



Choosing to See

28 DAYS OF
PRAYER &
REFLECTION

Becoming People of Compassion

How to Use this Prayer Guide:

This book is intended to be a devotional prayer guide for individuals and families to give fresh insight into our four Compassion Partner locations—**Rwanda, Haiti, Uganda and Central Alberta.**

Each day contains information and stories about our partnerships, as well as prayer requests. It is our prayer that God would use this book to help you **SEE** where He is at work in our partnerships, and that you would sense God's compassionate heart growing in you towards His purposes in Central Alberta and around the world.

To get the most out of this book, we would encourage you to set aside a few minutes each day, such as around the dinner table or before bedtime, to read, reflect and pray.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support of CrossRoads Compassion.

Julie Cavanaugh

**Interim Pastor of Outreach Missions
& the Global Compassion Committee**

CROSSROADS  COMPASSION
CHURCH

Since 2008, CrossRoads Church has been developing long-term accountable partnerships as we seek to impact our world with compassion and the hope of Christ. For more information regarding our partnerships visit:

crossroadschurch.ca/compassion





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**PARTNER COLOUR CODE
USED IN THIS GUIDE:**



HAITI



UGANDA



RWANDA



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Compassion

EYES TO SEE

What does it mean to be compassionate? In the Bible, compassion is far more than sympathy. It means to ‘feel from your gut’ what a sufferer feels. Yet in order to feel with them, we first need to be able to SEE them. It’s easy to *know* people are suffering; we *know* things are hard in many countries, including our own. But when we see suffering remotely, or often, it blends into the background and becomes invisible.

In the book of Genesis, Hagar seems invisible. She is a foreign, female slave, who ends up an abandoned and impoverished single parent. One could hardly be more lowly, more unseen; but God sees her. In His compassion, He sends an angel to help her. This book is designed to help us choose to see, and like our God, respond with compassion.

We’ll begin these 28 days reflecting on essential elements of compassion and then we’ll introduce our partnerships—hearing painful realities alongside stories of transformation and hope. As we take time each day to pray, may God move our hearts a little bit closer to His own heart of compassion.

THINK

Who is invisible in your community? Do you find it difficult to slow down and truly see?

PRAY

That God would give you fresh eyes to see those who are in front of you today.



**You are the
God who
sees me.**

Genesis 16:13



2 out of 5 Canadian
Christians give money
towards missional
compassion.



Poverty

“

**And they hid
from the Lord
God among
the trees of
the garden.**

Genesis 3:8

You have money or you don't...and if you don't, you're poor. Right? Sometimes we describe poverty like this—as if it were a financial line that people are either above or below, making money the obvious solution. It just isn't that simple. From a Christian perspective, poverty is **not** a line that needs crossing, it is **a brokenness that needs mending**. This brokenness is in all our relationships—with **God, ourselves, others and creation**.

In Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve broke relationship with God, fear took the place of trust. Their hearts became scarred with shame. The closeness they had with each other was twisted into blame, and the fruitfulness of creation became a struggle against thorns and thistles. God. Self. Others. Creation. These broken relationships cause poverty in all its forms including injustice, starvation, abuse, despair.

Seeing poverty as just a money problem can cause those of us who are 'above the line' to miss the truth. We too are impoverished. We too have brokenness. Compassion grows out of recognizing our own deep need for God's healing—along with our world.

THINK

Where do you see brokenness in your community in each of the four relationships? Where do you see poverty in yourself?

PRAY

Pray that God would mend the brokenness and poverty *in you* and would use you to mend brokenness *around you*.

68%

of Canadians believe money can buy happiness.



Gospel

A picture is worth a thousand words. Jesus loved using pictures to describe Himself, only He didn't have flashy photography in His day. Instead, He used everyday images. Light. Water. Bread. For many of us, these images don't have the same impact as for their first audience, because they are available on demand through the flick of a switch, a crank of a tap or a jaunt to the corner store.

To get Jesus' point we need to see these images through the lens of the materially poor. Ghandi, the famous Indian activist explained, "There are people in the world so hungry that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread." That's how Jesus came—identifying with basic needs. Spiritually, Jesus came to restore the broken relationship between humanity and God, but He did not stop there. He fed people. He healed people. He elevated their status. In other words, **His gospel is Good News that doesn't stay as news. It produces good deeds.** Our compassion must be the same.

Coming up, we will look at how our partners are transforming their communities through sharing the gospel.

THINK

Which side of the gospel do you tend to gravitate toward—Good News or good deeds? On which side do you think Central Alberta primarily experiences CrossRoads Church?

PRAY

Thank God that He is transforming people and that in Him is real, life-changing hope for Central Alberta, Uganda, Haiti and Rwanda.



**Jesus said,
I am the
bread of life**

John 6:35

63%

of Canadian Christians say the local church is responsible for the Great Commission.



