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Energy Psychology in Africa: Exploring Spiritual Dimensions

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Abstract

Four practitioners from the United States went to Rwanda in September of 2009 on a humanitarian trip to work with orphan survivors of the 1994 genocide who are still suffering from complex posttraumatic stress disorder. They used a variety of energy psychology techniques for trauma desensitization both in a group setting and also in individual sessions, coupled with meeting the physical needs of the students. The author and one other team member then went to Nigeria to co-teach a series of energy psychology workshops with Chief Iwowarri B. James, the first Nigerian certified by the Association for Energy Psychology (ACEP) as an Energy Health Practitioner. The author explores the interplay of spiritual belief systems and culture in Africa with psychotherapeutic interventions. Two case studies of individual healing sessions with genocide survivors are presented.

Key words: energy psychology, spirituality, Africa, post traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, genocide, trauma, trauma desensitization, Rwanda, Nigeria, Association for Energy Psychology, ACEP

Introduction

When I discovered the power of Energy Psychology techniques to gently and rapidly desensitize trauma and relieve human suffering, I wanted to share these powerful tools with places in the world most in need. As a child, I had always wanted to go to Africa as a missionary doctor. Dr. Lori Leyden, a dear colleague and friend, started doing humanitarian work in Rwanda in 2007, and my partner Bert Fellows and I joyfully supported the nonprofit organization she founded for this work, The Grace Process International (TGPI, www.createglobalhealing.org).

In 2009, she offered Bert and me the chance to join the TGPI humanitarian team she was leading to do trauma desensitization with survivors of the 1994 genocide who were still carrying enormous burdens of complex post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Bert, a psychologist, had been to Africa several years earlier on a humanitarian mission and was eager to return. Another team member was Christopher Lowman, a Jin Shin Jyutsu practitioner.

Following two weeks with our team of four in Rwanda in September of 2009, Bert and I went on to Nigeria to co-teach a series of energy psychology workshops with Chief Dr. Iwowarri Berian James, the first African to be certified as an Energy Health Practitioner by the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology (ACEP, www.energypsych.org). Chief James had chosen me for his Certification Consultant, and we had been working together closely for two years as he completed his requirements. As African Regional Coordinator for ACEP, he invited us to come to his country to teach together to spread the word of what he calls “a drugless health improvement method.”

While most systems that address trauma resolution deal only with emotional and mental dimensions, the multi-dimensional approach our humanitarian team used in Rwanda included addressing the spiritual dimensions of trauma.

Genocide background

While the basic human condition may be the same all over the world, each culture has its specific historical, religious and spiritual belief systems. Describing our work in Africa would be difficult without providing a context within which to appreciate and understand the settings and the people with whom we worked.

Two groups of Rwandans with a common culture and a common language lived together side by side for many years and intermarried in the small country of Rwanda, about the size of the state of Maryland. The Tutsi were the herders and were generally taller. The Hutu were the farmers and comprised over 80% of the population. The colonial powers fostered enmity between these two groups with their “divide and conquer” policy in Africa, knowing that people would be easier to control if they were fighting each other instead of the foreign rulers. The Tutsi were the ruling class until their King suddenly died in 1959, whereupon the Hutu were thrust into power, and a tumultuous period of revenge ensued in which thousands of Tutsi were slaughtered. Hundreds of thousands of Tutsi fled the country for safety. Some later organized in the neighboring country of Uganda under the name the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) with a plan to return to their homeland.

Enmity between the two groups escalated over the years and resulted in the formation of a radical government group in Rwanda whose motto was “Hutu Power.” This group labeled the Tutsi as “cockroaches” and blamed them for all problems in the country. They planned a genocide to systematically “exterminate” not only every Tutsi in the country, but also the Hutu moderates who believed in peaceful coexistence.

