

## Obituary – Reverend Canon Ian Leakey (1924-2020) – Jonathan Leakey



Family man, missionary, vicar: Ian Raymond Arundell Leakey, a Reverend Canon in the Church of England and former missionary with the Ruanda Mission (CMS), died peacefully in his Salisbury home on 28<sup>th</sup> January, aged 95. He will be remembered by many, both in Africa and the UK, with great fondness and high regard.

The title of his auto-biography *“Four Worlds – India, Africa, England and Grace”*, self-published in advance of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, hints at both his geographical and spiritual life journey.

Ian was born in 1924 in India. His father, Raymond Arundell Leakey, worked for 36 years in the Rates and Development Department of the Bengal-Nagpur railway line. His mother, Maud, was a grand-daughter of Rowley Hill, Bishop of Sodor and Man (1877-1887). From the age of six until fourteen Ian lived with guardians in England and on the Isle of Man, attending Aymestrey Prep School in Worcestershire, and then Sherborne. His primary love at that time was sport: rugby, cricket, hockey and tennis. It was while at Sherborne that World War Two broke out. From there Ian gained a choral scholarship as a counter-tenor to King’s College Cambridge in 1942. His university studies, in French and German, were interrupted by the war and service in the Royal Navy, which culminated in a posting as an RNVR Lieutenant and Gunnery Control Officer on the destroyer *HMS Atherstone*, operating primarily in the Mediterranean on convoy escort duty.

It was during the war that the *“Fourth World”* of Ian’s life story, namely *“Grace”*, saving grace, first impacted Ian’s life. While in Northern Italy Ian was invited to a 3-day Christian conference on Lake Como by university friend and Navy man, Jimmy Boyes, a former President of the Cambridge Inter-collegiate Christian Union (CICCU). It was at this conference that Ian’s heart was stirred by the Good News of the Gospel.

Returning to Cambridge after the war to complete his degree, Ian sensed God’s call to the mission field and specifically to Central Africa. This, in large measure, came through the testimony of CICCU’s revered link missionary, and strong evangelical, Dr Joe Church, who brought with him inspiring stories of the Ruanda Revival (also known as the East African Revival). In 1948 Ian applied to the selection board of the Church of England, and on acceptance chose the two-year theology course at Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

Ian’s two-year curacy was spent in St John & St James, Litherland, Bootle, Liverpool; and it was while serving here that he met and fell in love with Joyce Coulton, who was on an inter-church mission from her Ridgeland Bible college (Kent), and who, like Ian, had coincidentally just applied to the Ruanda Mission! The two were engaged during the obligatory ‘colonial course’ in Brussels. But it wasn’t until June 1955, a year into their time in the mission field, that they were married in Burundi.

During their eighteen years in Africa Ian and Joyce had five sons: Mark, Graham, Richard, Jonathan and Christopher. Sadly, Graham died of leukaemia in his third year. Ian’s work in Rwanda and Burundi involved preaching, training in church leadership and pastoral care, and some teaching in secondary schools. Joyce worked in general and maternity nursing, specialising in a ministry to malnourished children and their mothers. Their time in Africa came to an abrupt end in 1972 when Ian was deported during the Burundian tribal genocide.



**Ian as Curate**



**Ian when vicar in Kent**

On return to England Ian’s second ministry career lasted sixteen 16 years, this time as vicar to the two village parishes of Cudham and Downe, in Kent, and with that came the chaplaincy to RAF Biggin Hill.

Ian and Joyce’s spiritual journey in that time had evolved from conservative evangelicalism inspired by the likes of John Stott and All Souls Langham Place, to the East African Revival emphasis on repentance and cleansing in the blood, to embracing the charismatic renewal in the late 1960s and into the 1970s. In the 1980s Ian and Joyce were early responders to John Wimber and the enlivening influence of the Vineyard movement; they drew inspiration from the ministry of Bishop David Pytches and the St Andrew’s Chorleywood team, as well as regular annual attendance at the New Wine festival in Shepton Mallet.

Semi-retirement took them to Landford, Wiltshire, where Joyce was to pass away after a stroke in 2001. In 2004, at the grand age of 80, Ian married Felicity Angus, and they settled in Salisbury, attending St Paul’s Church. Ian helped out leading services in

local churches and preached his last sermon aged 87, at St Lawrence's, Stratford-sub-Castle, Salisbury. Ian is survived by his wife Felicity and his four sons. "Amazing Grace!" were the final words of his auto-biography; Ian will be remembered, amongst many things, not only for his experience of Divine Grace, but his own gracious spirit.