

Chapter 5

Broken Bodies, Damaged Psyches and an Elusive Search for Justice in Rwanda

Not so many years ago, Rwanda held a firm grip on the popular imagination — not for its bloody civil war, but for the legend of the landlocked country as a haven for peace-loving gorillas made famous by an American primatologist named Dian Fossey.

Fossey--a 31-year-old San Francisco native whose love for animals dated from childhood--used her life's savings to travel to Africa in 1963. Captivated by the habits of some of the world's largest, most powerful primates, she set up camp in Rwanda's Virunga Mountains and launched what became a lifelong study of the mountain gorilla.

At her Karisoke Research Center, Fossey lived among quadrupeds who grow from four to six feet tall, and whose weight can range from 300 to nearly 500 pounds. Mountain gorillas, she discovered, vocalize with 16 distinct calls. When a male mountain gorilla wants to fend off a rival, he stiffens his legs and struts aggressively. When a female gorilla is feeling amorous, she makes sustained eye contact as she slowly approaches her chosen male, then purses her lips. If that doesn't work, she slaps the ground as she heads toward him.

Mountain gorillas form family groups, Fossey found. Individuals can live to be 40 years old.

Fossey's enthusiasm was contagious. Her 1983 book, "Gorillas in the Mist," topped best-seller lists for several years and became a successful film starring Sigourney Weaver as Fossey.

But violence has a way of foreshadowing itself. Fossey was hacked to death with a machete in her tent at Karisoke in 1985. Her murder remains unsolved.

Along with animal researchers around the world, the crime shocked one of Africa's smallest countries. Rwanda — officially, the Republic of Rwanda — is located just south of the Equator. The area was settled by hunter-gatherers during the Stone and Iron ages. Its three primary ethnic groups are the Hutu (85%), the Tutsi (14%) and the Twa (1%).

The mountainous topography of Rwanda gave rise to its nickname, "land of a thousand hills." In fact, the entire country is at such a high altitude that its lowest point is the Rusizi River, at 3,117 feet above sea level. Along Rwanda's northern border, the Virungas--a chain of extinct volcanoes--soar to more than 14,000 feet. Rwanda's breathtaking scenery and temperate climate have prompted some to liken the country to a tropical Switzerland.

Bordering Rwanda are Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Uganda, and Tanzania. Its population of 12.6 million makes tiny Rwanda the most densely populated mainland African country.

Rwanda's primary language is called Kinyarwanda. English, French and Swahili also are widely spoken. With their own long oral traditions, the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa tribal people laid the groundwork for a rich heritage in Rwanda of poetry and folk tales. Before Euro-colonization began in the late 19th century, a form of epic poetry was performed in Rwanda's royal courts,.

Ibitekerezo told the history of the country's dynasties through poetry that was performed as song, accompanied by a musical instrument.

The early Hutus were largely agrarian, while the Tutsis traded in cattle. For centuries, Rwandans lived in a series of small kingdoms. Then, in the 19th century, Rwanda--like so much of Africa--became a target for European colonization. The territory went first to Germany, and then to Belgium.

Playing on underlying tensions between the tribes brought on by longstanding economic imbalance, the Germans and the Belgians promoted the idea of Tutsi supremacy. In 1926, Belgium further emphasized ethnic differences by imposing identity cards designating people as either Hutu, Tutsi, Twa or "Naturalized."

The strife turned violent in 1959. After Tutsi extremists fatally assaulted a Hutu sub-chief, Hutu activists retaliated with a series of arson attacks on Tutsi homes. The same year, Hutu rebels launched what became known as the Rwandan Revolution, a full-on rebellion against Belgian rule. This period also is sometimes called the Social Revolution or Wind of Destruction. The Kinyarwanda word for this conflict is *muyaga*.

Not until 1962 did Rwanda achieve full independence from Belgium. That year, a Rwandan revolutionary named Gregoire Kayibanda--a Hutu--became the country's first elected president. Thousands of Tutsis fled to neighboring Burundi as the 1960s and 1970s brought the purging of Tutsis from universities and ethnic quotas that restricted Tutsis to 9% of government jobs.