On April 6, 1994, with the assassination of the Rwandan president, a bloodbath broke out, sponsored and endorsed by the radical Hutu Power genocidaires (perpetrators of the genocide) who seized complete control of the government. Any Hutu “...who publicly opposed the genocide, by word or deed, risked being executed or condemned to kill a Tutsi victim on the spot. Everybody had to participate in some way...” (Hatzfeld, 2003). By forcing moderate Hutus to murder a Tutsi or be killed themselves, they included as many people as possible in the genocide guilt. Of an original population of about seven and a half million, over one million Rwandans were killed, mostly by machete, in just a hundred days (Gourevitch, 1998). The RPF, engaged from the start, took control of the capital city of Kigali on July 4th, which stopped the bulk of the killing as the genocidaires began to flee the country.

The genocide left 800,000 children orphaned and thousands of people devastated, mutilated, and/or infected with HIV because the systematic rape of Tutsi females to infect them with AIDS was a part of the genocide plan. The entire country of Rwanda was left suffering from posttraumatic stress.

The most Christian nation in Africa

Christianity became the state religion in Rwanda in 1931 when the Tutsi King converted to Christianity and strongly encouraged the masses to convert. Figures from a 2006 census quoted in Wikipedia show that Rwanda's population is 93.6% Christian, 4.6% Muslim, 1.7% no religious belief, and 0.1% traditional indigenous beliefs. Peace Corps workers in Rwanda we spoke with observed some competition for parishioners between the three main groups of Christianity present in the community: Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Evangelicals.

Traditional African belief systems

Africans traditionally have a very strong belief in the spirit world. Traditional beliefs about spirituality intermingle with Christian teachings. Even though most of Rwanda is Christian, one of our translators informed us that some Rwandans still use the services of Native Doctors (formerly called Witch Doctors). He reported that these Native Doctors use what we would call both Black Magic and White Magic. If a person is angry with a neighbor, one can pay the Native Doctor to "bewitch the neighbor," to cause the person harm. Usually this bewitchment will be in the form of a detrimental herb that will go into something the neighbor ingests, but the bewitchment can also be sent through the air, a purely spiritual intervention. Once the neighbor feels the illness coming on, he or she can go to the Native Doctor and buy the antidote to the bewitchment.

In earlier times, this sort of bewitching was a means of social control within villages where there were no policemen, courts or jails to maintain social order. People who felt wrongfully victimized would go to the local witch doctor with their complaints. If the witch doctor felt it was justified, he would cast his spell on the perpetrator. The perpetrator then had to make amends as a part of the ritual of being released from the spell.

Traditional African culture also believes in ancestor worship and praying to the deceased spirits of their family members to ask for favors. This same translator shared the story of how all seven of his adult siblings died in the same year from a "bewitchment." His father prayed to his ancestors to ask for a business opportunity that would bring him income. The spirits of his ancestors agreed, with the condition that he would sacrifice a bull to them as repayment for their help. The ancestors kept their part of the bargain, and the father got the business opportunity. However, the father reneged on his end of the agreement and did not sacrifice a bull. The ancestors became angry with him and "bewitched" all eight of his grown children. Seven of them fell ill and died within the following year. The eighth one, our translator, was a Christian minister who believed that having the protection of the Holy Spirit around him gave him immunity from the bewitchment, which had no effect on him.

Chief James in Nigeria shared that many Africans still have fear of malevolence from evil spirits, beliefs that our culture would call superstitious. However, if both the sender of a negative thought form and the receiver believe in its power, it is likely to have an effect. On the other hand, if the receiver believes that the supernatural power of God is protecting his or her energy field, the thought form has no place to hook into the energy system.

Singing and dancing

Africans have traditionally used singing and dancing to raise their energy levels. Communal ceremonies would use specific sets of words, called "mantras" to move into a trance state, enhanced by ritual dance movements which further raised the level of "chi" (the flow of life energy) to the point where a person could communicate directly with spirit. Eastern traditions would use the terminology that these activities excite the kundalini energy for expanded consciousness (Wikipedia).

