



Updates

Sharing news of our ministry for praise and prayer

Aug, Sept, Oct 2025

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ.

Colossians 4:2-3

THE DAMASCUS TRUST



Partners

NEWS FROM DIOCESES OF BYUMBA & GASABO (RWANDA)

Three of us from DT visited our overseas partners in Rwanda in June. It was good to go and to see / hear first hand more about what is going on with the Church of Jesus in our partner dioceses, especially given the present closure of so many church buildings. As you can imagine, this is impacting the Christians hugely, so we thought it important to share what we heard and saw with you for prayer.

We were told by senior church leaders, that in recent times there has been a big increase in the number of religious groups setting up congregations all over Rwanda. Self-made 'bishops' and 'prophets' have gathered people around them, teaching a prosperity gospel, resulting in financial gain for themselves and causing turmoil within communities. Unregistered and unregulated church congregations were being set up at an alarming rate and in all types of buildings / structures. As a result, the government decided to act. Firstly all church leaders had to have a recognised bachelor degree-level qualification in theology. Then in order to ensure the safety and legitimacy of church structures, building regulations were introduced.

To avoid unregulated church meetings, key aspects of religious worship (congregational singing with drums and musical instruments, dancing, clapping) are restricted to church buildings that meet the building regulations. Smaller church / home groups can meet for Bible study and prayer, but without any key aspects.

We were able to visit seven parishes in the diocese of Byumba and another seven in Gasabo diocese. This gave us a good idea as to how Christians are responding.

In general, most parishes have church buildings that are closed. Some parishes have adapted to this situation better than others and are finding creative ways of maintaining fellowship, Bible teaching and evangelism. However, other parishes are really struggling to keep going with people feeling very discouraged. Please pray for the pastors and church leaders in these parishes in particular.

Whilst we can understand some of the human reasoning behind what is going on, we are very aware of the spiritual dimension that is also involved. In Ephesians 6, Paul makes it very clear that our struggle is against *'the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places.'* It seems that the spiritual forces of evil are taking advantage of these regulations to demoralise and handicap the Church of Jesus. What is required of many parishes, is seemingly beyond their human abilities / resources.

But whilst church buildings may be closed, the Church of Jesus cannot be closed down and Almighty God is still at work, building his Church. So let's pray that the Christians will see what God is doing and join in. Ω

8-10.25

Helpful abbreviations: **DT** = Damascus Trust; **SAP** = Support A Parish; **ADoB** = Anglican Diocese of Byumba; **ADoG** = Anglican Diocese of Gasabo;; **WHP** = Water Harvesting Project;

PRAISE & PRAYER FOR DIOCESES OF BYUMBA & GASABO

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.” Deut 31:6

- Please pray that Almighty God will intervene in the present situation and bring about a right resolution with the government concerning the many building regulations.
- Pray that the Church of Jesus will continue to grow, numerically and spiritually during this testing time. Pray for victory over adversity.
- Please pray for the Christians who are struggling with the lack of church services and meeting together. Pray that they will rediscover their love for Jesus and the value of fellowship in smaller groups.
- Praise the LORD for the initiatives that are taking place to maintain fellowship and Bible study amongst believers. Pray that they will grow in their love for one another as well as for Christ.
- Please pray for the Bishops in both dioceses as they feel the weight of responsibility to care and provide for the pastors and the congregations. Pray for Holy Spirit strength and wisdom.
- We are encouraged by the use of SAP money to set up income-generating projects in the parishes (see photo). Banana and coffee plantations, animal husbandry are relatively easy to set up and run and produce an income within the first 1-2 years.
- These projects allow people to work together, to encourage one another and to lift themselves out of poverty. Please pray that Christians will make the most of these times of interaction with one another as well as with others in the community.
- Give thanks for the church buildings that are open and for the opportunity for people from different congregations and parishes to share in services together.
- We praise God for the continued, and growing, witness of Christ's Church even whilst facing challenges. Praise the Lord that people are coming to Christ and being baptised. Please pray for their nurture through the house groups.
- Please pray for those pastors who are facing redundancy / retirement due to not having the right qualification. Many of the pastors are close to retirement and are not able to go back to study. Other pastors do not have the intellectual ability to get the necessary degree qualification. The dioceses are looking at ways to employ some in a different role - as an assistant priest - but those who are older will have to take early retirement and struggle on a reduced income.
- Some pastors have taken out loans with the diocese to set up an income-generating project to support themselves and their families in retirement. Pray for God's blessing on these ventures.





Partners

NEWS FROM DAMASCUS TRUST (UK)

As you know, **Robin and Hilary Swan went with Andy to Rwanda in June.** It was a very worthwhile trip and we were able to visit 14 parishes in both our partner dioceses. You can read more about it in the relevant section in our updates. Now we are back, there is a lot to process and think through, so please pray for us as we continue to work alongside the Church in Rwanda.

One development in both dioceses is the way our **SAP funds** are used to allow parishes to set up income-generating projects. This means that not only is the pastor helped through this income, but the parish benefits as a whole and becomes more self-supporting for the future. Having talked things through with both bishops as to how funds are allocated and managed, we are reassured that DT's money is being well used to help the spiritual and physical needs of pastors and their congregations.