Focus

“

**Let your eyes
look directly
forward and
your gaze
be straight
before you.**

Proverbs 4:25

With so much brokenness, where do we start? The issues can be overwhelming. How should we invest our compassion? When people invest money they often want to diversify—meaning, a little in this, a little in that... spread the money around. That way, if stocks are down, maybe the real estate market is up. With this kind of investment the goal is financial *stability*.

However, when it comes to investing compassion, we don't want stability. **What we want is *significant impact***. That requires a focused approach. Robert Lupton, a community development expert, states that if Christians want to impact their communities they can't invest in every issue—they need to focus. This means going deep in a limited number of areas.

As a church we have chosen to invest our compassion into four places—Haiti, Uganda, Rwanda and Central Alberta. While all the other places in the world matter deeply to God, we feel called to make a significant impact in these four places.

THINK

To focus on compassion for 28 days might mean saying no to other things. Take a minute to name things that are vying for your attention this week.

PRAY

“God there is so much competing for my attention, my time, my money and my heart. Would You help me to focus on how You want to impact me during these 28 days?”

100%

of CrossRoads' December Compassion offering goes directly to our partners.



Partnership

Every culture has strengths. Some cultures value relationships. Others value industry and hard work. Most cultures, however, also have weaknesses, or blind spots, which lead to cultural brokenness. For example, one culture might normalize gender violence, another isolation and loneliness, or perhaps greed. If we only pay attention to our own context we can miss God's fuller picture of wholeness.

God has placed His image inside all of humanity. When we choose to open our eyes to the strengths in other cultures, we ourselves can grow to better represent Christ in our world. This is why partnership is so important. We partner with agencies around the world and in Central Alberta because we believe that God has given us gifts that can bless them, AND *that they have gifts from God that will bless us*. We work together—like a body.

Having a partnership mentality helps guard us against arrogance—thinking our culture knows best. In the body of Christ, all the parts work together for the good of the whole body. **Jesus' gospel cuts across cultures.**

THINK | Have you ever seen Christians display cultural arrogance, causing damage to others? What are your culture's strengths? Weaknesses?

PRAY | Pray that God would keep us from arrogance in our efforts of compassion, and that those at CrossRoads who are in charge of our Compassion Partnerships would have wisdom partnering cross-culturally and across our city.

“

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

1 Corinthians 12:27

93%

of large churches engage in partnerships in global communities.



Uganda Current Realities



Uganda has a population of **48 million**



High HIV rates continue to contribute to Uganda's poverty and orphan crisis



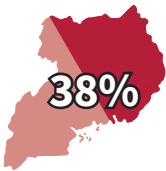
12.3% of children are **orphans**, totalling over **2 million** child orphans



Only **1 in 4 children** in our partnership region have their **essential needs met**



29% of children are **stunted** from not enough nutrition



38% of Ugandan's live on \$1.75/day, making Uganda one of the **poorest countries** in the world



12% of girls between the ages of 10-19 years old are **already married**



65% of children experience **violence** in their childhood

THINK

Which one of these statistics grabs your heart? Why?

PRAY

Pray for the people represented by these numbers. Praise God that we can partner with IN-Uganda as they seek to help bring lasting change in these areas.



Safe Water

Uganda

“

**But let
justice roll
on like a river,
righteousness
like a never-
failing stream.**

Amos 5:24

“Students drink it. They take it as it is without being purified.” These are the words of Paul, the Headmaster at Buikwe Secondary School. In Red Deer, most principals are concerned about grades and teachers’ salaries. Paul is concerned about water. Clean water.

Seven years ago, the school began an initiative to address the lack of water. This involved pumping water from the valley, filling tanks, and dispersing it throughout the school compound. The result was plentiful, beautiful flowing water; but was it good to drink? Sadly, the answer is no. This is the reality for 18% of Ugandans. Many have to walk great distances to obtain clean water, and for others, clean water is simply not available. This results in exposure to serious diseases including typhoid and chronic stomach problems.

In Buikwe, however, Headmaster Paul is determined to change this story. His new goal is to obtain a water purification system so that students remain healthy and can study hard. Without partnership and participation alongside this school, improvements like this would not be possible.

ACT

Today, challenge yourself. Drink only water. No coffee. No pop. As you drink water thank God for the gift of clean water.

PRAY

Pray for those in Uganda who are still without this basic necessity. Pray for IN Uganda’s water projects; that they would be fully funded and effectively carried out.

80%

of water-gathering in Uganda is done by females, making it very difficult to attend school.