We first arrived at the Remera Mbogo High School Orphanage on a Sunday morning, as we wanted to join their worship service to connect with this group of 550 orphans served by only ten dedicated

teachers and to build rapport. Worship in Rwanda did not look anything like the solemn church services in my background. Their worship is a very lively, emotional activity! We could hear their singing and clapping reverberating from the meeting building as we drove in, long before we stepped into the excitement and beauty they created with their worship. Four different choirs, all self-taught, performed for us, producing beautiful, soulful music. Their group dancing as they sang further electrified the atmosphere and brought me to tears with the impact of its praise. I felt honored to be asked to preach in this service. I shared my testimony of praying for help the night before my surgery for breast cancer in 1991. In my mind's eye I saw Jesus come stand before me. I felt a physical tap right over my heart, along with the communication, "I now heal your soul" (Stone, 1994). I prayed for soul healing for everyone there also.



Orphanage choir performing during Sunday morning celebration

In our opening ceremonies on teaching days when no instruments were available, students clapped their hands to make the rhythm section, often interspersing syncopated rhythms to build the intensity. (See the YouTube video mentioned above.)

The bones

Rwandans believe that for a soul to come to rest after death, the bones of the deceased must be given a proper burial. This belief was reflected in a conversation I had with Mama Lambert, a counselor at Solace Ministries who lost her husband and five children in the Genocide. We talked on the anniversary of the death of one of her daughters. Mama Lambert told me, "When you don't know where the bones are, you feel all upset." When the family does not know the location of the bones, they feel anxious because they believe this situation keeps their loved ones from moving into the next world, a problem called by various names in different cultures, including being an "earthbound spirit, wandering spirit, ghost, spirit-walker, or wayward." Although Christianity teaches that good people go straight to heaven or to paradise when they die, the traditional belief system about the importance of the bones remains essential to Rwandans to bring closure to the loss of a loved one.

President Paul Kagame, who was formerly the head of the liberating RPF army, has instituted a program of forgiveness and reconciliation in Rwanda. Imprisoned genocide perpetrators who will repent of their actions and tell the names of the people they killed and the location of their bones are released from prison and reintegrated into the community. While this program has its challenges, it is slowly helping the nation to heal from the wounds of the past. Remaining family members come to peace when they recover the bones of their loved ones and give them a proper burial.

The mass graves at the Genocide Memorial in Kigali hold the bones of over three hundred thousand people, and new bones are being added all the time. Genocide memorials at locations of mass slaughter also showcase the bones of victims. When we visited these sites, I prayed for healing for any genocide victims not yet at peace.

Reincarnation

Chief James reported that native African culture believes in reincarnation, with families frequently identifying a child as the reincarnation of a deceased grandparent, aunt, or other family member as

they believe that people reincarnate into the same families over and over. Family bonds are very strong, in part because they believe they have been together for a very long time!

Many in the early Christian church also believed in reincarnation. In the time of Jesus, the Pharisees believed in the continuity of the soul through lifetimes, calling the concept the “transmigration of the soul.” One of the signs of the coming of the messiah was to be the reappearance of the prophet Elijah. In Matthew 11:14, Jesus identifies his cousin John the Baptist as the reincarnation of Elijah.

In the 500's the Catholic Church was divided in its stand on reincarnation. A political vote decided to brand reincarnation as a heresy. I still feel the repercussions of this decision in my professional life. I had been teaching meridian and chakra therapies at a beautiful, peaceful Catholic retreat center for the past ten years. As my professional growth led me to develop Soul Detective Protocols for healing past life trauma and releasing earthbound spirits (Stone, 2008), a person who received the brochure with my “Healing Past Life Trauma” course offering complained to the local Bishop about this heresy. I was excommunicated from all teaching at that center. Fortunately, this decision did not carry the death penalty!

The power of prayer

The official language in Rwanda is Kinyarwanda, so we needed to do all of our work through translators. To help the translators understand the nature of the energy therapies we were using, we offered them free sessions. One translator wanted relief from the headaches he got from bright sunshine. We used muscle testing to trace the origin of his headaches to the death of his younger sister from an illness. After desensitizing this trauma with a customized meridian tapping sequence, he asked, “In our culture, we believe that prayer is what heals. How does this tapping work?”