In a 1973 coup aimed at overthrowing Kayibanda, one of Rwanda's senior military officers, Juvenal Habyarimana, took power. Habyarimana--whose nickname was Kinani, the Kinyarwanda word for "invincible"-- promised to restore order and national unity. Instead, exclusion of Tutsis and preference for Hutus in military and public service jobs continued.

Decades of continuous ethnic strife continued up to 1990. Habyarimana was attending diplomatic meetings in New York City when a rebel group called the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded northern Rwanda from outposts in Uganda. The attacking forces were made up largely of Tutsi refugees who had fled persecution in their own country. The three-year confrontation that followed became known as the Rwandan Civil War, an explosion of the long-running enmity between Hutus and Tutsis.

While the Rwandan army sought and received assistance from French troops, the RPF staged what amounted to a guerrilla war. Among the RPF leaders was Paul Kagame, the country's future president.

An uneasy truce settled into place in late 1993. Then, on April 6, 1994, a plane carrying Rwandan President Habyarimana, Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira, and other dignitaries was shot down above Kigali International Airport, killing everyone aboard.

Habyarimana's death became the catalyst for the Rwandan genocide. Just hours after his death was announced, Hutus began a deadly campaign against the Tutsis. To prevent anyone from escaping, the Hutus set up roadblocks, then systematically moved from house to house, slaughtering Tutsis and moderate Hutu political figures.

Exact figures remain in dispute. But over the course of 100 days, between 500,000 and 1 million Tutsis are believed to have been killed in well-planned attacks. Thousands of Hutus also died in the violence, often while attempting to oppose the slaughter. Seventy percent of the Tutsi population was decimated in attacks perpetrated largely by nail-studded clubs, machetes and sometimes, firearms.

Rape, often a weapon of war, was widespread, promulgated in many cases by groups of insurgents known as rape squads. No official tally exists, but it is believed that between 250,000

and 500,000 women were raped. Thousands of widows, subjected to rape, became HIV-positive as a result.

The killings in Rwanda gave rise to a chilling new phrase in the lexicon of warfare. “Intimate genocide” referred to the fact that, among other atrocities, Hutus married to Tutsis were expected to kill their spouses and children. Hutu neighbors who had lived as friends with the Tutsis next door also were on orders to slay their acquaintances.

The Rwandan genocide received limited international response and essentially no attempts at intervention.

Philip Gourevitch, an American journalist, is the author of “We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed Along With Our Families,” one of the definitive accounts of the Rwandan genocide. According to Gourevitch, the mass murders in Rwanda cannot be explained simply as the product of hostility between competing ethnic groups.

“The genocide was the product of order, authoritarianism, decades of modern political theorizing and indoctrination, and one of the most meticulously administered states in history,” he contends.

In an interview with the PBS program “Frontline,” Gourevitch said of the Rwandan genocide, “The logic was to kill everybody. Not to allow [anybody](#) to continue.”

Gourevitch makes a clear distinction between civil war in Rwanda and the [country's genocide](#).

“In a civil war, you have essentially two combatant forces,” he explains. “Sometimes they are fighting against one another. Sometimes civilians get involved as militia men or so. In a genocide, there is no political objective. The idea is to eliminate what is perceived as a bloodline. It means anybody who carries that blood must be eliminated. So it doesn’t matter if

you're a baby. In a civil war, a baby is not a serious enemy element. Here, it is, because 60 years from now, that baby could be an adult."

A 1999 report from Human Rights Watch called "Leave None To Tell the Story" draws much the same conclusion.

"The Rwandan genocide of 1994 was one of the defining events of the 20th century," the report asserts. "It ended the illusion that the evil of genocide had been eradicated and spurred renewed commitment to halting genocides in the future."

The book-length report assesses the implications of the genocide, both within Rwanda and for the international community. It's worth quoting at length.