Farming

Rwanda

Imagine farming while being blind. Damascene is 43. He has a wife and five children, and for years was living in agonizing poverty due to his blindness. "I thought I was a burden to my family and even to society. I did not believe in myself at all," Damascene said. Then, he heard of World Relief's *Agriculture for Life* training through the church. He joined a farmer field school where they started planting basic crops such as Irish potatoes and wheat. The plants and farming techniques were a success! Damascene made a profit and was able to open a shop.

Once his own family's needs were met, Damascene reached out to others in his community with crippling disabilities. He is now running a savings group for them and is helping them receive training through World Relief so they too can provide for their families. Damascene says without World Relief valuing his life, things would not be as they are today. "I am changed and totally transformed for a better tomorrow." Praise God that He is using Damascene to empower 'the least of these' in his community.

“

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field...Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner

Leviticus 23:22

THINK

Imagine you had to live off of what you could produce in your yard. How long would you survive? Where would you go to find training?

PRAY

Pray for wisdom and success for the volunteer farmers who do 'one-to-one' training for *Agriculture for Life*. Pray for expansion so they can train in more remote areas.

69%

of Rwandans farm for survival with nothing left for profit due to poor farming practices.

Food Insecurity

Central Alberta

“

**For I was hungry,
and you gave Me
something to
eat; I was thirsty,
and you gave
Me something
to drink; I was a
stranger, and you
invited Me in.**

Matthew 25:35

We'll call her "Sarah". Sarah has three kids, and like many single parents in Central Alberta, with the rising costs of living, Sarah is struggling to keep them fed.

When she first found the programs of Hope Mission, a CrossRoads' Compassion partner, she thought it would just be good mentorship for her oldest, Ryan. He needed a role model, and this "seemed like a God-send." What she didn't expect is that the after-school programs would benefit the whole family. See, Ryan wasn't just going to the program for himself—with two hungry siblings at home, he went with his family in mind. "He brings some home for us," Sarah says, smiling. As Ryan built relationships at Hope Mission, Sarah found out about the community meals they put on. These are a time to gather around the table with others and have fellowship over good food. "My life is still chaotic," she says, honestly, "but [Hope Mission] is always there to help."

Jesus told His followers that when they invited strangers in and fed them, their kindness was directly for Jesus. What a simple way for our partners to share Jesus' love!

THINK

In what way can broken relationships lead to economic poverty? What other factors might contribute?

PRAY

Pray for our partners at Hope Mission, that God would give them His heart for each student and family they interact with. Pray that they would have many opportunities to point people to Jesus.

In 2023 our partner,
Hope Mission, provided

10,336

meals to kids and
families.



School Sponsorship

Haiti

We all experience hardship, but some people seem to have more than their share. A Haitian man's first wife bore them six children. Then she died. He married again. They had another six children, and then that wife died. A third wife; three more children, and another tragic death. Fifteen children with a bereaved father who had no means to provide for them. None of these children went to school a day in their life and by the time Haiti Arise found the family, eight kids had been given away—to anyone who would take them.

Statistically, one of those children likely became a slave. The four oldest and three youngest stayed with their father, but the youngest children were severely malnourished. "They had no smiles and nothing to smile about," said Haiti Arise staff. Their life seemed like a hopeless pit. The social work team discussed with the father and Haiti Arise agreed to help the younger children. A few weeks later, these three kids were heading to their first ever day of school. You should have seen the smiles! God saw these children, and thanks to Haiti Arise, they now have a firm place to stand.

“

He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

Psalm 40:2

ACT

If you have a child you sponsor, take a few minutes today and write them a note of encouragement.

PRAY

Pray for school teachers at Haiti Arise to be effective as they teach children to read, write, grow and develop so the cycle of poverty and illiteracy can be broken.

600

children are currently educated through Haiti Arise—200 of those are financially sponsored.



Rwanda

Current Realities



14 million people live in Rwanda—the most densely populated country in mainland Africa.



Many Rwandans continue to struggle from the **emotional and economic setbacks** caused by the **Rwandan Genocide**.



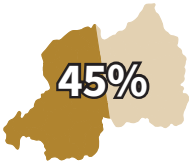
55% of Rwandans **live in poverty**.



Nearly **half** of children suffer from **chronic malnutrition**. Malnutrition impacts brain development, limits growth, hinders school performance, and lowers immunity.



50% of women (between ages 15-49) believe a husband is **justified for beating his wife**.



45% of the population is **under 18**.



Almost **1 in 5** children are **engaged in child labour**.

THINK

What statistic stands out to you the most? What factors do you think shape women to excuse violence against themselves?

PRAY

Praise God that He is using World Relief to unite churches in Rwanda and bring about change in these statistics. Pray for wisdom in how World Relief can impact the young population, to bring about cultural change.

Teen Pregnancy

Rwanda

“

For you
created my
inmost being.
You knit me
together in
my mother's
womb.