To answer his question, I told him a story. Several days earlier, I fell into a drainage ditch at night and badly bruised my leg. I asked him, “If I had broken my leg, would I just pray, ‘God, please heal this leg?’” He agreed that I would have needed to go to a doctor to get the bones rejoined, cast the injury - and then ask God to help the healing! I made the analogy that when we are traumatized, some of the energy circuits in the body get broken. The meridian tapping helps to rejoin those circuits, just like resetting a broken bone. With a huge smile, he responded, “I understand!”

To make our rather strange-looking energy psychology interventions more culturally appropriate, we began each healing session with prayer, which is a powerful way to center the energy field, set clear intention, and invoke transpersonal assistance. We ended each session with a prayer of gratitude for the healing we experienced, giving the credit to our Divine helpers.

Our work in Rwanda

We worked with two groups of orphan survivors in Rwanda: students at the residential Remera Mbogo High School Orphanage in a remote area of northern Rwanda and Orphan Heads of Households served by Solace Ministries, a Christian group in Kigali.

During Dr. Leyden’s 2008 visit to Rwanda, she asked the orphanage for a needs assessment. They responded that their greatest need was for running water, as the closest available well for this residential school of 550 students was several miles downhill, and they had to fetch water by oxcart. Lori put out a TGPI fundraising appeal to get water for the school, and my partner Bert and I and our families donated the funds to build a water tank that tapped into an underground stream. Thus, our first intervention was “water therapy!” The next priority on the needs assessment list at the orphanage is to get electricity, and then computers.

“Even God would not be foolish enough to appear to a starving man in any other form than a loaf of bread.”

- Mahatma Ghandi

Our team used a variety of techniques to build upon the rapport Dr. Leyden had already established in her previous work with both orphan survivor groups. We did Laughter Yoga exercises, singing and dancing, Yoga stretching, diaphragmatic breathing, team building, forgiveness work, and gratitude exercises. Lori also fed everyone lunch, an extremely important intervention! We used a variety of techniques from energy psychology to desensitize trauma, including Thought Field Therapy, Tapas Acupressure Technique, Jin Shin Jyutsu, and The Grace Process - a spiritual practice developed by our leader, Lori Leyden, to activate heart resonance to connect with the energy of grace.

We used a trauma inventory called the Child Report of Posttraumatic Stress (CROPS), authored by Dr. Ricky Greenwald, assessing initial levels of posttraumatic stress to screen for students most in need of our limited time for individual sessions. This survey also provided a measure of the effectiveness of our work. The bulk of the trauma desensitization was done in group sessions. Overall, the CROPS scores of the data we were able to collect at the orphanage dropped by 19%, and the scores at Solace Ministries dropped by 26%. Details of the data we gathered are presented in our article in the inaugural edition of the new Energy Psychology Journal (Stone, Leyden and Fellows, 2009). We have asked both groups to continue monitoring results with the CROPS inventory at 3, 6, and 12 months after our visit.

The following YouTube Video “Trauma Healing in Rwanda” shows our work with these precious orphans: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ohHXskRItQ>

Culturally appropriate interventions

We often had to adapt our teachings to the conceptual and belief systems of the people we were helping. As much as we did our best to be sensitive to their frames of reference, we sometimes found ourselves having to apologize for our limited awareness of their local culture and lived experiences.

During one of our Thought Field Therapy group healing sessions, we were tapping on the karate chop area (5th finger side of the hand) to clear limiting beliefs. I was leading the intervention and made the comment, “Let’s chop up the belief that it is not possible to get over this trauma” as we hit the sides of our hands together. Our leader whispered into my ear, “That’s not a good metaphor for this group.” I realized to my great chagrin that we were treating images of their family members being chopped up with machetes. First, I rephrased the statement to “Let’s eliminate this limiting belief.” Then I stopped and made a sincere apology to the whole group, telling them how sorry I was that I had made an extremely counter-productive mistake. To my astonishment, they all broke into smiles and clapped for my apology! Over and over, we were impressed by the openness of their hearts to us.