"For Rwandans, whether inside the country or abroad, the consequences of the genocide are direct and tangible," the report states. "They struggle daily to heal broken bodies and traumatized psyches, to seek justice, and to recreate trust among themselves. Yet the consequences of this genocide, enormous as they are for Rwandans, do not stop at the border of that one small country but spill onto the people of neighboring countries and far beyond. Those living in the region have suffered from subsequent wars of unimaginable cruelty and from the consequences of millions of people in flight, both refugees and killers. Those further from Rwanda pay the price of their failure to protect others, both in guilty consciences and in the material costs of humanitarian aid and assistance in rebuilding shattered societies."

Timothy Longman, a professor of political science and international relations at Boston University, was among the authors of "Leave None To Tell the Story." Longman directs the university's Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs and has served as acting director of BU's African Studies Center. Longman worked with Human Rights Watch in Rwanda following the genocide and has been called as an expert witness in several Rwandan war crimes trials.

Longman stresses that entrenched views about Africa on the part of many Westerners may help to explain the failure to intervene in the Rwandan genocide. In an interview with BU Today, an internal publication at Boston University, Longman said:

“Our approach to Africa is still shaped by racist ideas. There’s a tendency for Americans--but I think it’s true for Europeans as well--to view Africans as inherently savage, to still believe that Africans are just prone to violence, and that’s why violence happens.

“In dealing with Africa,” Longman continued, “when violence happens, we assume that it is primal and a reflection of backward cultures rather than something that is, in fact, modern and well-organized. The genocide in Rwanda was only possible because of a modern bureaucracy, because of the type of organization that a modern state made possible. It was well-organized and well-planned.”

The Rwandan genocide ended in July 1994 when Rwandan Patriotic Front forces took Kigali, the nation’s capital. Hundreds of thousands of Hutus fled as Kigali fell to forces led by Paul Kagame.

A sense of global horror and shame took hold as the extent and calculus of the mass killings became evident. In 1994, the United Nations Security Council established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) with the goal of bringing to justice those who had perpetrated the massacres. Within Rwanda, a traditional village court system known as Gacaca was reintroduced as an additional step to ensure justice.

According to Human Rights Watch, at least 10,000 Rwandans have been tried for crimes associated with the massacres. The country’s civilian-run Gacaca courts have handled more than 1 million such cases. After 10 years, the Gacaca ended formally in 2012. In 1998, 22 people were publicly executed for their roles in the killings. Other death sentences were commuted when Rwanda abolished the death penalty in 2007.

In the aftermath of the genocide, several countries offered formal apologies to Rwanda for failing to take steps to halt the killings, according to “Rwanda: Justice After Genocide--20 Years On,” a 2014 report from Human Rights Watch.

Without actually apologizing for his country’s failure to intervene in Rwanda, former U.S. President Bill Clinton, who was in office during the atrocities, said in 2012, “I don’t think we could have ended the violence, but we could have cut it down. And I regret that.”

A report from Human Rights Watch cast a wide shadow of shame, concluding that “Despite repeated warnings by Rwandans and international human rights organizations, diplomats, U.N. staff and others that a genocide was being prepared, governments and intergovernmental bodies...dramatically failed to act to prevent the genocide as it unfolded in 1994.” Within Rwanda, a new constitution adopted in 2003 bans political organizations that base themselves on “race, ethnic group, tribe, clan, religion, sex, religion or any other division which may give rise to discrimination.”

Rwanda’s 2008 Genocide Revisionism Law prohibits the advancement of what it calls genocide ideology. Included under this legal umbrella are intimidation, defamatory speeches, genocidal denial, mocking of victims and acts lumped under the term “divisionism.”

The new government also took steps to address gender inequity. According to the new government, a mandatory minimum of 30 percent of the country’s senators are women.

Not all the changes were seen as progressive. As president, Kagame had been limited to two terms in office. But he wanted more. A 2015 constitutional amendment would permit Kagame to stay in office until 2034.