Psalms 139:13

Raising a child alone is an incredibly difficult task, no matter who you are or where you live. Now, imagine raising a baby while being impoverished, uneducated and still a child yourself. This is the reality many young women face in Nyamasheke, Rwanda.

This last year, 300 single moms between the ages of 16-20 were invited to receive World Relief training in *Savings for Life*. This training equips them to invest in farming or small businesses and teaches them how to save. Thirty of these women were chosen to receive livestock as a means of provision. Thirty seems small among 300, but this is an investment strategy. The livestock is an opportunity for these moms to give back to the community. Each mom gives the first offspring of her livestock to another vulnerable teen mom. The impact is moving this community from despair to dignity.

Imagine the joy for these moms to be able to not just provide for themselves, but to help someone else as well! Last year, 15 savings groups were formed from these young moms, offering them and their children community and hope.

THINK

What single parents are in your life? How could you bless them with a word of encouragement or a helping hand today?

PRAY

Pray that God would enable World Relief to keep expanding ministry to these vulnerable kids. Pray that God would prosper the savings groups for these single mothers.



Unwed teen pregnancy is a leading cause of poverty globally.



Domestic Violence

Central Alberta

Who do you turn to when home isn't safe? For years Ella had no answer to this question.

Originally from Syria, Ella endured 15 years of violence at the hands of her husband. After a breach of restraint, she was found unconscious. Death threats against her and her children forced Ella into a shelter where she was introduced to our partner, the Outreach Center. **Ella was given a furnished apartment in Julietta's place which protects victims of violence.** On arrival, she was quiet and disengaged. Slowly, the staff gained her trust, assisting her and her children through their trauma.

Ella realized the safest place for her was back in her homeland; however, she had no money and her children had no passports. To get them meant legally opposing her husband. Ella was terrified, but the staff not only helped her through the courts, they offered to pay the cost of the passports and airfare. When the team at Julietta's Place saw videos of Ella arriving back home, they felt blessed to have been a part of her journey. We'll never know the end of Ella's story, but our God still sees her.

“

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Psalms 34:18

THINK

If poverty is broken relationships, what are the ways violence impacts poverty in a community?

PRAY

Pray for the staff at Julietta's Place. They are on the front lines of many heart-wrenching stories. Pray that God would refresh and restore them.

3000

Red Deer women and children seek shelter from domestic violence every year.



Central Alberta Current Realities



Christianity has **decreased by 10%** in 10 years. Church attendance is at an all-time low



Red Deer is the **7th least-churched city** in Canada



Nearly **1 in 3 children** are raised by a lone parent



34% of lone parent families live in poverty

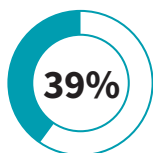


51% of women age 16 and older report experiencing **family violence** at least once



Local Partners:

- Outreach Centre
- Hope Mission
- Central AB Youth Unlimited
- Schools



39% of Food Bank distribution feeds children



1 in 4 child/youth hospitalizations is for **mental health**



Canada has the **3rd highest youth suicide** rate amongst developed countries

THINK

Who do you know who is currently living in one of these statistics?

PRAY

Ask God to show you where you can be His hands and feet. Praise God for our partners who are working to bring hope to people in our city who are struggling with these issues.



RWANDA

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Psalm



UGANDA

HAITI

the
s praise
D God.
may all
ations
e you.

n 67:5

CENTRAL ALBERTA





Hopelessness

Central Alberta

“

**There is surely
a future hope
for you, and
your hope will
not be cut off.**

Proverbs 23:18

“The biggest problem growing up today is not actually stress; it’s meaninglessness.” So says the latest research on adolescence. Youth in Central Alberta are suffering a crisis of meaning. “Every day teenagers buckle under the pressure of trying to figure out who they are and what their identity is,” says staff at Youth Unlimited, our partner.

For 13-year-old Scott, living half at his mom’s and half at his dad’s felt overwhelming. Scott’s anger and anxiety made school impossible. There were fights and suspensions. Academics were the last thing on his mind. When Scott had to move in full-time with his mom, however, things only got worse. Money became tight and Scott’s embarrassment over being ‘poor’ was crippling. “I couldn’t see any future for myself; how could I get out of this space that I was in?”, said Scott. “There was no one in my life to encourage me that I had any potential.”

When kids like this come to Youth Unlimited, it takes consistency before they believe they matter to someone and accept the love of Jesus. For Scott, it’s making all the difference in the world.

THINK

Who is a teen in your circle who might be struggling with hopelessness? How could you reach out to them today?

PRAY

Pray that as Youth Unlimited and Hope Mission walk alongside youth, the students would come to see their identity in Christ.

In 2022,

60%

of surveyed Albertans experienced anxiety or distress; many citing loss of hope as the cause.



