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## Editor's note

This issue of *SHARE* highlights the ministries of peace and reconciliation. In 'Focus', our staff member shares his visit to Rwanda's reconciliation ministry, witnessing how the Lord has planted seeds of forgiveness in a land once scarred by genocide. 'Back to the Bible' reflects on Ephesians, showing how the cross of Christ not only brings redemption but also breaks down hatred and builds peace. It challenges believers to respond to the call of peace with action. 'Learn a Little More' explores the meaning of Shalom from both theological and practical perspectives, showing how CEDAR puts peacebuilding into practice through community aid, development, building, and activism.

## FOCUS

### God Plants Forgiveness in a Land of Hatred

*Written by Tony Chan (Senior Communications Officer)*

'He was an animal!' said Faine, a survivor of the genocide, as she described Jean, the former enemy who took part in killing her husband.

31 years ago, Rwanda witnessed a genocide that shocked the world. In just a hundred days, around a million people were killed, most of them Tutsi, while most of the perpetrators were Hutu. Yet when you walk through Rwanda today, you see former perpetrators and survivors sitting together, chatting and laughing, worshipping God side by side. This is not because the genocide has been forgotten, but because they have chosen a path of reconciliation so painful and demanding that it reveals the power of God.

In April of this year, I visited Rwanda to see firsthand a peacebuilding project that CEDAR runs in collaboration with our local partner, Christian Action for Reconciliation and Social Assistance (CARSA). Testimony after testimony left me with a deep sense of how God has planted forgiveness in a place once consumed by hatred. In 14 reconciliation groups across two areas, there are many stories like Faine and Jean's — people who were once enemies but have begun to walk the path of reconciliation.

Faine, who is Tutsi, told me how on the day the genocide broke out, she and her husband fled in different directions. Carrying her five children, she climbed up into the hills. From there, she saw Jean, a Hutu man from her own village, leading armed men into the neighbourhood to carry out a massacre. It was then that her husband was killed.

After the killing finally stopped, Faine returned to the village with her children, burdened by grief. Their broken family

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struggled in poverty, trying to rebuild their lives from nothing. But 20 years later, Jean, who had been imprisoned for leading searches for people in hiding, was released and came back to live in the village. Seeing him again tore open old wounds. The pain of losing her husband and the hatred she carried came rushing back.

When I spoke with Jean, he admitted he had been filled with guilt after his release. At first, he could not look his neighbours in the eye or imagine ever speaking to Faine again. When I asked why he took part in the killings, he said with regret, 'I lost all sense at the time. For so many years, we had lived in the same village together. Many of the Tutsi were neighbours I knew well. But the government stirred us up and brainwashed us to see them as enemies.' He also admitted he was afraid that if he did not join in, he would be killed himself.

## The Roots and Aftermath of the Genocide

Rwanda's ethnic hatred was not rooted in ancient history. The Tutsi and Hutu, these so-called 'ethnic groups', were communities whose language, culture, and even appearance were almost identical. During the colonial era, the Belgian authorities and the Catholic Church introduced an ethnic classification system to make it easier to govern, favouring Tutsi people for education and better-paid positions and excluding the Hutu, sowing the seeds of conflict. By the 1960s, the Hutu revolution reversed the balance of power. Tutsi communities were marginalised or driven into exile. The Hutu-led government kept portraying Tutsi as the enemy, misleading Hutus into believing that killing them was righteous. Decades of manipulation and propaganda eventually erupted into the 1994 genocide, which engulfed the country in violence.

In the immediate aftermath, many Hutus did not realise they had taken part in such brutality. Some thought they were simply obeying orders; others believed they were protecting their nation. When the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took control and ended the fighting, they did not launch large-scale revenge operations. Instead, they focused on rebuilding and reconciliation. This unexpected approach gradually made many Hutus start to question what they had done and slowly change their thinking. In response to the longing for justice, the Rwandan government set up Gacaca community courts, where villagers acted as judges. Cases were heard publicly, defendants could confess, and survivors could testify. Although imperfect, this local justice system helped reveal the truth and offered a first step toward accountability.

## God and the Project: Making Reconciliation Possible

But trials alone were never enough. The pain of losing loved ones is not something a verdict can erase. A single apology does not free a life burdened by guilt. For many, forgiveness felt almost impossible. Yet faith opened a way, helping people find strength and freedom in God's love. That is why our reconciliation groups focus on faith: through Bible study, prayer, and livelihood cooperation, people who were once enemies could start seeing each other as neighbours again.