One of the girls I worked with was having visual and auditory hallucinations of cries for help from an uncle whom she had lost in the genocide. She felt guilty because she had not been able to save his life. In my private practice, I have found that frequently these symptoms come when a close relative’s spirit is not at peace, almost as if the bond of love between them sensitizes the living person’s awareness to the distressed emotional state of the deceased, who (in the spirit world) has not yet gotten over the shock of a violent death.

Although I have developed a protocol to help earthbound spirits heal and cross into the Light, using that protocol would not have been appropriate for this work we were doing in an Evangelical Christian setting. I never mentioned my work of healing past life trauma in Rwanda, as the belief system there

did not accept the theory of reincarnation. I needed to work within her belief system that prayer is the most powerful healing tool.

Roman Catholics, in particular, believe that people on earth can help the souls of those who have died and are in purgatory by praying for them. So in this case, while she was telling her story to the translator, I opened my heart and just prayed for her uncle's healing. I asked his guardian angels to do whatever was necessary to heal his soul. When she finished telling her story, we prayed out loud for this uncle and fervently prayed for forgiveness for her inability to help him. At the moment of this joint prayer from the three of us - the niece, the translator, and myself—the heavy energy of despair present in the room lifted. The client breathed a huge sigh of emotional relief, and the radiant smile on her face and the peace in her heart indicated to me that the situation had been resolved.

In Nigeria, on the other hand, our colleague, Chief Iwowarri B. James, belonged to a religious group which embraced both Christianity and reincarnation. I could freely use my Soul Detective Protocols there to help earthbound spirits heal by having their relatives do surrogate energy tapping to heal their wounds and help them get ready to cross into the Light. Individual work was also easier in Nigeria since the official language is English.

Chief James is a High Chief, a position which carries the responsibility to help his people. He takes this role very seriously and has spearheaded a humanitarian campaign to spread the word of the benefit of energy psychology not only throughout the capital of Lagos where he lives, but to all of Nigeria. He has been teaching energy tapping to the other chiefs of his tribe, the Igbos. The King of the Igbos in Lagos State, His Royal Highness Eze Cyril O. Anomneze, National Patron of the Igbo Speaking Community in Lagos, came to all of the workshops we presented. The King celebrated his 90th birthday on November 17th of 2009, and he has been using energy psychology to help those who come to him. He describes one of his interventions in the following YouTube video “Energy Therapy Workshops in Nigeria:” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EmR_Hjtw9I

Having the blessing of the tribe's royalty made using energy psychology even more culturally appropriate! Chief James and the Igbo tribe greatly honored my partner and me by making us both Igbo Chiefs. Part of the ceremony included the blessing that their ancestors will now be present with us to help us in our healing work. My heart was greatly moved as I felt the bestowal of this ongoing blessing—a traditional African belief of help from the ancestors now blended with the rest of my eclectic belief system!

Our teaching was not just at the level of individual and group interventions. During our five days in Nigeria, we recorded a television interview and also did a live TV show informing millions of Nigerians about the power and benefit of Energy Psychology. Chief James made a two-minute TV trailer about the workshops which repeatedly aired to an audience of 30 million. In three days of consecutive workshops, attended by approximately twenty people each, we taught centering, Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), Soul Detective Protocols, and Golden Rays Integrated Energy, the innovative work of Chief James. In addition, we did half a dozen private sessions.

In Rwanda, our team was at the orphanage a total of six different days. After Sunday worship and dedication of the new water tank, we returned Monday through Wednesday to do short individual interviews with 60 of the students whom the orphanage had identified as having the most disturbed behavior. These students were initially reluctant to participate in a group healing session, but after their interviews, they agreed to come to group. We did two different group healing sessions with 40 students each. We had time for only about ten individual sessions with the students who were most in need. In addition, we did a follow-up training group with 50 students identified in 2008 as leaders and

already trained by Dr. Leyden in Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) and Tapas Acupressure Technique (TAT).