If you are part of the **Damascus Trust Facebook group** then you will have had news updates and photos from us whilst we were in Rwanda. It was good to have that immediate link with you and thank you for your prayers and encouragement. If you are not yet signed up, then why not join us. You can sign up via this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/620538267056781/?ref=share> Ω



Audio files of some Bible teaching given by Andy Paine are now available on the DT website. [Click here to select and listen.](#) More will be uploaded in the coming months. Ω

AUDIO

Andy and Liz continue to have involvement with a local (elderly) church congregation on the 3rd Sunday of each month. This is a small fellowship, on a housing estate, but they are enthusiastic, especially for singing and Bible teaching. As one lady declared, 'We love our Bibles, we do!' Andy also leads the monthly Café Church at St Editha's in Tamworth. For the last few months we've been looking at some of the Foundations of the Christian Faith - reminding ourselves of what we believe and why we believe it. This has been an abridged version of Andy's online teaching course. Ω

Andy will be visiting some UK partner churches in the coming months including Pocklington Christian Fellowship, Guithavon Valley Evangelical Church (Witham) and Crossways Christian Fellowship (Halstead). He will also be visiting Romania again in October to teach the 'On the Edge' course at Emanuel University and speak at different church fellowships.. Ω



Today's **Engage with the Bible** is available [here](#) or on our website at www.damascustrust.org. Why not sign up and have it delivered each day by email? Ω

8-10.25

Helpful abbreviations: DT = Damascus Trust; TMB - Tamworth Men's Breakfast; EWTB = ENGAGE with the Bible; DTAH = Damascus Trust At Home

PRAISE & PRAYER FOR DAMASCUS TRUST

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Rom 12:11

- Give thanks for the recent visit to Rwanda, for safe travel and for valuable time with our overseas partners.

- It was good to have Robin and Hilary travel with Andy to see the work first hand (see photo). As a result, Hilary has offered to help with the SAP programme - which will be much appreciated. Please pray that we can set everything up to run smoothly between us and our overseas partners.



- Please pray for forthcoming visits to UK partner churches. We are grateful for their share in our ministry and for their regular support in prayer and finance.
- Give thanks for all who support our work through prayer as well as financial help. If you are amongst these, then THANK YOU! Many of you have been partners with us for many years - even decades now. We thank God for you.
- Please pray for the preparation needed for Andy's trip to Romania in October (3rd-13th). He will be teaching the 'On the Edge' course at Emanuel University. This course looks at a Biblical perspective on working with those on the margins of society. We expect a class of around 30 students from the Social Studies department but may be joined by students from the Theology department.
- Andy will also be preaching at various churches in Oradea on the Sundays and in the evenings during the week.
- Pray too for the practicalities involved in preparing for this visit. A youth worker, Howard, who attends Waterloo Road Chapel, is planning to travel with Andy. His testimony is relevant for some that ACV works with and we hope to run some workshops and activities for different groups as part of our visit. More details will be posted on our website in September.
- Pray for the adjustments necessary as the work of DT changes and develops. Allocating the time needed to do the preparation for editing / writing new EWTBs and also editing / recording teaching series is a challenge.
- We're grateful for the ongoing help and support offered by the Trustees - Robin Swan, Peter Harrington and Floyd Davies. As we meet together every three months, please pray that our discussions and decisions will be guided by the Holy Spirit and that we will be sensitive to his direction.

ACV monthly prayer meetings continue for different aspects of the ministry as well as for individuals. Both Noemi Lazar and Sorin Maier (both on ACV Management Team) have had surgery recently, so we pray for their speedy recovery. Romania has a new President and Prime Minister, so we can pray that they will serve with integrity and set a good example for others to follow. Ω

A new **ACV Mentoring Programme** is due to start in Oradea Prison in September, so please pray for preparations for this - practical and spiritual. Ω

The Guitar classes finished on June 19th after another term of teaching both guitar and the Bible. We're grateful to those who lead and teach the young people. The classes also give opportunity to interact with the parents of the students, some of whom are present for most of the class and can listen in on what is being taught. ACV often takes some of the students on church visits to lead worship songs and some of the parents help with transport. Ω

ACV volunteers work with other organisations in prison to run two other programmes - **'One Day With Father'** and **'Prisoner's Journey'**. The first programme focusses on the role of a father, helping inmates to consider their family responsibilities. The other programme addresses our attitudes to work and helping inmates to recognise their self-worth. Both programmes have a Biblical basis. Sorin writes: *'We finish with diplomas, guests, party, good food and Gospel. It was a blessing time with all inmates family. A lot of them come in front at the end for us to pray for them.'*

ACV continues to visit the prison on the third Sunday in the month, to lead a church service for inmates. Because this service is popular and clashes with the Orthodox service, the time of the ACV service is now at 1300 hrs, instead of 0900 hrs. Please pray that this will not reduce the numbers attending. Ω

Since last April, ACV has been visiting the **Night Shelter** twice a month. There has been a lot of encouragement recently with some good response from the residents. Students from **Emanuel University** are a regular part of the team and fortnightly visits enable relationships with the residents to develop quicker.

