

Introducing the ‘Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict’ (HWEC) ministry

The HWEC ministry seeks to help enable the church to be an agent of healing and reconciliation in the nation. We believe the church is God’s ideal agent in every country, but the church first needs to be healed herself. As everyone is wounded where there is ethnic conflict, the aim is to bring healing to Christian leaders so that they in turn can be agents of healing in the nation.

Ideally it is an ongoing national ministry for the Body of Christ, and so is not focussed on a particular church or denomination, though it may start out that way. Because we aim to make a national impact, it is important to lay a good foundation from the start. It would be good for as many national church leaders and Christian organisations as possible to be involved, and to ‘buy into’ the vision. Healing and reconciliation are at the centre of the Christian Gospel – they are not optional extras for para-church organisations. Jesus longs to heal His church so that she can regain her mission and reveal His glory to the community.

HWEC is not a big funding organisation coming in with big money. Rather as servants our aim is to serve and equip local Christians and help them discover their role, both regionally and nationally. This ministry is part of Le Rucher Ministries, Geneva. www.lerucher.org We have an office in Kigali, Rwanda, serving the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa (Rwanda, Burundi, Eastern Congo). This is led by Joseph Nyamutera, who is also the overall manager of the ethnic reconciliation ministry under the umbrella of Le Rucher Ministries International.

The motto of Le Rucher Ministries is ‘Impacting a needy world by caring for and equipping Christian workers.’ Through an integrated approach, Le Rucher Ministries activities involve:

Ethnic Reconciliation - promoting reconciliation between people and tribes by Biblically based training and ministry

Community Development - training reconciled people to live out their new co-operation in their villages based on values from a Biblical worldview.

Member Care – debriefing, support and training for mission workers, especially those who are involved in high risk areas.

The ministry usually begins with a HWEC workshop for Christian leaders, though in some cases it may follow one of the other ministries. (Note: this is not a workshop to train counsellors or mediation skills. It is aimed at Christians who are burdened to bring reconciliation into their communities, using a Biblical basis.)

Introducing the ‘Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict’ (HWEC) workshop

The goal of this workshop:

This four day workshop (Monday evening to Friday morning,) which was first developed in Rwanda, aims to equip Christian leaders to be agents of healing and

reconciliation. A combination of interactive teaching, group sessions, ministry times and participant interaction is used. Each session builds upon previous sessions so full participation is essential. Intercession for the workshop is essential and must undergird everything, as division and disunity are spiritual strongholds.

This workshop, developed by Dr. Rhiannon Lloyd, is now being run actively by Africans in Rwanda, Congo, Burundi, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya. It seeks to bring healing and wholeness to communities suffering from ethnic bitterness and hatred. People from differing ethnic and church backgrounds are invited to encounter God and one another at heart level. In a safe environment, they are encouraged to experience healing and are able to develop new perspectives and attitudes. They are also equipped to influence others to demonstrate new perspectives and attitudes.

HWEC Workshop topics include:

- God's original intention for relationships
- The awful power of prejudice
- A restored identity in the Holy Nation
- The Church, God's plan for healing the Country
- Suffering and a God of love
- Knowing God as a Loving Father
- The Wounded Spirit
- Healing Inner Wounds
- The Thief
- Forgiveness – what it is and what it is not
- Personal and corporate repentance
- Pronouncing blessings

Why are these workshops needed?

- Too often the church is part of the problem instead of being part of the answer
- Often there is no difference between the church and the community in terms of beliefs, prejudices, behaviour
- There are foundational Biblical truths which are overlooked or not understood
- Church leaders also get wounded in ethnic conflicts
- Before the church can be an agent of healing it must first be healed itself

Workshop materials

A handbook called 'Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict' is available digitally on our website <http://www.lerucher.org/Content/Reconciliation/resources.html>. You will be able to print out copies for personal use or for workshop participants. It cannot be sold for profit, though you can, of course, cover your printing costs. We are also happy to negotiate with you the terms for translating this handbook into your local language(s).

What we want to achieve through the HWEC workshop:

- a new/fresh encounter with God and with one another
- revelation of truth that sets people free
- an opportunity for people to hear each other and express their pain in a safe environment
- healing of heart wounds at the cross, enabling people to forgive or ask for forgiveness
- removal of prejudices and judgements, and an ability to see the beauty in each other
- dividing walls to be demolished between ethnic groups and between different denominations
- a new hope that the church has a crucial role to play in the healing of the nation
- everyone to leave the workshop feeling loved and affirmed
- a determination to live out the reconciliation practically in their churches and communities

Overall strategy

Once people have been through the HWEC workshop and have responded well to the teaching, our aim is to train local facilitators as soon as possible so that they can conduct the workshop themselves. The kind of people we would want to train is described below.

