



## **SHOES FOR NATIONAL HEALING BURUNDI**

November 2011

Dear Pastors, Bishops, Family, Friends and Supporters,

My name is Bishop James Dixon and I sit on the board for Samaritan's Feet. I will be preaching in my bare feet on behalf of those without shoes around the world, and I'm asking others to join me.

There are millions of children around the world who don't have shoes. They suffer from discomfort, diseases, infection and many other ailments as a result. Many are losing their lives due to infections from these soil transmitted parasites.

Samaritan's Feet was started in 2003 with a goal to put 10 million pairs of shoes on the feet of 10 million children in the next 10 years. They serve the impoverished in over 60 countries by washing their feet, sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and fitting them with a new pair of shoes. Over 70,000 people have joined our mission in reaching nearly 3,000,000 people around the world and today we have another chance to help heal and reconcile a whole nation.

Burundi is a country of people with diverse origins, cultures, languages and beliefs. The history of Burundi is one of increasing Tribal divisiveness. The conclusion of a 12-year civil war and the 2005 inauguration of President Pierre Nkurunziza offers an opportunity for lasting peace. With an estimated one million displaced refugees, this small country of ten million people remains in a desperately fragile state. Ethnic divisions still run deep and the economy is slowly rebuilding.

In a war-torn situation no group in society is as vulnerable as its children. In Burundi the figures speak for themselves. UNICEF estimates that 358,000 children have lost at least one parent, and 77,000 have lost both parents. There are over 500,000 AIDS orphans and at least 30,000 street children.

We believe that Burundi has the potential to be a nation whose dream of unity and common purpose is now achievable. We believe that God wants to bring great healing to the Burundians and He can use shoes as a way to open doors for ministry.

Samaritan's Feet has partnered with His Excellency President Pierre Nkurunziza to launch Shoes for National Healing to help initiate a platform for reconciliation and healing for the nation. Our vision is to serve the children and the nation at large by providing 200,000 pairs of shoes for the children to help them get back to school. Their work with the children of Burundi is based on the disciplines of washing their feet and engaging in dialogue with them about forgiveness, peace and reconciliation – without which Burundi simply has no future. By helping thousands of young Burundian orphans create new lives and by connecting with local churches to help facilitate ongoing discipleship in the school system, Samaritan's Feet intends for the message of peace and reconciliation to migrate across the country and regions. We believe the children of Burundi hold the future of the country in their hands.



Just one service in your bare feet can change the life of a child forever...and perhaps even your own. That's what happened last year when hundreds of pastors from across the country raised funds for over 10,000 pairs of shoes for children in need. Samaritan's Feet is again asking pastors to leave their shoes behind for a weekend service. We will stand barefoot together to bring awareness to the need, call our congregations to action, raise funds, and become advocates for those who need our help.

**I am asking that you to do three things:**

1. Preach your sermon in your bare feet for one weekend
2. Take up a special offering for Samaritan's Feet to support the project in Burundi. This can happen in two different ways: Ask your congregation to donate \$10, which buys, sorts, warehouses, ships and distributes a pair of shoes and socks for a child in need. Or ask your congregation to text "shoes" to 85944 and \$10.00 will be added to their cell phone bill at the end of the month, which buys a pair of shoes for a child.
3. Make phone calls or send out emails and/or letters to four other pastors.

**Church Support:**

- Promote a "barefoot day" at your church with church staff, congregation members, choir and others given the option to attend church shoeless.
- Encourage your church members to support this cause by participating in our text2give initiative.

Become a part of the bare foot movement by contacting Ibrahim Sani at [isani@samaritansfeet.org](mailto:isani@samaritansfeet.org) or call 704.200.2207. You can also register online [www.samaritansfeet.org](http://www.samaritansfeet.org).

I thank you for your consideration and I look forward to having you and your church a part of our barefoot family.

Remember, Jesus said, ***"Whatever you do to the least of these, you have done it also for me."*** (Matthew 25:40)

Thank you and may God's favor increase!

Sincerely,

Bishop James Dixon