Let's start with the 'livelihood cooperation'. At first, Faine could not imagine forgiving Jean. She said her heart was full of fear and hatred, and she could not stay calm when he was around. The project arranged for them to care for a cow together and share its income, creating a space where they had to meet and work side by side. In the beginning, they divided up the chores without speaking. But over time, they began to help each other. If one fell sick, the other would step in to look after the cow. Gradually, these small acts of cooperation started to break down the barriers between them. Faine described the process as getting to know Jean all over again and reopening her own heart.



The cow provided by the project helped Faine and Jean reconcile and make a living.



In her backyard, Faine excitedly shared how the manure from the cow had given her a richer harvest.

What truly helped Faine understand the meaning of forgiveness, though, was the power of God. Through the reconciliation group meetings, she spoke about her pain for the first time. She came to realise that forgiveness was not about excusing the past, but about freeing herself from hatred. She felt the support of the group and her faith giving her strength to let go, step by step. She admitted it was not easy and often wondered if she would ever really be able to forgive. But every meeting felt like planting a tiny seed in her heart. Finally, during one session, she decided to talk to Jean. For the first time, she said sincerely, 'I am willing to forgive you.' She said that moment felt like releasing a weight she had carried on her chest for years, making her body feel light.

In the reconciliation groups, we not only walk with survivors but also care for those who have caused harm. The meetings help former perpetrators confront their guilt and fully acknowledge their actions. They are encouraged to apologise and ask for forgiveness, because doing so is not only a release but an essential step toward rebuilding relationships. Jean told me that when Faine forgave him, 'I felt like I was finally freed from the prison of my own sin.'

## Hatred Turned to Laughter

When I sat down with the two of them, I wondered about their relationship today. They said they were now good friends. Still, remembering everything they had been through, I could not help but feel a trace of doubt about whether their reconciliation was genuine. So, I asked them more about their everyday lives to gain a better understanding. They told me they sometimes invite each other's families over for meals and have even extended invitations to each other's family weddings. I thought, if there were still resentment between them, they would never do that. Hearing this, my doubts faded.

They went on to say that now and then, they remember how, in the past, whenever they crossed paths in the village, they



would immediately turn away and walk in the opposite direction. Thinking about all the fear and shame they carried back then, they now find it almost funny. As they laughed about it, I felt a warmth in my heart and a deep sense of awe at God's work.

In Rwanda, I came to understand deeply that 'forgiveness' is not just a slogan. It is a real and often painful choice. True peace is not about forgetting but choosing to remember and rebuild. While institutions and human efforts matter, the most important thing is God's healing and intervention, turning enemies into neighbours and restoring what was broken.



Faine and Jean, who were once enemies, laughed as they recalled how they used to turn and walk away whenever they saw each other.

## Back to the Bible

### The Cross

*Written by Dr. John Wai-On Chan (Associate Professor of Theology, Alliance Bible Seminary)*

Scriptures reading: Ephesians 2:16-17

<sup>16</sup> and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.  
<sup>17</sup> He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.'

The cross of Christ marks the end of all hatred in the world. In Ephesians, Paul uses the Greek word ἀποκτείνας, meaning 'to put to death', a term that can also be translated as 'killing'. Yes, the cross killed Christ our Lord, but through this very act, hatred itself was put to death, making peace possible. True and lasting peace requires that hatred be destroyed entirely. The cross is not merely a symbol of forgiveness or substitutionary atonement. According to the 'Christus Victor' view on redemption, Christ's crucifixion was a cosmic victory over darkness and death, and a decisive strike against hatred. Of course, hatred does not simply vanish through words. The Bible teaches that the elimination of hatred came at a great cost: God Himself paid the price. His Son was nailed to the cross, so that all darkness, death, and hatred would be crucified with Him. Then, through Christ's resurrection, a new beginning and renewed hope were made possible for the world.

Therefore, as the community of the cross, we must understand that the peace we proclaim is never just a slogan. It demands something from us, sometimes even a sacrifice. The very act of taking up the cross is an implication of peace. This peace is not a mere phrase we carry; it is a way of life that calls us to give of ourselves at any moment. Still, when we offer ourselves for the sake of peace, we must remember that such a sacrifice pales in comparison to what Christ has already accomplished on the cross. Christ's cross has already overturned the powers

of darkness and destroyed hatred. It has already ushered in true peace. Thus, we pursue this peace with our lives, responding to the cross.