Reverend Seth, headmaster at the orphanage, reported that since The Grace Process International's 2008 training, the incidence of outbreaks of traumatic flashbacks at the orphanage has decreased by 90%. Two team members returned the following week to collect data and do several more individual sessions. We were able to gather enough scores on the Child Report of Posttraumatic Stress (CROPS) inventory at the orphanage so that statistical analysis demonstrate a 19% drop in scores on the posttest that was significant at the $p > .001$ level.

As we were leaving the orphanage, one of the students came to us and exclaimed in broken English, "Now I have hope!"

At Solace Ministries in Kigali, we worked with a group of 44 Orphan Heads of Households in two consecutive days of training. On the first day, students filled out the CROPS inventory. We did over a dozen individual sessions with students scoring highest on this inventory. We did trainings on two consecutive days, including the same elements we used at the orphanage. Two team members also made home visits to some of the Orphan Heads of Households. The average initial CROPS score of the thirty-three students who returned their surveys was 29.4 out of 52 (19 or higher indicating PTSD). We were able to gather posttest data on only five of these students due to their scattered geographical locations. The scores of these completers dropped from an average of 41.8 to an average of 30.8, a 26% drop in PTSD symptoms. Statistical analyses of these scores showed they were just a little short of being significant ($p = 0.078$).

Case examples

The agencies we worked with not only gave us permission to share the stories of the students, but also permission to film the process of both our group trainings and our individual work with these orphans to raise awareness of the situation in Rwanda and the need for further humanitarian help. We also got official permission from the government of Rwanda to do the filming.

Ron, age 22

Ron had only one sibling, his twin sister. In 1990, Ron's father left Rwanda to join the RPF and was killed on the battlefield. When the genocide began, Ron's mother tried to escape by fleeing with the twins to the home of a friend near the border. By the time they arrived, their friend had already been murdered. They tried to hide in the bushes, but the extremist Hutu government militia captured them. A soldier took them to his home, promising to protect them. Instead, the militia took away their mother, raped her, and returned her hours later. The following day, they took their mother away again, raped her for three days, and then killed her. They cut off her thumb and brought it back to the twins, informing them that their mother was dead and that they would be killed next.

That night the soldier's wife had compassion for the twins and hid them in a pit used for making banana juice, covering the hole with banana leaves. Although insects kept biting them, Ron and his sister were so afraid of dying that they enjoyed this pain, a sign they were still alive!

The soldier quarreled with his wife when he could not find the children. The wife got a young man to take the twins to the Catholic Church for protection; however, this man knew the church would be destroyed and hid them in the swamp instead. He told them he would come back to bring them food, but never returned. When the RPF finally came to free them from the swamp, the government militia tried to kill everyone they could in a last ditch effort to exterminate as many Tutsi as possible. They

threw spears and shot arrows into the areas they could not reach with their tracking dogs. Ron and his sister went different directions to try to escape. An arrow hit his twin in the chest, killing her instantly. Ron tried to remove the arrow but could not get it out. The loss of his twin sister was his greatest trauma.

Everyone else in Ron's extended family died in the genocide, and he felt utterly alone. He criticized himself for failing to solve his own problems. Tears came to his eyes during his story. The pain in the air was palpable. I did not ask Ron for an initial rating of his subjective units of distress (SUD level) on a scale of zero to ten as I assumed it was greater than ten. Instead, we moved directly to trauma desensitization and made a customized treatment to clear his shame, rage, trauma, and depression and his limiting beliefs about recovery - in particular that getting over his trauma was not possible.

Next, we prayed fervently that God would heal the pain in his heart and in his sister's soul and forgive him for not being able to protect her. Ron experienced a measure of emotional relief with this intervention. While his current stressors remained extremely challenging, he felt more peace around his feelings about his sister's death.

Ron's initial CROPS Score was 49 (out of a maximum possible of 52). His CROPS Score after one week was 37.

Hope, age 24

Hope was the youngest in her family, the only girl, and very much loved by everyone. She had never imagined that she could lose this precious life situation. She was nine years old when her mother and all of her brothers were killed in the genocide. Hope still had scars on her legs and neck where she had been hacked by machetes in the slaughter. The killers threw her into a pile of bodies in a latrine pit and left her for dead.