Conducting a training for those who would facilitate a HWEC Workshop

Ideally, this would be a 5 full-day residential training. The training would include:

- testimonies of what has changed for them since the HWEC workshop
- sharing the challenges
- questions to assess their grasp of the material
- teaching on:
 - interactive teaching vs preaching
 - the qualities of a facilitator
 - handling challenging situations they may face in the workshop
 - how to arrange and conduct the workshop
 - understanding the sequence of the workshop sessions
 - building up prayer cover
 - taking care of themselves in ministry
- reviewing each topic thoroughly
- group work to prepare teaching sessions
- presentations with everyone giving constructive feedback

- commissioning them into the ministry

Who should present the workshop?

A multi-ethnic team made up of both men and women would be ideal to present the workshop because they would demonstrate by the way that they relate to one another that reconciliation is possible.

Characteristics of the presenters:

People who:

- are committed Bible-believing Christians, sensing a call of God to the ministry of reconciliation
- have been through the whole workshop at least once (the more times the better!)
- have a good testimony and are held in high regard in their church and community
- have already experienced a significant amount of healing from their own wounds, and are therefore able to remember the injustices they have suffered without a major emotional reaction
- are sensitive to the other ethnic groups, and try to understand what it is like to 'live in their skin'
- are humble and teachable
- are already seeking to live reconciliation
- are good public communicators
- have good teaching skills (as opposed to preaching) or the potential to learn them
- have already demonstrated pastoral or counselling gifts
- are well informed about the nation's problems, both through reading and through relationships with other ethnic groups
- are comfortable and gracious in an interdenominational setting
- are tolerant of differing opinions
- are prayerful, able to listen to the Holy Spirit

Ministry Coordinator

From experience, we see the need for a part or full-time coordinator for the ministry to be appointed once the trained teams begin to work. This would enhance the development of the ministry. This person should be chosen from among the trainees, identified for his /her leadership skills, walk with the Lord, reputation and character, heart for the hurting and his/her personal vision and commitment to reconciliation.

The coordinator would be responsible for keeping in touch with the teams to give encouragement and support, seeking out new opportunities for ministry, building a support base and prayer covering. We also know from experience that this ministry is disturbing to the enemy of our souls, so the coordinator needs to be aware of the

spiritual warfare that will be involved and have adequate prayer cover and accountability.

CRITERIA FOR LE RUCHER MINISTRIES AGREEING TO RUN A 'HEALING THE WOUNDS OF ETHNIC CONFLICT' WORKSHOP IN A NEW SITUATION:

We would need to receive a request from a group or organisation from within that nation/region. This would need to be a group of local Christians or a Christian ministry or NGO who are burdened to see an end to the ethnic conflicts in the region and who are happy to have a Biblical rather than a secular approach. If they were already involved in reconciliation initiatives, that would be an added bonus.

Included in that group, there would need to be representatives of all the ethnic groups involved in the conflict.

The group would need to be in good standing with the local churches and committed to empower the local church to be an effective agent of healing and reconciliation. If the invitation comes from a church, we would want to know how good they are at working with other churches.

The group would need to be committed to continuing the work of healing and reconciliation after the Workshop so that it was not a one-off event.

Funding would need to be found by the hosting organisation/church for the Workshop and ongoing ministry, with only a minimum cost included for administration.

A member of the Le Rucher reconciliation team may visit to make an assessment of the needs and feasibility of conducting a Workshop. Alternatively, an initial pilot workshop can be conducted to give an idea of what we would be offering.

Ideally, we would offer one or two initial HWEC Workshops, followed by a training seminar for those deemed to be eligible to present the workshop according to the criteria previously mentioned. After the teams have been running workshops for a few months, a member of Le Rucher Ministries could be available to run a team development seminar, where the teams could be debriefed, and advice also be given on planning, leadership development and organisational management.

It is possible (according to staff availability) that Le Rucher Ministries could also offer seminars on the Biblical Foundations of Community Development, so that the reconciliation can 'put on flesh' in helping to build up the community. Also it may be possible to offer seminars on Trauma Debriefing and Counselling, and Caring (Member Care) for the Christian workers.