The specter of the genocide weighs heavily on the soul of Rwanda. Little chance remains of burying the horrific memories — not when, 25 years after the slaughters ended, mass graves of genocide casualties continue to be uncovered.

The civil war and ensuing genocide also took a toll on a Rwandan economy based largely on subsistence agriculture. Ironically, before the global pandemic caused by the coronavirus virus closed most international borders, tourism was strengthening the Rwandan economy. In spite of the tragic legacy of war and genocide, people still wanted to observe the mountain gorillas.

“I Lived To Tell the World”

Dressed in the plaid shirt and down jacket that is the unofficial uniform of the Pacific Northwest, Emmanuel Turaturanye was riding the MAX train in Portland, Oregon, one day when a guy sitting nearby shot him an angry glare. Turaturanye has an easy smile, and his tortoise shell glasses afford him a scholarly air. He is from Africa and his skin is very dark.

“Go back to where you came from!” the man shouted at Turaturanye.

Very soon, the man on the MAX train realized he had chosen the wrong adversary. Turaturanye stayed calm and poised. What the man had roused in him was not anger, but righteous indignation. Turaturanye knew far too much about the toll of hatred, and he knew that the best way to combat it was not to fight back, but to stand up to it.

“Freedom of speech does not give you the right to engage in hate speech,” he rejoined, keeping his voice strong and even. “What you just said is a violation of my human rights.”

All eyes on the train turned on the man who had spoken to Turaturanye. Still keeping his voice calm, Turaturanye challenged, “What do you think all these other passengers think of what you just said to me? What do they think of you?”

At the next stop, Turaturanye’s verbal assailant couldn’t get off the train fast enough. Around him, Turaturanye said, other passengers began marveling at how skillfully he had defused a potentially explosive encounter. Several people wept in admiration.

“I do not respond to anger with anger,” the lanky Amazon delivery driver--41 at the time of our interview--explained later. “It is like trying to stop fire with fire.” More forcefully, he added, “I am a product of hate. I survived it. I respect human rights. But I will never tolerate hate.”

Turaturanye was 16 years old, “just a young boy,” when his native Rwanda was ravaged by civil war. The assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana spurred a bloody Hutu campaign that sought to kill every member of the rival Tutsi clan living in Rwanda. The worst of the killings occurred in the first six days after Habyarimana’s death on April 6, 1994. But the genocide stretched on until 70% of Rwanda’s Tutsi residents had been slain—including nearly all of Emmanuel Turaturanye’s family members. Among those who survived, many sought permanent exile outside Rwanda.

In the process, the Hutu forces also murdered thousands from the Twa tribe, the country’s earliest inhabitants. The Twa were aboriginal pygmy hunter-gatherers who had begun settling in the region that became Rwanda between 800 B.C. and 3000 B.C. About one-third of the Twa population were slain in the rampage.

Experts say the rate of killing in such a short time was five times that of the Nazi Holocaust. The scale and brutality shocked the world. But Western nations, including the United States, all but ignored the careful and calculated attempt to eliminate an entire population based solely on ethnic identity.

A Village Childhood

Turaturanye, whose surname means “neighbor,” was born and raised in the Ngoma district of Rwanda’s Eastern Province. His father was a pastor and his mother, a farmer. Beans, cassava, bananas and avocados provided the bulk of their income. Theirs was a self-sustaining lifestyle: “I never had to go buy food at the market,” Turaturanye said. “It was just there.”

Turaturanye was one of six siblings whose native language was called Kinya. Three cousins, the children of his father's brother, lived with them. "So we were 11 in the house," he said. "It was fun."

The boys and their neighbors played soccer in the village streets, barefoot. Turaturanye said no one thought about who came from which tribe. The family was active in the large church community led by Turaturanye's father, where Hutu prayed alongside Tutsi. They lived a village life, far in so many ways from the political strife of the country's capital, Kigali. If there was tension, he said, it was more about economic disparity than tribal identity.

