

Pershore Abbey Iona Service - 5pm on Sunday 28th April 2024

CHRISTIAN AID - BURUNDI

Welcome:

Gathering Song: 🎵 *(Common Ground 4 verses 1,2,4 and 5)*

Introduction:

Reader A: Our service today is about extraordinary love.

God's love for each of us exceeds what we can imagine.

We are called to live out that love in service to one another.

We'll be hearing Aline Nibogora's story. She is from Makamba Province in Burundi. Married when she was still a child, she gave birth to her first child when she was 14 years old. Aline experienced domestic violence, homelessness, and extreme poverty. But Aline's love for her children, and her experience of God's love, filled her with exceptional courage. She was determined to give her children a better life and to help her neighbours.

Opening Responses:

Leader: We gather as children of God, bound to one another by love.

All: **See what love the Father has given us.**

Leader: We gather to live out our calling to love our neighbours and our enemies.

All: **See what love the Father has given us.**

Leader: We gather to experience in word and song, in prayer and worship, the overflowing compassion and tenderness of our God.

All: **See what love the Father has given us. Amen**

Prayer of Confession

Leader: Creator God, you made us and cherish us as your beloved creation.

We confess that we have failed to care for the world you brought into being.

We have polluted the earth; we have consumed without thought for the future.

We have hardened our hearts

and turned away from communities devastated by the climate crisis and marred by greed.

Out of the greatness of your love,

All: **Lord, forgive us.**

Aline's Story – Part One

Reader A: Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world financially. More than 70% of the population live in poverty. Most people get their living through farming. Farmers have been significantly affected by the climate crisis, facing droughts, floods and landslides. Many families eat just one meal a day.

Philip Galgallo, Country Director of Christian Aid Burundi tells us: 'I think the biggest worry for most Burundian mothers is how they'll feed their children.'

On top of all this Aline Nibogora faced extra challenges. She was abused by her husband and forced out of her home, becoming separated from her children. With nowhere to live and worrying daily about her children's safety, Aline was pushed into the most extreme poverty.

Quiz: *(Time to discuss a few quiz questions about Burundi, with the person next to you.)*

1. Burundi is bordered by three other countries in Africa. Can you name them?
2. Cassava bread is at the heart of many meals in Burundi. Which classic pudding is made from the pearls of cassava root?
3. How many people in Burundi are thought to be in modern slavery?
a) None b) 75 people in every 10,000 people c) 75 in 1,000 d) 75 in 100
4. In which year did Burundi make its debut in the Olympic Games (in Atlanta), winning a gold medal in athletics?
5. Burundi sits on the shore of which great lake, the oldest and second largest freshwater lake in the world? a) Lake Victoria b) Lake Tanganyika c) Lake Kivu d) Lake Turkana
6. What is the infant mortality rate in Burundi? (Children who die before their 5th birthday but not including still births.)

Bible Reading:

Reader B: The greatest commandment (*Mark 12 28 – 31*)

²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, ‘Of all the commandments, which is the most important?’

²⁹ ‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” ³¹ The second is this: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.’

For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us,

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Aline’s Story – Part Two

Reader A: Aline told Christian Aid about life when she was homeless: “I wandered the streets, asking anyone for a place to sleep. Those who showed me kindness would let me stay for two or three days, but it was difficult. People would insult me and treat me with contempt. They forgot I was a human being. It filled me with sorrow.”

Aline never gave up. Pushed to the brink of survival, she pushed back.

Aline joined a community workshop led by Christian Aid-funded trainers. She learnt about Village Savings and Loans Associations and was determined to form her own to help herself and others around her. Village Savings and Loans Associations offer a way for community groups to manage, save and lend money. Aline was able to get a start-up loan and began trading avocados and peanuts. She was also able to buy a bicycle so that she could transport her goods.

Song:♪ (*When I needed a neighbour. Written for Christian Aid in 1965*)

1. When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there?

When I needed a neighbour, were you there?

Chorus:

***And the creed and the colour and the name won’t matter,
were you there?***

2. I was hungry and thirsty, were you there, were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?

Chorus:

3. I was cold, I was naked, were you there, were you there?

I was cold, I was naked, were you there?

Chorus:

4. When I needed a shelter, were you there, were you there?

When I needed a shelter, were you there?

Chorus:

5. When I needed a healer, were you there, were you there?

When I needed a healer, were you there?

Chorus:

6. Wherever you travel, I'll be there, I'll be there.

Wherever you travel, I'll be there.

Chorus:

And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,

I'll be there.

Aline's Story – Part Three

Reader A: Aline's business was successful and she was able to rent a house. At last she was reunited with her three eldest sons who came to live with her. She is hopeful that one day she will be together with all of her children. Aline can now afford food for herself and her family. She has bought solar panels so that her children can have light to help them study.

Now Aline is baking her own bricks and building a stronger home for her family, in every sense. Aline told Christian Aid: 'We pray together as we are still alive thanks to God's grace. ... We have been through hurricanes and difficult times, but now we make plans for the future.'

