

connections

Working Together to Grow the Kingdom

LEADERSHIP NETWORK®

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Building a Bridge to the World's Poor

FOLLOWING JESUS' CALL TO SERVICE

FEATURED HALFTIMER:

Dale Dawson

HOMETOWN:

Little Rock, Arkansas

HOME CHURCH:

Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church, Little Rock

FIRST INVOLVEMENT WITH HALFTIME:

Read book in the late 1990s

HALFTIME CALLING: Working with the poor of Rwanda

When Dale Dawson first picked up Bob Buford's book *Halftime* in the 1990s, he thought it was a good read. He saw the book as an interesting intellectual endeavor, but something that really didn't pertain to him.

But when Dale picked up the book again in 2002, everything had changed. Dale was in a different place. He had found great career success but lacked the passion he once had for business. He was searching for new ways to add significance to his life.

This time around, *Halftime* touched Dale's heart. It helped him understand the uncertainty and unease he felt in his life. And it inspired him to start thinking about ways he could use his skills and passions to make an impact in God's Kingdom.

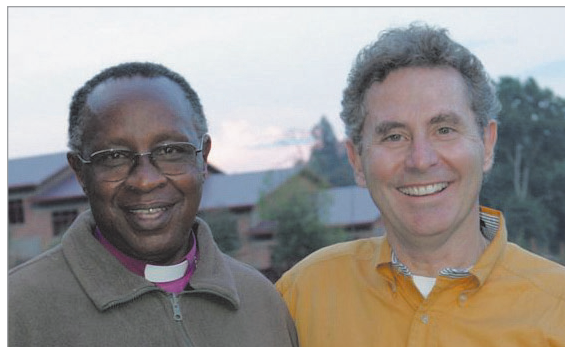
ENTERING HIS HALFTIME

The book led Dale to the www.halftime.org Web site. There, he devoured the inspirational stories of people who sounded just like him. He particularly

identified with the businesspeople who had made life changes like the ones he was contemplating. He wanted to learn more about how to follow God's call.

Dale signed up for the "My Halftime Guide," a personalized electronic coaching program that sends regular e-mails challenging recipients to ask themselves tough questions and think about important issues.

The e-mails kept Dale on track. They not only made him take steps toward change but also gave him comfort in learning that his experiences weren't unusual. Dale was receiving permission to live his life differently—to change his priorities and redefine success.



Bishop John Rucyahana (left) inspired Dale Dawson (right) to open his heart to those less fortunate in Rwanda.

AN INTRODUCTION

In order to make the change to a more significant life, Dale needed to find something that awakened his passions like the business world once did. He wanted to use his skills to their greatest advantage.

God knew exactly what Dale needed when He orchestrated a meeting between Dale and Anglican Bishop John Rucyahana from Rwanda in 2002.

Dale liked Bishop John immediately, identified with his leadership skills and admired how he dedicated 100 percent of his life to serving the poor and telling others about Jesus. "I saw something pure in his motivations," Dale says.

"Bishop John was my trigger to make changes," he says. "Even though we were from completely different backgrounds and experiences, we had an instant connection."

'WE ARE OPENING A WINDOW AND BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE WORLD'S POOR SO WE CAN TRANSFORM LIVES AT BOTH ENDS OF THE BRIDGE.'

Dale first got involved by helping Bishop John raise funds for his boarding school, which predominantly serves Rwandan orphans. They have raised \$800,000, and the students are testing at the highest levels in the country. Their goal is to show society that caring people can redeem the neediest kids out of the streets and turn them into the country's leaders.

WHAT HALFTIME MEANS TO ME

Halftime has helped me redefine what success is for me. It gave me examples of people who had successfully done that.

I didn't have any colleagues or know people in my church who were going through a similar experience. I found that support in Halftime. "My Halftime Guide" sent me e-mails and asked me pointed questions that made me think and forced me to action.

The e-mails kept me coming back to the issues. It is easy to drift along with the way things are. The guide made me think about the issues that really could bring about change. It kept me from getting distracted by life. —Dale Dawson



For more information about the My Halftime Guide, please go to http://www.halftime.org/my_halftime/my_halftime.cfm.

But Bishop John didn't think Dale's only calling was with the school. One day he challenged him, "You are a businessman. What Rwanda needs are businesses and jobs. What can you do about that?"

Dale would put his experience, passion, connections and skills to work to answer that question.



Dale's children speak the universal language of soccer with Rwandan students.

BRIDGE TO RWANDA

Dale is now involved with Opportunity International (OI), the world's largest faith-based microenterprise development organization, whose goals include transforming the lives of people in the developing world. OI is motivated and inspired by Jesus' call to serve the poor.

"All of my life, I've been interested in starting, organizing, running and growing businesses," Dale says. "I was shocked and stunned to learn that I could use those skills to follow Jesus' call to serve the poor."

Dale is shepherding OI's efforts to start a bank in Rwanda to help citizens become entrepreneurs. He is putting together the management team, raising money to seed the bank and serving on the board.

This bank will allow Rwandans to open savings accounts (something previously unattainable to nearly 75 percent of the population due to minimum deposit requirements) and will also grant small-business loans.

The loans, usually \$50 to \$100, are awarded to groups of people who guarantee the loan together. They meet weekly for training and to make repayments. These loans help create a network of people invested in one another's lives and families.

BACK HOME

Dale has traveled to Rwanda three times in the last nine months, and plans to return frequently. While home in the U.S., Dale uses much of his time to mobilize others so they can find their own "Rwanda."

"I tell people there is a whole other career available using their business skills," he says. "You don't have to join the ministry to serve God. You can find a calling that uses your skills and passions to serve others." LN