Each visit includes songs (which residents join in with), testimonies, readings and a short gospel talk. Then an important time follows with ACV team mixing with the residents to listen and talk with people on a more personal level. Problems are shared, prayer is offered and people are responding to the love of Christ as shown by the ACV team. Ω



8-10.25

PRAISE & PRAYER FOR ASOCIAȚIA CĂRAREA VIEȚII

So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. 2 Thess 2:15

- Give thanks for the success of the guitar classes. Please pray that these young people will learn as much about following Christ as they do about playing guitar.
- Pray for the guitar teachers and Bible teachers as they volunteer their time each week. Pray God's blessing on them.
- Praise the LORD that students from Emanuel University are part of the regular ACV team visiting the Night Shelter. An end-of-term BBQ was provided by ACV for the students (right).
- Pray for the ongoing health of the ACV Management Team, especially for Noemi and Sorin as they recover from surgery.
- Thank God for the partnership of local churches with ACV and for their financial and prayer support. It's important for ACV to have this link with local church fellowships.
- Pray for the preparations for the next mentoring Programme in Oradea prison in September. Pray that the right inmates will sign up and that the right ACV volunteers will be involved.
- Give thanks for the response from the residents at the Night Shelter. Pray for a sensitive approach from ACV team members as they work with these vulnerable adults.
- Give thanks for the programmes that ACV is involved with that are run in Oradea Prison. Please pray for good relationships with the prison authorities as well as with the inmates.
- Pray for the monthly services that ACV runs in Oradea Prison. Pray that there will be good relationships with the Orthodox church there in the prison and that the change in service times will not be a hindrance for inmates to attend.
- Give thanks for the help of a local Christian restaurant owner, who provides food for ACV to take into the Night Shelter, This is a great blessing and much appreciated by the residents, as you can imagine.
- We thank the Lord for providing extra help on the ACV Management Team. In addition to the original four (Sorin, Emil, Florin and Iosif) they now have Noemi Lazer (students and youth), her husband Oliver Lazer (logistics) and Nicu Maior (prayer manager).
- When there is a 5th Sunday in the month, ACV will visit a partner church. With the help of some guitar students, they will lead some worship, share testimonies and news about the work and encourage prayer and practical support.



WHO'S WHO & WHAT'S WHAT

Trustees: Robin Swan (& Hilary); Peter Harrington (& Susanna); Floyd Davis (& Anne)

Hon. IT Consultant: Gavin Rowden; **Ubushuti:** Pete & Heather Ellis; Liz Paine;

Hon. Treasurer: Joy Dean; **General:** Andy & Liz Paine

Local Coordinators: Sorin Maier (Romania); Placide Nizeyimana (Byumba); Samuel Kayitare (Gasabo)

Christian Partner Organisations:

Asociația Cărarea Vieții / Path of Life Association, Romania, overseen by Sorin Maier

Diocese of Byumba, Rwanda cared for by Bishop Emmanuel Ngendahayo

Diocese of Gasabo, Rwanda cared for by Archbishop Laurent Mbanda

Rwanda SAP Programme:

Parishes/Pastors with ADoB, Rwanda:

Bwambi - Rev. Onesime; wife Marie
Gaseke - Rev. Seth; wife Jeanette
Giheta - Rev. Lucien; wife Dative
+ Giti - Dcn Boniface
Kibare - Rev. Evariste; wife Venerand
+ Kinihira - Evangelist Elish
Kinyana - Rev. Mutsinzi; wife Francis
Kitazugurwa - Rev. Jean Bosco; wife Henriette
Mimuli - Rev. Alexis Moses; wife Clementine
Mugina - Rev. Celestin
Ngarama - Rev. Placide; wife Susanna
Nyabihu - Rev. Innocent; wife Marie
Nyande - Rev. Sylvere; wife Seraphine
Rebero - Rev. Augustine; wife Florence
Ruhondo - Rev. Clementine
Ruyange - Rev. Kezia (widow)
Rwasa - Rev. Diogene; wife Francoise
Rwesero - Rev. Felicien; wife Placidie
Tsimba - Rev. Jean de Dieu; wife Rev. Patricie
Tumba - Rev. Philbert; wife Ernestine
+ sub-parish

Parishes/Pastors with ADoG, Rwanda:

Gacuriro - Dcn Cyprian
* Karama - Rev. Clement; wife Marie Immaculee
* Kayanga - Revd Benjamin; wife Egidie
Kinyinya - Rev. Samuel; wife Grace
* Nduba - Dcn Appolinaire; wife Francoise
Nkuzuzu - Rev. Alfred; wife Claudette
Nyabikenke - Rev. Eugene; wife Marie Claire
Rubungo - Rev. Emmanuel; wife Francine
* new parish plants

ACV Romania:

Board / Management Team

Sorin Maier	Emil Bodog
Iosif Rezmives	Florin Maghiar
Oliver Lazar	Noemi Lazar
Nicu Maior	

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