"I was a Tutsi, but it was a social class, not a tribe," he said. "Sometimes when I talk about this, it is hard even for me to understand: How to call people who speak the same language 'different tribes?'"

But hostility toward the Tutsis had been brewing for several decades. The attacks on April 7, 1994, that began in the northern part of Rwanda, when Hutu insurgents poured in from Uganda, had been carefully orchestrated. The violence came with a mandate to leave no Tutsi man, woman or child alive.

As Turaturanye observed, "Genocide does not happen instantly. It has to be planned." The killings may have taken place in 1994, but "the seed of genocide ideology — the propaganda and the discrimination," as he put it, was planted in 1959, long before Turaturanye was born.

As a Tutsi, his father was not allowed to go to high school, nor to serve in the military. As time went on, intending to deny Tutsi children the chance for higher education, the government maintained a steady count of Tutsis attending school. In first grade, Turaturanye remembered, an official called out, "Hutus, stand."

“So I stood,” he said. “I didn’t know the difference.”

When the same thing happened the next year, in second grade, his teacher slapped him for what she presumed was his impudence. Confused, young Emmanuel went home and asked, “Dad, what is a Hutu, and what is Tutsi?”

By the following year, when he was 8, Turaturanye began to feel the discrimination himself. “What I experienced in school was dehumanization,” he said. “I was called a cockroach and a snake. I was bullied, physically, every day.”

When this would happen, when schoolmates would taunt him,” Emmanuel would turn to his father for comfort.

“He was the one I would go to, and cry,” he said. “He was a really good, loving, caring father.”

He has since studied the philosophy, such as it is, of tyranny. “This is how they did it, with propaganda. It was the same as the Nazis against the Jews.”

Because even many Rwandans could not distinguish one group from another, the government began issuing those national identification cards. Children, however, were not required to carry ID cards. That oversight by a government bent on destruction helped many young people to survive.

The genocide came as no surprise to Turaturanye. “Growing up, Tutsi, I was told we were going to be killed,” he said. “They were always telling us we were foreigners — Ethiopians.”

The relentless erosion of his humanity took its toll. “I don’t know if I can explain it,” he began. “It was as if I was already dead. I was not a human being.”

The unremitting cruelty was itself unfathomable. “You would see people wearing priests’ robes,” Turaturanye said--men whose very clothing was intended to inspire trust. “They would tell you they were going to kill you.”

The Killings Begin

The mass killings of 1994 began in early April. On the eighth day of the month, machete-armed guerrillas arrived in Turaturanye’s region. The Tutsi population was in shock, wondering what to do. No one could have expected such brutality, so quickly.

“There was not enough time to flee,” he said. If you did manage to escape, “wherever you would go, someone would find you.”

Many of the people in his father’s congregation were Hutus. “The people he had preached to, they turned against him,” his son said. A crowd of maybe 10 people surrounded the family’s home. They carried guns and machetes.

“Machetes were for the poor. You had to pay to be shot,” Turaturanye said. “Can you imagine? Paying someone to shoot you?”

By sheer happenstance, Emmanuel Turaturanye was outside when the attack began. Cooking duties rotated among the children, and it was his day to prepare meals for the family. His 5-year-old sister, Amena, was with him. Amena adored her big brother, and she loved to sit next to him while he cooked.

A group, he said, “maybe 10 people” began surrounding the family home. “They had gun and machetes.”

Turaturanye saw them, “and my heart started to race, the way you feel when something bad is about to happen.” His body began to spasm with chills of fear. “And then my gut told me: *Run!*”

He scooped up his sister and took off as fast as his long, lean legs could carry him. The guerrillas chased them, but Emmanuel and Amena outran them. All these years later, a sense of amazement remains in his voice as he remembers, “My little sister, my God, she was so fast.”

Inside the family home, the Hutu warriors killed his 95-year-old grandmother, his mother and his brother Steven. His cousins — Asman, Amina and Ayat — all were killed the same day. His father, who had been at a neighbor’s house when the attack occurred, also perished in the carnage. An older brother, Samuel, somehow had managed to run to another village.