Child Abandonment

Haiti

When a grandmother approached the Haiti Arise team, begging them to take her baby granddaughter Ruthneie, the team was hesitant. Ruthneie's arms were covered with socks, and the team was unsure of the situation. Investigating further, they discovered that Ruthneie's mother was heavily involved in witchcraft and was ritually burning her.

The Children's Village in Haiti exists to provide children a safe family environment, free from exploitation—whether from child slavery, abuse or neglect. Rather than an orphanage, these children are placed in families where they are cherished and educated. A social worker is involved in overseeing the children's development.

Since Ruthneie's arrival in the village, her body has healed and she is beginning to thrive. Now that she is a part of the Haiti Arise community, Ruthneie will have life-changing opportunities available to her, and most of all, she will know the love of Jesus Christ who compels us to love one another.

“

Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

Matthew 19:14

THINK

On day two, we talked about the four broken relationships that cause poverty. What types of brokenness can you identify in this story?

PRAY

Praise God for the parents in the children's village. Pray that God would fill them with love and wisdom as they care for these children. Pray that God would protect vulnerable children in Haiti.

32

children have currently found a family through Haiti Arise Children's Village.



Family Support

Rwanda

“

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other...

Ephesians 4:32

I didn't know a husband and wife could make decisions together. I didn't know they could trust each other..." When Ravodige and his wife's relationship began, things were difficult. Ravodige was unfaithful. He says, "I would spend my money on drinking and prostitutes." Their home was filled with fighting and violence. Yet God brought three World Relief church volunteers to his wife's door. They began to teach her about her rights, and about God's way. As she learned, God began working in her heart. "I myself was not an easy person, and so I started changing myself before anyone else," she says.

Ravodige saw the changes and he felt in his heart that he, too, needed to change. They began taking World Relief's *Families for Life* classes through the church. As they learned, they decided to get married. Ravodige chose to be faithful and began bringing his income home to his wife. They learned how to save money and how to treat their children with kindness.

Ravodige's wife is now on their church council. "We are now helping three families who are in the place we were, because now we know what life can be."

THINK

Has God's generosity towards you resulted in you extending that generosity towards others? Why or why not? In what ways has God blessed you? How could you pass on that blessing?

PRAY

Pray for World Relief volunteers who go door to door to engage with families like this one. Pray that God would help families in conflict to find support in the church and peace in Christ.

Last year, *Families for Life* reached

174 families,
and trained

29 couples.



Spiritual Warfare

Uganda

Sometimes we can forget we have an enemy, a real enemy who wants to “steal, kill and destroy.” (John 10:10.) In Buikwe Uganda, the local church struggles with near constant spiritual attacks.

One church in particular has been under significant spiritual opposition, and to top it all off, their church building was recently destroyed from incessant rains. Generally, Ugandans are open to Christianity, but often do not want to leave behind the old belief in witch doctors. Even in matters of health, witch doctors are frequently consulted before medical doctors. The battle between light and dark, the battle fought in the spiritual realm is real. When our teams go to Uganda, they actually feel the darkness.

However, knowing we have an enemy keeps us diligent to pray. The work in Uganda is “not by our might or by our strength, but by the Spirit of God.” Even without a building, the church continues to meet out in the open—their faith unshaken. God will provide.

“

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the...powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:12

THINK

In what ways is this story different from what you experience at church? In what ways is it the same?

PRAY

Pray for the church in Buikwe, that their faith would not fail and that the name of Jesus would be lifted high.

85%

of Uganda is considered Christian, but witchcraft and voodoo are still widely practiced.



Haiti Current Realities



20% of Haitian children are **malnourished**



1 in 10 children in Haiti are **child slaves**



75% of the people in Haiti live in **poverty**



50% of children will **never go to school**.
Only **5%** of those who do will **graduate**.



82% of Haiti's population is **unemployed**



60% live on less than **\$2.00/day**



Only **11%** of soil is **productive** for crops



Due to **violence**, all foreign NGO's have pulled out of Haiti

THINK

Imagine what it would be like to live on 2.00/day. What would you eat? How would it impact you?

PRAY

Praise God for preparing Haiti Arise for such a time as this! While others have had to leave, Haiti Arise is standing strong! Pray that God would increase the supplies and volunteers for Haiti Arise, and that Marc and Lisa, the directors, would know God's will.

DAY

20



Injustice

Haiti

“

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners ...and to set the oppressed free.

Luke 4:18

“It was the worst day of my life.” Jeff Sinclair recalls the day he was taken to a Haitian prison where he quickly learned how the system works—bribery.

In order to sleep he needed to pay the equivalent of \$100 Canadian. Paying bought him enough space to lay on his left side, sandwiched between all the other men who had also paid. After four hours of sleeping, to change sides, all of the prisoners need to wake up, stand up and move to their right side. No extra room whatsoever. Those who can’t pay stand in the latrine area all night. This means standing in raw sewage. “You don’t want that,” Jeff says. “Your feet become all swollen... it’s terrible.”

