university 'of healing', expressed great interest in extending their 'education for healing' mandate to Rwanda and serving as an envoy of unity and reconciliation on behalf of Rwanda.

Apology. The founder and former president of Martin University, Benedictine Monk and Catholic Priest Boniface Hardin, also gave his commitment to speak to Catholic authorities at the highest levels to have them address the issue of silence with regards to the role of his church at the time of the genocide. The Catholic church, he says, must apologize to the people of Rwanda.

The Past in the Present and Future.

At the Indiana History Center, delegates witnessed a theatrical presentation on the speech given in Indianapolis by Robert Fitzgerald Kennedy on the day of the assassination of Martin Luther King. He was speaking a large predominantly African American crowd while on the campaign trail – and he broke the news. His speech, often considered his most significant, is credited with preventing the race riots that followed the news in other cities, and of changing the lives of many of the people present, for the better. Quoting the Greek poet Aeschylus, he said “Even in our sleep, pain which we cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, until, in our own despair and against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.” Such is the nature of reconciliation. Our delegate, Executive Secretary of the Commission in the fight against genocide, Jean de dieu Mucyo, was moved by the emotions expressed and how relevant such forms of theater are in not only commemorating an important occasion, but also in continuing to educate the population at large on our priorities for commemorating and learning from the past, in building a better tomorrow.



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Leading by Example. At the campus of IUPUI (Indiana University, Purdue University at Indianapolis), delegates spoke words of inspiration to African students from a range of countries, such as Guinea, Nigeria, Burundi, and Kenya, and there will undoubtedly be positive outcomes as others learn from Rwanda the sorts of steps necessary for creating a strong and unified nation. Already, the Mufti has made arrangements for the Guinea head of unity and reconciliation to visit Rwanda and learn first hand how Rwanda is approaching the important task of reconciliation, with its reconciliation barometer project, gacaca, reconciliation or peace villages, and so on.



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Restorative Justice. One of the sponsors of the many dinners was an Indiana University professor named Prof. John Stanfield who is preparing to establish an Institute for Restorative Justice in Atlanta and has advised us that apart from a focus on domestic reconciliation and race relations, he wants to embark on a project on Rwanda, with reconciliation as a theme and our team as coordinators.

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Education. Finally, genocide survivor Kizito Kalima has suggested to the other members of the Indianapolis team that we establish an NGO to help coordinate our reconciliation activities. A tentative title for this group is: Global Genocide Prevention Alliance, and it will bring together a strong body of academics like Dr. Ian McIntosh and John Stanfield from Indiana University who both teach truth and reconciliation studies, and Rwandan Professor John Musiine from Martin University. As a key to the success of any reconciliation campaign is education, this NGO will have an academic core and will draw upon the expertise of the hosts of the 17th



commemoration, teachers at the Decatur Discovery Academy like Cathy McKay, and members of the Education faculty at Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) in this alliance. As part of his commitment to spreading the word, Kizito Kalima will address students of the truth and reconciliation class at Cornell College in Iowa in mid-May on the topic of reconciliation in Rwanda.

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Networking. Strong connections were renewed between Bishop Rucyahana and Jay Hein, the Executive Director of the Sagamore Institute (a think-tank based in Indianapolis). The delegation was hosted for lunch in the famous Levey Mansion by Jay, former Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and Deputy Assistant to US President George W. Bush. Jay Hein maintains close links with Rwanda and also President Kagame, and has held several workshops and conferences in Kigali on the development of public-private enterprise. He is



Jay Hein, President of the Sagamore Institute, visiting with delegation.



currently engaged with his Rwandan colleagues on establishing a think-tank to achieve such ends, along the lines of the Sagamore Institute, in Rwanda. The International Center, a NGO located in Indianapolis with the mission of strengthening Indiana's global connections, provided logistical support to the team and hosted the delegation at a reception.

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In summary, the 17th Commemoration of the Genocide Against the Tutsi held at Indianapolis on April 23, 2011, was an extraordinary event not only because of the size of the audience or the importance of the visiting delegation or even its unique focus on reconciliation between all Rwandans. The most significant thing about this commemoration was that its success has opened the eyes of many Rwandans and

friends of Rwanda to a whole new field of opportunity for reconciliatory activity in the Diaspora. What was considered impossible by some, is now a reality. Hutu and Tutsi are planning reconciliatory events together across the US in a model that inspires us all with the belief that everything we dreamed of is now possible in the new Rwanda. The success of the 'Indianapolis model' is very much due to the support of the Rwandan Planning Committee, and especially to the leadership and guidance of Mufti Habimana, Bishop Rucyahana and Jean de dieu Mucyo. Thank you!



Mufti Habimana, Bishop Rucyahana, Jean de dieu Mucyo, and Ambassador Kimonyo participate in a panel discussion at commemoration.



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