In all as the massacre continued, Turaturanye said he lost too many members of his family to count—certainly too many to make any sense.

“Oh my God,” he said. “More than 100.”

An official death toll from the massacres is hard to establish in part, he said, “because so many people disappeared.”

The loss of his family and the callous nature of the violence seemed impossible to absorb. There was no time to grieve. Turaturanye knew only that he had to flee, to find a place of safety for him and his sister.

“All I felt was numbness,” he said. “I was in desperation mode. You don’t think of anything else, just how to survive.”

Emmanuel and Amena first sought refuge in the district’s administrative offices. It seemed reasonable to believe that in a government office, they would be out of harm’s way. The

brother and sister were not alone in making this assumption. When they arrived, the offices were teeming with Tutsis in search of refuge.

But far from being safe, he soon realized, “it was like walking into fire. We were 6,000 Tutsis in the district office that day, a kind of ad hoc refugee camp. We thought we were safe, but they were planning to kill us all.”

Three days later, the Hutu soldiers tried to lull their captives into a further sense of safety by bringing them food, rice and beans. They also brought 1,000 grenades with the intention of finishing off the entire lot in one massive hit. Turaturanye is still unsure just how he managed to escape. But in his heart, “I thought, ‘I do not want to die.’”

One small advantage was that he did not have a national ID card naming him as a Tutsi. But Hutus from his own village knew him and would happily have identified him as their enemy. Roadblocks were everywhere.

The Kindness of Kamondo

With nowhere to turn, and at that point, little to lose, he knocked on the door of a Hutu woman who had been a close friend of his family. She told him she knew what was happening. Then, rather than turning him out to face certain death, she said, “Son, just come in.”

Her name was Kamondo, the same as a kind of exotic bird. Inside her home, she hid Emmanuel and Amena. The gesture carried great personal risk. Her own son, Turaturanye said, “was among the criminals. He knew we were there.”

But the woman warned her son: “If one of these kids is ever killed, I will kill myself.” For emphasis, she told him: “If you ever, ever even think about it, I will die first. They will not be harmed. Not in my life.”

When Hutus from his own village came looking for him, she hid Emmanuel and Amena under a bed. Even her son went along with the scheme. “There’s no one here,” he told the rebels. “And since he was one of them,” Turaturanye said, “they believed him.”

Who can comprehend the incomprehensible? When the killings stopped, Turaturanye could scarcely understand that he was alive, never mind why or how. Many people his own age, after all, had been bludgeoned, butchered, burned alive. He believes his survival may have been preordained for a purpose.

“Being alive ... it is not that I deserved it,” he said. “I think I lived in order to tell the world.”

Fighting Back

For years, even the United Nations balked at applying the label “genocide” to the terrible events in Rwanda. Instead the bloodshed was called the Rwandan Civil War.

“They were ashamed,” Turaturanye theorizes. “‘Never again,’ they had said when this had happened before in other places.”

The lack of support from the United States, a traditional ally at times of global despotism, did not surprise Turaturanye. Only a year before, U.S. troops had been killed in Somalia, and the government was in no hurry to become involved in another African dispute. Besides, Rwanda is a country of few natural resources, and as Turaturanye pointed out, “for Clinton, there was to be no return on his investments. What was he going to get in Rwanda?”

Soldiers from the RPF had already captured his region when Turaturanye joined their forces. He had seen so much already — houses burned with families inside them, people thrown into toilet pits that served as mass graves — and now maybe it was his turn to fight back.

“I felt I had to do something,” he said. “But I also felt protected. No one was going to chase me with a machete.”

Three of his cousins, sons of a sister-in-law who somehow managed to survive although her husband did not, joined with him in enlisting. Their mother agreed to take care of Emmanuel’s sister Amena.

But even as a soldier, he never killed anyone. He could not. He fell back on the foundation his father had given him: “Love your neighbor as yourself. If you want to be treated well, why would you mistreat others? And God was my witness.”