Jeff spent a month and four days in these conditions, but for what crime? The false accusation of stealing a phone. “But God was with me,” Jeff smiles. A lawyer from Haiti Arise saw him that first day and fought for justice. Without him, Jeff would still be in that cell.

Jesus came to release captives from physical and spiritual darkness, and He’s still doing it today. How incredible that we can join Him in this work!

THINK

Freeing captives from darkness—both physical and spiritual—is costly work. What might God be asking you to give in order to join in His work?

PRAY

Pray for the team of lawyers in Haiti. They need wisdom, resources, and for God to open doors so they can fight for people like Jeff.



Haiti’s prisons are 4.5 times over capacity. 9 prisoners fill the space where only 2 should be.



Gender Inequality

Uganda

No one wants to pay school fees, but in Uganda, 68% of students drop out because their parents cannot pay. However, one mom incredibly sent her six boys and six girls to the Buikwe school to receive “an equal education.” By this, she meant breaking the norm to educate her daughters too; but it wasn’t easy. They sold produce from their garden to pay the fees, which often meant choosing school over full bellies.

Why such sacrifice? Because without education a Ugandan girl only has one option—marriage. Leticia, her second youngest, says, “Marriage is where a girl’s dreams go to die.” Leticia then described watching her neighbor beat his wife with a stick. When she sought justice she was blamed for her failure as a wife. “But,” Leticia says with conviction, “we are created in God’s image . . . and our God is not limited. I want to use law to defend young girls. To inspire them.”

The subsidy the Buikwe school receives through our partnership has breathed life into Leticia’s dreams to become a lawyer, and continues to do so for the dreams of many other young girls as well.

“

In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27b

THINK

Jesus valued and elevated women, even when His culture devalued them. Who are the women who have most impacted your life?

PRAY

Pray that God would raise up women of faith and justice, like Leticia, in all our partner countries.



1 in 4 Ugandan teenage girls is already childbearing.



OUR FOCUS: Single Parents & Vulnerable Youth

through Hope Mission, Central Alberta Youth Unlimited (CAYU), and Outreach Center



Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.

1 Thessalonians 5:11



45%

CAYU's youth outreach and equipping young moms

35%

Outreach Centre's trauma therapy and safe housing*

20%

Hope Mission's after-school and food programs

*Going forward, our Outreach Centre support will concentrate on equipping Julietta's Place with upgraded security, and a play structure for kids.



The Bible contains 83 verses instructing care for orphans and widows.



What does partnership look like within our own community? Our local relationships developed from us asking our community where the church should focus. They said, **“Would you pay attention to the root causes of poverty?”** In other words, supporting people before they are caught in challenging and often preventable social issues. This is why we focus on single-parent families and vulnerable youth.

With our local partners however, we can give more than money; we can give of ourselves. This is where we live, where we are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus. So, local

partnership also means getting involved. When God opens our eyes to truly see those in need around us, He wants us to be willing vessels of compassion; people who, wherever we work, play or go, we bring compassionate hearts and hands that offer hope. For some, this might look like serving with one of our local partners. For others, it might mean reaching out to the single-parents and vulnerable youth God brings into our path. Money, relationship and involvement are key for local compassion, and all of them need to be covered in prayer.

THINK

What is hardest for you to give of: your money, your heart or your time? Where do you think God wants to challenge you?

PRAY

Pray for Hope Mission as they ready a new building. Pray that families would feel peace and welcome there. Pray for Youth Unlimited that the relationships they form with youth and young moms would reflect Christ. Pray for Outreach, that God would use Julietta’s place to bring stability, safety and healing in the lives of the women and children who live there this year.



OUR FOCUS:

Technical School

through Haiti Arise in Grand Goave, since 2008

“

**Work hard so
you can present
yourself to God
and receive his
approval.**

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Haiti Arise uses education as a means to raise godly leaders, while providing life-changing programs for community transformation.

Looking Back



This last year, the school instructed 350 students in 12 disciplines. Our 2023 funding covers teachers' salaries and program costs.

Looking Ahead



The school wants to expand to teach hospitality, nursing, education, and agriculture, and also explore a university component. Our upcoming funds will help them accomplish this.

82%

of the Haitian
population is
unemployed.



“It is like we are saving people,” says Pastor Luke, head of the Technical School at Haiti Arise. “Socially we are saving people; spiritually we are saving people. We cannot change this country without the young people, and unless they love this country.” From the outside, Haiti may not seem loveable. Violence. Corruption. Unrest. Starvation. Who could love a country like that?