Prayers: *(Please add your own prayers during the pauses, whether out loud or in your heart.)*

Leader: Compassionate God, we bring to you our thanks and our concerns.

All: **Your love endures forever.**

Leader: Thank you, God, for those who have shown us tenderness, care and compassion;

for those who have seen us through troubled times and brought us hope.

We pray for those we love, and for those we have failed to love.

Remembering Aline's experience, we hold in mind people around the world who know what it is to be treated as less than human.

May we work together to uphold the dignity of every human being.

(PAUSE)

God whose love endures forever,

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Inspiring God, thank you for those who inspire us with their strength, courage and perseverance.

We pray for people brought to the brink by extreme poverty, struggling to survive.

We pray especially for families in Burundi who do not have sufficient food, clean water, or access to healthcare.

Fuel us with the fire of your spirit. Fill us with a fierce determination to end the outrage of poverty. May we hear the cries of those who are excluded from power. May we speak up with them for a more equal and just world.

(PAUSE)

God whose love endures forever,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Healing God, thank you for peacemakers and healers. We pray for all those who are reaching across divisions and acting to end violent conflict. May political leaders use their power wisely to further the cause of peace.

We bring to you our concerns, both personal and around the world:

(PAUSE)

God whose love endures forever,

All: Hear our prayer. Amen

Aline's Story – Part Four

Reader A: Burundi continues to be one of the toughest places on earth to live and Aline and her family still face challenges.

When a ferocious storm destroyed Aline's home, almost killing her and her children, she was able to recover by selling the cows she'd been keeping. Now when crisis threatens her family's survival, Aline has options. Even a small business can provide just enough resilience to weather the most brutal of storms in Burundi.

Aline's now the chairperson of a Village Savings and Loans Association that she founded. She's using her experience to help transform the lives of 25 families who are building their own brighter future together. Aline says, 'If anyone has a problem, we help them find a solution. ... The members thank me for the training and the positive impact it has had on their daily lives. People come to me as they trust me. Here in Burundi, a neighbour is considered a member of the family.'

A sign of peace:

Leader: We are all neighbours and members of one family. Let's share the peace of Christ with each other.

Time for sharing thoughts:

Explanation of the new door to door envelope and letterbox collection system:

Song:♪ *(from Central America)*

- 1. When we are living, we are in the Lord, and when we're dying, we are in the Lord;
for in our living and in our dying, we belong to God, we belong to God.**
- 2. Each day allows us to decide for good, loving and serving as we know we should;
in thankful giving, in hopeful living, we belong to God, we belong to God.**
- 3. Sometimes we sorrow, other times embrace, sometimes we question everything we face;
yet in our yearning is deeper learning: we belong to God, we belong to God.**
- 4. Till earth is over may we always know, love never fails us: God has made it so.
Hard times will prove us, never remove us; we belong to God, we belong to God.**

Closing responses:

Leader: God of life, of all life and of each life, we lay our lives before you.
Nothing is hidden from you. We give our lives to you.

All: **You are before us, God, you are behind. You are around us, God, you are within.**

Leader: God of life, generous Spirit,

All: **renew us with your life, tonight, tomorrow and always.**

Blessing:

All: **May we persevere in faith, may we go out in hope, may we act and speak with love,
By the grace of God, our creator, redeemer, and comforter, Amen.**

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Iona Abbey Worship Book © The Iona Community

Common Ground © The Iona Community

We belong to God © WGRG

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<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>

NEXT IONA SERVICE IS AT 5pm on SUNDAY 26th May 2024

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT BURUNDI

Burundi is a small country in central Africa. The majority of people are ethnically Hutu (about 84%) with the Tutsis as a minority group (about 14%). Before European colonisation the two groups lived largely peacefully together, ruled by another group, the Ganwa, which was respected by both Hutu and Tutsi.

After independence from colonial rule in 1962, the larger country of Ruanda-Urundi is divided along largely ethnic lines, into Rwanda and Burundi. In Burundi, the minority Tutsis gained and kept power and controlled the army. The use of discrimination by the Tutsis fuelled the growth of fear and prejudice on both sides. Cycles of violence and genocide resulted in 400,000 deaths. (While one million people, mostly Tutsis, were killed in the genocide in neighbouring Rwanda in 1994.)

The first democratically elected Hutu President was assassinated in 1993 by Tutsi army officers. 12 years of civil war followed. A protracted peace process went on during this time which involved pursuing justice for previous crimes of genocide, engaging all parties to have a voice and ownership of the process, and encouraging listening and dialogue.

Peace and stability have been worked towards by the signing of an Accord, ceasefires, the gradual disarming of the various groups, and a transition plan which involved safeguards for all parties and inclusive initiatives such as Burundi Leadership Training.

Burundi is slowly building its economy based on subsistence farming. Progress is hampered by worsening storms, floods and droughts. Poor health care systems and early marriage of girls has resulted in a high birth rate and high child mortality rate. 75 in every 1,000 of the population are estimated to be in modern slavery.