The trauma he had endured never left him. His emotional wounds were too deep and too fresh. He had terrible nightmares. “Oh my God, the nightmares,” he says. In flashbacks, people chased him constantly, brandishing machetes.

His inner turmoil mirrored that of Rwanda as a whole. The country, its very soul ripped to shreds, had to rebuild from the ground up, including establishing a new constitution. Two public holidays were set aside to recognize and mourn the genocide. High school and college students alike are required to take a course that outlines the genocide.

The new government focused on helping its people to heal. Trauma therapy became widely available. Turaturanye did not hesitate to take advantage of these services. “The therapy really helped me to understand what I was going through,” he said. In turn he trained as a counselor so he could help others.

He also went to college in Rwanda, saving the money to pay for his courses by skipping meals and ignoring the constant rumbling in his stomach. He earned one advanced degree in agricultural engineering, and another in economics and management. He took a job as an agronomist agent for the government, helping people learn to grow healthy food.

But no amount of therapy or work as diversion could help him to reconcile the evil he had endured. The pastor's son gave up on God. He had no hope. He was angry. "I questioned God," he said. "If God existed, why did he not stop the murders?"

He has no idea where he found the money for alcohol and drugs, but somehow he did. Smoking marijuana was illegal, but he did not care. "I was an angry young man," he said. "Life was worthless. I wanted to die. Life was worthless."

A Voice Speaks

One day — Emmanuel swears this happened — he was standing around, smoking, when he heard a voice.

"Emmanuel," said the voice, "what are you doing?"

He looked around but saw no one. His head spun once again, but still he was alone. Obviously, he concluded, he was losing his mind.

"Emmanuel, what are you doing?" the voice asked for the second time.

The third time the voice spoke, it said: "Your dad Isaac is in heaven. You know how he did everything to make your life good. If he looked at you now, would he be proud?"

At that exact moment, he said, his life took a U-turn. He contacted his cousin, Jane, the only person he thought he could trust at that point. Jane had watched his downward spiral but had not passed judgment. When he told her about the voice he had heard, Jane looked up at the sky and asked Emmanuel to come to church with her the following day.

"The speaker that day was from Congo. He started preaching about the prodigal son," Turaturanye said. The message hit home. He began to weep.

“That very day, I quit smoking. I quit drinking,” he said. “One week after giving my life to Christ, I changed the group I was hanging out with. I started singing. I joined the choir. After two years I was playing music. Now I write music.”

Indeed, as part of an oral history project to observe the genocide, he composed a song and sang it. His tune called “Just Having Good Time with the Spirit” can be seen on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEQsZpKmGV4>).

Turaturanye was to hear from the voice, the Spirit, yet again. It was 2008 and he was serving as a choirmaster. Within his choir were people whose families had committed genocide, and people whose families had been killed in the genocide. This is when the Spirit told him he was a hypocrite, for through his music he was teaching forgiveness, the very notion he was unable to embrace himself.

The Spirit reminded him that the Lord’s Prayer calls for forgiveness, then admonished: “I want you to do it.” Turaturanye was angry. He started to cry. The voice repeated: “Do it!” The voice told Turaturanye he must return to the village where he was born and proclaim forgiveness.

“And that is when I started feeling inner peace,” he said, because he did follow those instructions. “I felt alive, lighter. That is why I don’t cry anymore. I found this grace, and it really transformed me.”

This epiphany, this moment of true healing taught him another important lesson.

“Forgiveness is different from reconciliation,” he said. “Reconciliation is between you and someone else. Forgiveness is within you. I started forgiving myself so I could find peace within myself.”

His faith continues to sustain him, Turaturanye said: “I am a Christian. I have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. To have that faith has really helped me.”

Triple Redemption

Turaturanye likes to say that he was saved twice, once when he escaped the Hutu atrocities, and again when he found Christ. But there was a third moment of redemption, and that was when he met Danielle, the beautiful American woman who would become his wife.