Let me say this: Do not lose heart! Offering yourself for peace is always worth it!

### Let's Think

1. What are you willing to give for peace in the world?
2. Do you believe the ultimate reality of this world is peace? Does your life reflect that belief?

## Learn a Little More

### What is Peace?

*Written by Clara Chiu (Head of Partnership Development)*

In the Bible, the Hebrew word for 'Peace' is 'Shalom', which means completeness and wholeness. It refers not merely to the absence of conflict but to a more positive and flourishing state of being. The website Christian Learning describes 'Shalom' as a perfect brick wall, with no gaps or missing bricks.

Christ came into the world to mend the brokenness of humanity, the flaws in systems, and the rifts between God and humankind, as well as among people themselves, restoring the fullness and beauty of God's creation. At CEDAR, our humanitarian relief and community development efforts follow in the footsteps of Christ: We go beyond meeting physical needs, working alongside partners to heal brokenness and support communities in pursuing reconciliation with God, with one another, with creation, and with themselves. Ultimately, we strive for a state of 'Shalom'. It is this conviction that drives our efforts in peacebuilding.

According to the Christian organisation Peace Catalyst International, peacebuilding in communities can be categorised into four areas:

1. Community Aid – focusing on urgent and emergency responses that prevent further deterioration, though not necessarily addressing root causes;
2. Community Development – enhancing the economic capacity of community members through capacity building and resource provision;
3. Community Building – fostering relationships that bridge differences, heal broken ties, and create collective stories and visions;
4. Community Activism – leveraging collective power to influence decisions by governments, institutions, and corporations.





CEDAR's ministry covers all four areas. One example is our 'Gender Equality and Child Rights Promotion' project in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The project aims to reduce gender-based violence in slum communities by empowering women and strengthening community support systems. At the project's core is support for 'People's Institutions', which takes on the role of local leaders in designing, establishing, and managing community training centres. The centre offers vocational training to young people, including tailoring and air-conditioning servicing. Education on gender roles and children's rights is also provided to youths and peer mentors, reflecting 'Community Development'. In addition, 'People's Institutions' serves as a bridge between residents and government officials, holding regular meetings on various community issues and conveying public opinions, illustrating 'Community Activism'. The project also provides aid, such as mobility canes and braille materials, for children with disabilities, demonstrating 'Community Aid'. Even when slum clearances displace residents, 'People's Institutions' continues to encourage participation in group meetings and forums, helping maintain community bonds and a sense of belonging, contributing to 'Community Building'.

We have learnt from our partner that women beneficiaries in Bangladesh now support one another, proactively reporting domestic abuse and helping victims. Children have also come to understand their right to education and encourage their peers to seek help from our partner when forced to drop out of school. Community members are actively rebuilding their neighbourhoods, working to mend brokenness in an imperfect world, moving step by step towards 'Shalom'. We believe that the 'perfect brick wall' is not just a vision — it is within reach.

**2024 - 2025 Operating Statement**  
For the period Jul 2024 - Jun 2025

<b>Income</b>	<b>HK\$ 22,508,256</b>
Donations	17,044,846
Donations for Disaster Relief	4,748,048
Other Income	715,362
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>HK\$ 20,956,554</b>
Development & Poverty Alleviation	11,115,968
Disaster Relief & Rehabilitation Projects	3,867,786
Education & Partnership Development	3,762,997
Administrative Costs	1,243,738
Depreciation	966,065
<b>Surplus /(Deficit)</b>	<b>HK\$ 1,551,702</b>

Note > CEDAR's fiscal year is from 1 July to 30 June of the following year. The total budgeted expenditure for the 2024-2025 fiscal year is HK\$21,943,077. Please pray for and support the work of CEDAR and our partners.

> In 2024-2025, a special donation of HK\$10,000,000 was given to set up an endowment fund: 'Education and Community Development Fund'. The endowment corpus will be kept in perpetuity, and the annual return will be used to support CEDAR's education and community development projects.

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**CEDAR BAREFOOT WALK 2025**

**Long-term Assistance to the  
Conflict-stricken Poor**

**2025.11.8  
2 - 5:30pm**

**Assembly Point  
Eng Yu Evangelistic Mission  
Hong Kong Church**

**Event location  
North Point District**



**Learn More  
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In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Acts 20:35)