Here are some links to stories about Christian Aid and Burundi



<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week/alines-story>

Aline can not only look ahead to her children's future now, but her own too. Naturally, Aline wants security as she ages.

In the next five years she hopes to expand her current wholesale business by selling a range of goods, so that one day she can buy a mill. This will provide a source of income without the need to transport heavy goods over long distances.

Aline told us: 'This is not a dream. It is a plan, and I will do it. I am a woman who is an achiever.'

Burundi Country Profile



Burundi, one of the world's poorest nations, is struggling to emerge from a 12-year, ethnic-based civil war.

The country's early history and role of the three main ethnic groups - the Twa, Hutu and Tutsi - is highly debated.

Since independence in 1962 it has been plagued by periodically violent tensions between the usually-dominant Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority.

A civil war, sparked off in 1993 made Burundi the scene of one of Africa's most intractable conflicts.

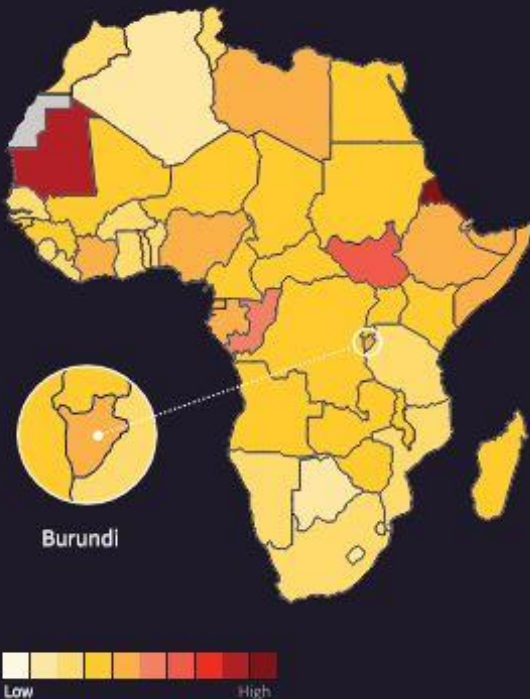
For more information about Burundi visit <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13085064>

Modern slavery in Burundi

Global Slavery Index 2023 Country Snapshot



Figure 1.
Estimated prevalence of modern slavery across Africa



KEY STATS

Population (2021) 11,890,781
GDP per capita, PPP (Current intl \$) \$771

7.5

PREVALENCE OF MODERN SLAVERY per 1,000 people

89,000

NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN MODERN SLAVERY

77/100

VULNERABILITY TO MODERN SLAVERY

29/100

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO MODERN SLAVERY

The scale of modern slavery

According to the 2023 Global Slavery Index, an estimated 7.5 in every thousand people were in modern slavery in Burundi at any point in 2021. In other words, 89,000 people experienced forced labour or forced marriage in Burundi in 2021. In terms of prevalence of modern slavery, Burundi ranks 47th globally and 8th within Africa.

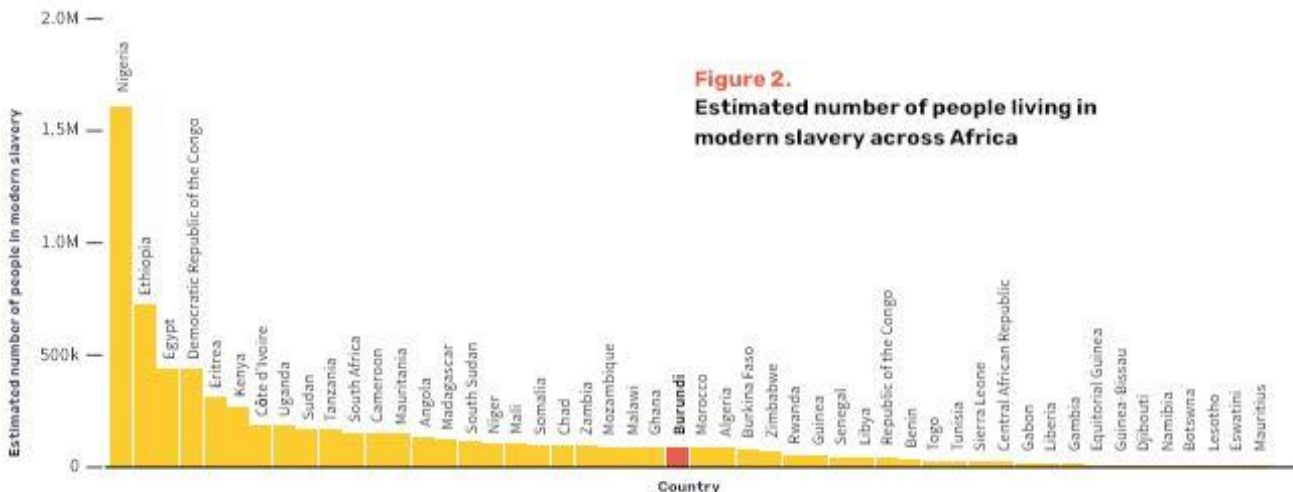


Figure 2.
Estimated number of people living in modern slavery across Africa