It was 2008. Friends of his, Nathan and Pam, had opened an English-speaking school for the children of missionaries and NGO (nongovernmental organization) workers living in Rwanda. Turaturanye was hanging out at the school, in part to help with the music program, but also to encourage these newcomers to Rwanda to attend the English-speaking services at the Anglican church where he was both the organist and an unordained pastor.

Danielle, a traveling missionary, had arrived to serve as a teacher at the school. “I just saw her smile, and her beautiful golden eyes,” Turaturanye said. “And oh man, I just felt something.”

Evidently it was mutual. Danielle came to his church and began attending evening worship services. She didn’t have a car, so he would walk her home at night. Sometimes he would take her hand. The relationship remained warm, but chaste, until Danielle moved back to the United States in 2010 to take a job with a nonprofit organization. When an opportunity to return to Rwanda cropped up soon after, Danielle jumped at it.

Finally, Turaturanye felt it was time to tell her how he felt. “It was a really long conversation,” he remembered. When he at last told her he loved her, she replied, “Are you sure?” They began dating.

As she prepared once again to return to the U.S. in 2011, Turaturanye had a friend make a golden ring adorned with shiny rubies. He presented it to her in a Rwandan peace basket and asked her to be his wife. It was an intercultural, interracial partnership, and there were some large hurdles to overcome. On May 18, 2013, they became husband and wife. In the small church in the village where he was raised, Emmanuel and Danielle made sure that everyone was invited, even those who surely had taken part in the slaughter of Turaturanye's family.

"The same people who had surrounded my house, they were at my wedding," he said. "I embraced them."

A Cool New Family

At first they lived in Rwanda. Things were not always easy. Days into the new year, 2016, Danielle and Emmanuel both lost their jobs.

"We got stuck. We had no severance pay," he said. So what they did, "we prayed."

Emmanuel went to the U.S. Embassy and was granted a 10-year visa to the United States. (He has since obtained a green card.) And so later in 2016 they moved to Danielle's native Portland. There were some immigration roadblocks: "It was a little complicated, because of my military background in Rwanda," he said. Also, his university degrees carried little weight in the U.S.

But as they settled into life in Oregon, things began to fall into place. One of Danielle's cousins gave them a car. Danielle found a job with a nonprofit. Emmanuel received a work authorization permit.

Turaturanye considers himself lucky because "her family is really cool." Having lost nearly everyone in his own large family — upwards of 100 people, he estimates — he treasures

the moments when his American nieces crawl into his lap and tell him how much they love their Uncle Manny.

“Her family,” he said, “they love me and I love them.”

Even from far across the globe, Emmanuel and Danielle stay in contact with his surviving sister and brother via Skype, WhatsApp and other platforms. Emmanuel says that no matter how good his life is in Oregon, it is hard not to miss Rwanda.

“It is my home,” he said.

Danielle and Emmanuel hope for children of their own one day. When the time is right, he will take them back to Rwanda and share with them the terrible history that he and his country endured. He will tell them the truth and hope that they learn from it.

But also, he vows, “I will tell them to love and respect every human being, no matter what their race or where they come from, no matter what their religion might be. Just love them, as a human being.”

There are things, important things, that Turaturanye would like to tell the rest of the world. He would like people to understand, for instance, that “ignorance is preventable, but it is also contagious.” He would like to make it known that as his home country reorganized, “one of the smartest things Rwanda did was to invest in education. Not just math and physics, but also teaching how to prevent hate crimes from happening.”

Perhaps most important, he would like to talk about the toxic nature of anger.

“Anger, let me tell you, anger does not exist on its own. It is like the second emotion, the thing that comes next. It is an iceberg. You only see just the top. But there are a lot of layers underneath.”

Anger, he continued: "It just kills, and it destroys the soul."

That is what he would like people to know, "if anyone can hear."

But can people hear? Can they learn? Can the toxic tide of anger be turned back?

"People are still killing. There are still mass shootings," he conceded. "But I don't think it's too late to make a change. It's not too late to empower the younger generation to love and respect."