And yet, love for the country looks like last year’s sewing graduates returning to sew this year’s 100 grad gowns—saving costs and boosting school pride. **Love is seeing the trade school praised in national news, and knowing 90% of graduates find**

work in their field. Their education gives them a reason to love Haiti, but it’s more than education. Through the lives of their teachers, they experience the saving hope of Christ. “We want them to have Jesus when they leave here.”

On Day 3, we talked about the gospel being Good News and good deeds. This partnership is a perfect example, and it’s changing the future of Haiti. Speaking to our church, Pastor Luke says, “In Haiti, we believe in prayer; we know that things can go forward.” And then, leaning forward he urges, “I would like CrossRoads to pray so that more students can come to study.”

THINK

Pastor Luke says that in order to change the place you live, you need to love it. What are you thankful for about where you live? Do you love Central Alberta?

PRAY

Pray that God would open doors for students to be able to come and train. Pray that the school could continue to expand and that many students would come to know Christ’s love.



OUR FOCUS: Education

through International Needs in
Buikwe, Uganda, since 2008

“

**Instruct the
wise and
they will be
even wiser.**

Proverbs 9:9

International Needs-Uganda focuses on improving the lives of orphans and vulnerable children.

Looking Back



During 2023, CrossRoads' funds completed six housing units for female teachers. With more girls than boys at the school, this staff housing will directly support the emotional, spiritual, and educational needs of these girls.

Looking Ahead



We are currently reviewing our partner's needs around education such as water quality, computers, student-teacher ratios, etc. Funds for 2024 will go to support the school in this way.

Only

14%

of kids in Uganda
enroll in secondary
school.



Imagine teaching a class of over 100 students, many of whom don't have textbooks. That's enough to make any teacher cringe! In Uganda, however, for many teachers, getting to school is harder than teaching in it.

Harriet is a teacher at our partnership school in Buikwe. "We work from very far; the roads are sometimes muddy and might be completely impassable," she says. This is true in many rural parts of Uganda. Often, due to poor infrastructure, teachers are unable to make it to schools altogether. These challenges significantly hinder rural education.

Our partner in Buikwe dreamed of a better way; with our funding they have now completed both male and female teacher's housing for the secondary school, removing the travel barrier. Harriet says, "We can reach our students in time, and even work with them in the evenings and on weekends." Praise God for such dedicated teachers who want to mentor these students to love the Lord with their heart, soul, mind and strength. God is using our money to impact the future of Uganda through Christ-centered education!

THINK

What would your life be like if you had to stop school at grade 6? For what teacher are you most thankful?

PRAY

Praise God that we've been able to finish the teacher's housing. Pray that God would bless the teachers with energy and passion. Pray for teachers you know in Central Alberta.



OUR FOCUS: Church Empowerment

through World Relief in Nyamasheke,
Rwanda, since 2013



You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.

Matthew 5:14

World Relief creates Church Empowerment Zones (CEZ) and equips them for outreach.

**World Relief's
Gospel-Centered Programs**



- **Water & Sanitation**
- **Outreach Groups**
- **Child Development**
- **Womens Empowerment**
- **Families for Life**
- **Agriculture for Life**
- **Savings for Life**

This coming year, our funds will help expand World Relief's programs in the much-needed area of vulnerable youth and single mothers.

Currently, our partnership is equipping

107

churches for outreach in Nyamasheke.



Sometimes Christians don't get along and don't work well together. Sometimes the reputation of Jesus in a community suffers because of this, but not in Nyamasheke Rwanda! Here, local churches understand the words of Jesus when He said, "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." (John 13:35).

Our entire focus in Rwanda is to mobilize local churches to work together to reach the vulnerable. World Relief trains church leaders in strategic programs to meet the community's physical and spiritual needs. For example, in Ernestine's community, someone from the local church knocked on her door to invite her into the savings group she was running. Ernestine says, "I didn't have skills in finance and had no relationships with others. When I joined, I was surprised how the savings group always

starts with prayer and sharing of the Word of God." Upon graduating from the program in 2023, Ernestine has been able to start a business and purchase a home to lend out. "I praise God who changed my hard life and [gave me] a better relationship with others."

Once the churches are fully equipped in all the programs, World Relief steps back, allowing local churches to continue being the hands and feet of Christ in their communities. **In 2022, we began in a new Church Empowerment Zone and God is already using the churches to make a lasting impact!** It sounds simple; yet here in Red Deer, we have much to learn from our Rwandan brothers and sisters about working together to reach out into our community. This is the gift of partnership; together we become more like Jesus.

THINK

Who do you have relationship with in other churches in Red Deer? How could you serve our community together with those people?

PRAY

Pray for Clemence, the new Country Director in Rwanda. Pray for wisdom and favor as she leads.



Being Changed

Global

“

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

These past weeks we've focused on our partners and their needs, and it's clear that without our giving, much of this good work would not be possible. We need to pray; we need to give; but we also need to get. Wait—what are WE supposed to get? Well, just ask Kevin.

