

Let me tell you about my friends The Reverend John Rutsindintwarane, General Secretary of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda, and his American wife Robin Strickler.....a phenomenal couple living and working in the heart of Africa.

John Rutsindintwarane is a natural leader, a fact finder, a visionary, an organizer, an innovator who takes action with confidence and commitment. Armed with a strong faith in God, John makes good use of his bi-lingual skills, his university and seminary education, his post-graduate training in conflict management and community development.

John is a quiet, gentle man with a pleasant smile. He can also be strong and defining while charming and affable. John is well respected and makes friends wherever he goes. Born of Rwandan parents, raised in refugee camp in Tanzania, speaking Swahili and English, John builds on his youth and young adult experiences. In 1995, John was one of five Lutheran pastors who left their Tanzanian homes at the orders of government and went with their congregations to Rwanda to begin a new life.



John  
and  
Robin

Thirsty for more education and in his thirties, John continued his studies in America in the courses he would need to help rebuild Rwanda. In America, John met and married Robin Strickler the daughter of another Lutheran pastor. Having spent seven years as a bi-lingual teacher in Japan, Robin immediately identified her teaching ability combined with her gifts of music and languages to be a contribution she could make in Rwanda. Robin visited Rwanda with John in 2004 and assisted him in gathering extensive research findings. They returned to America where John completed seminary and wrote his plan for community development in Rwanda, and Robin began laying a foundation to open a secondary school in Rwanda.

John and Robin spent 2005 in Oakland, California where he worked in an inner-city project with community development to gain insight for his future work in Rwanda. At the same time Robin gathered support, did fund raising, set up a school board, and put the foundation in place for the Rwanda school project. In January 2006, John returned to Rwanda to begin implementing his plan for community development and to fulfill his leadership role in the LCR.

In July of 2006, Robin joined her husband in Rwanda. At age 42, John's hands are overflowing with the needs of his country, his people and his church, but with Robin at his side he has the best partner and support system possible. This attractive and intelligent lady with a sparkling personality has caught John's vision. She left a comfortable life in America for a new life in Rwanda with few amenities, to support her husband's goals while making her own strong contribution to educate youth and future leaders of the struggling and impoverished, yet unique and intriguing country of Rwanda.

Any contribution to a solution, however small, is valuable. This dynamite team of John and Robin, however, leads me to believe their contribution to the people of Rwanda will be major.