Her father did not die, but the genocide left him disturbed both emotionally and mentally. She lived with him until she was eleven, but then he left without letting her know his whereabouts. Hope lived alone in a house that was not hers until the owner chased her away. Then she got a job as a housekeeper for a year until her employer wanted to force her to get married while she was still a pre-teen. A family friend secretly got her out and took her to the capital city of Kigali. Hope got another housekeeping job for a year which helped her get another year of school. She was able to go only half way through high school.

Many nights Hope would dream that she was together with her mother and brothers again, feeling the joy of their connection. When she awoke, the pain of their absence tore into her heart, and she would feel bad all day long.

I inquired whether Hope believed that she would see her family again when she died. Her belief system was that when a person dies, the soul goes back into the Light of God and loses all personal identity, being reabsorbed into the creator. She believed she would never see her family again, which was a tremendous loss to her.

I told her the story of a near death experience (Piper, 2004) where the author was pronounced dead following a terrible car accident and instantly found himself at the gates of heaven. A huge greeting committee awaited him, headed by his beloved grandfather who had died from cancer. Hope interrupted my story to excitedly share her experience with her own grandfather. Hope had lain in the pile of bodies in the latrine pit in a coma for six days.

During that time, her grandfather, who had also been killed in the genocide, brought her tea and food. His presence comforted and sustained her. She was in a place that was always day, although she knew it was night when she could see the lamp. This experience of direct interaction with her deceased grandfather contradicted her belief system that the personality does not retain its identity after death. She had been hesitant to share these details, fearing that others would not believe her story or would think she was crazy. However, Piper's account of his near-death experience opened her up to share her own miracle.

After six days in the pit, she heard a voice that sounded like her father, but she knew it was the voice of God. The voice announced, "I'm going to get you out of here, and you will serve me." At that point, someone heard her make a sound, realized she was still alive, and got her out of the pit.

We rejoiced together over this divine intervention to save her life. Hope has a strong sense that her life was spared so she could serve God. Her decision to forgive the perpetrators of the genocide is part of her spiritual service to promote healing in Rwanda. Sharing the story of her miraculous experience in another dimension during the time she was in a coma brought her hope that when her time of service here is complete, she might be united with her loved ones again on the other side, a belief shared by most of the Christians there. Following this session, she moved to the center of the circle for the group's opening dancing and singing, a testament to the joy in her heart.

Hope's initial CROPS Score was 40. Her posttest score is unavailable.

Postscript

Rwanda is an extremely beautiful country with a rolling landscape called "the land of a thousand hills." Although it is near the equator, the climate is nearly perfect because of its altitude. In the 15 years since the genocide, the country has made great progress in rebuilding. The capital city of Kigali is clean, orderly, and beautiful. Rwanda is now one of the safest countries in all of Africa.

We visited the Akagera Game Park in eastern Rwanda where we saw elephants, giraffes, hippo, baboons, water buffalo, impala, and many other beautiful animals in the wild. We also spent a day in Volcanoes National Park gorilla tracking, hiking up the mountain to observe these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat. We were allowed to observe them for only one hour. Our guide gave us the five minute warning that our time was almost up. Three minutes later, the gorillas all got up and walked off! We felt so blessed by our precious interaction with the mountain gorillas.

In this continent of truly astounding beauty, we also encountered unimaginable human suffering, eased by self-help energy healing tools we taught. Our lives were greatly enriched and blessed by this humanitarian trip to Africa. Deep gratitude goes to our Grace Process International Team, to Dr. Lori Leyden for the groundwork she laid in Rwanda in previous years, to all of the students we worked with, to the wonderful teachers and staff at the Remera Mbogo High School Orphanage, to the equally amazing staff at Solace Ministries, to Dian Fossey for saving the mountain gorillas from extinction (Fossey, 1983), to our Nigerian host, Chief Dr. Iwowarri Berian James, to His Royal Highness King Cyril O. Anomneze, and to all of the wonderful people we met and worked with in Lagos.

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