On our most recent global compassion trip to Uganda, seeing our partners up close, Kevin received three things: faith, hope and love. Faith—our partners don't have all the 'things' we have—our resources, our toys, our comfort—but, they have great faith in God. Hearing stories of how God is meeting their needs grows our own faith. Hope. Many of their needs remain unmet. Yet, they hope in the Lord's provision for their futures. We grow in hope as we pray for them. And finally, love. Through the joy of the poor in Uganda, Kevin experienced God's love—being poured out on him! It seems backwards.

They don't have enough, yet they give generously of what they have.

How about you? As you have chosen to see with eyes of compassion during these weeks, do you have a sense of how God is wanting you to show His love?

THINK

What do you think 'enough' looks like in your life? What might it look like to set a limit on 'enough' in order to give more generously?

PRAY

Pray for the financial needs for our partnerships. Ask God if there is anything He wants you to give or do. Pause to listen.

Mission trips keep our partnerships accountable and relational. For upcoming opportunities look up: crossroadschurch.ca/ShortTermOutreaches.



Seeing Clearly

Local

Compassion always starts with seeing. For Stephanie, it started when she saw the exhibit for Julietta's Place in CrossRoads' foyer, explaining the need for a secure haven for victims of family violence. Stephanie could hardly believe this was being talked about in a church!

Years earlier, while struggling in an abusive situation herself, her church community at the time didn't know how to walk with her in it. "I had no one to talk to, to confide in." Since coming to CrossRoads, Stephanie began receiving and extending God's grace, and seeing that exhibit made her want to get involved. "The issue that brought me hurt and shame was not something this church shied away from." Since then, Stephanie has been volunteering with our local partners. She says, "It is a part of my healing to be able to give my time to them."

Being compassionate doesn't mean we DO a bunch of good deeds out of obligation; rather, like Stephanie, **our compassion should flow out of renewed hearts, causing us to BE people of compassion**—ready to respond when Jesus taps us on the shoulder.

THINK

What is the difference between doing acts of compassion and being a person of compassion? Where do you sense God transforming you with compassion?

PRAY

Pray for our church, that we would become people of compassion for those who are harassed and helpless around us.

“

When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 9:36



Our partners love volunteers. To get involved visit:
crossroadchurch.ca/localinitiatives



Living it Out

“

**For we are
God’s handiwork
created in
Christ Jesus to
do good works
which God has
prepared in
advance for
us to do.**

Ephesians 2:10

Ephesians 2:10 says God has prepared good works for us to do. That means, He has chosen us for this time, this place, and this moment to do good works. Back on Day 3 we reflected on how the gospel is Good News that doesn’t stay news. Jesus came as a baby. He loved extravagantly. He died and rose again... and that changes EVERYTHING.

The Good News is translated into good works through the lives of those who receive it. Sometimes however, doing good works is, well, work. Sometimes it’s costly, but God has equipped us with all that we need. He has given each of us unique abilities, gifts and passions.

On this 28-day journey through the needs and accomplishments of our partners both global and local, where do you fit in? **What has God given to you? How has He prepared you to join this work of compassion?** Some of us have extra time. Some of us have extra money. All of us have the invitation to join in the work God has prepared for us. We’ve chosen to see, now will we choose to take our next steps into compassion?

THINK

**How is Jesus calling me to live differently?
What is Jesus calling me to give to benefit my
community and our global partnerships?**

PRAY

**“And now Father, send us out into the world to
do the work you have given us to do, to love
and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ
our Lord. To him, to you and to the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory, now and forevermore.”**

~Book of Common Prayer



The first step of
change is to move
from talking to doing.

Thank you for taking the time to pray for our Compassion Partners. We hope these 28 days have grown your understanding of our partners—their contexts and their ministry. Your involvement is critical to the continuation of these ministry areas.

Tell us what you think...your feedback is important to us! Please fill out a short 3 question survey to help us improve how we communicate about our compassion partnerships:
crossroadschurch.ca/compassionfeedback

Thank You!

If you would like to contribute financially towards our Compassion Partners, all funds specified for “**Compassion**” through any of the options below will go directly to our partnerships. Any donation of \$20 or more is eligible for a charitable donation receipt.

- Cash or cheques can be sealed in a red “**Compassion Offering**” envelope and dropped in an Offering Box at the church, or at the Main Office weekdays from 8:30am-4:30pm.
- Debit / Credit at **The HUB** on Sundays, or at the Main Office weekdays from 8:30am-4:30pm.
- Give Online: Use QR code or find giving link at:
crossroadschurch.ca/givetocompassion
- E-Transfer to: **compassion@crossroadschurch.ca**
Please include your name & mailing address if you wish to receive a donation receipt.



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