



Hands Across Nations
24 March 2016

From Darkness to Light!

Hello again from Uganda, the "Pearl of Africa". God's wonderful plans for the Lango people to be able to read His Word, the Bible, are moving forward very well. However, as is true in most of the plans that were in the Bible for God's people, things rarely go on without challenges and difficulties - mountains - that must be overcome along the way.

As we live here for longer periods of time, we realize the significant differences in the culture here and ours in America.



May the children of Uganda learn to live an honest and trustworthy life through their parents and grandparents who have learned to read the Bible through the Hands Across Nations literacy

program. They are precious in the sight of God and their future is dark without Him. (These beautiful children came to see what was going on in our Teacher Training Workshop next to their primary school.)



Frequently at our Teacher Training Workshops, we are asked what we are planning to do to as "motivation" for the teachers and learners. "Motivation" is defined as something they get for blessing us by their attending the training we are giving! Teaching them a skill, and providing the books for them to teach the classes, isn't enough. We should pay them to come, give them notebooks and pens, and feed them a meal which contains chicken or meat! We have resisted this and told them that this is to be considered their ministry to their community. No one will be paid, and this is to be your sacrifice of yourself for God and your illiterate neighbors. Many leave, but many have taken up the challenge. Just today, we graduated another 84 people who have decided to help others without "motivation", except to do it for the right reasons.

Others who pretend to be helping us to find a vendor for materials we need, are behind the scenes negotiating a kick back for themselves, raising the price which will be charged our charity. At times those who are purchasing items for us, will be given blank receipts on which they can write an inflated price so they can pocket the excess we pay them for the item when they bring back the fake receipts.

There are claims for using "airtime" for their telephones as every minute costs, tire repairs for the motorcycle which may or may not have happened, fictitious oil changes on vehicles, and

services and items bought without receipts. Everything is transacted with cash and almost always without receipts in the open market so the opportunity for cheating is always there.

All is not hopeless here however. God has brought together a team of Ugandans in the Lira Prison who are all believers in Christ who are on the front line. They are actively advocating for inmates as well as programs such as the Hands Across Nations "Learning to Read to Read the Bible" program, farming training, skills for reintroduction back into society and a number of other projects. They are also clearly in support of assistance for inmates to work through the legal system to prove their innocence or at least to defend themselves well.



These 4 men, L to R: Vincent, Okaka, Francis, and Bonny and 7 others were falsely accused of attempted murder and spent over 4 years in prison waiting to come to trial and to be exonerated and released. Francis was a learner in the first literacy class in the prison and was the "valedictorian" of the class. He then became a teacher for the next 2 literacy classes and is now becoming a teacher trainer! What a miracle for a man who never went to school past grade 4 due to a 2-decade war. The other 3 were some of our first trained teachers in the prison and are now becoming trainers of teachers. They hope to set up an adult literacy school in their village together.

As we teach the illiterate to read, and give them God's Word as the first book they will read, we are seeing the light of hope growing as the people are transformed by the renewing of their minds through knowing God's love for them, and how He has created them to live out their lives. It won't happen with just projects to teach them how to farm better, have clean water, become a tailor or a baker. It's far deeper than that and must happen to rise above the conditions in which they are living.



BUT Halleluiah, all of us have EASTER - Jesus' sacrifice for us because all of us have done wrong things and fallen short of how we are created to live. And not only Jesus willingly sacrifice His life for ours; He died, and then was brought back to life so people would know that He truly is God's son. And the third wonderful gift is His Living Spirit which God provided to live in anyone's heart who recognizes their need for the Lord, admits it to Him, asks for forgiveness for the wrong they've done and asks for God to give them the Holy Spirit to come into their heart to help them live correctly.

May each of us thank the Lord for His overwhelming love for the whole world of faulty people, and celebrate this weekend, the gift of Jesus' willing sacrifice, His resurrection, and His Living Holy Spirit available to all of us. How can we be discouraged when we know the answer is the living Lord?



This week was a momentous occasion when Victor on the left, and Richard on the right surrounded by some of our team, completed the simple "Learners' Bible" translation they have been working on since the first week in January.

We know that He is alive and working here through many average and imperfect people who have hearts set on Him. Richard Otim and Ouni Victor, this week completed the easy to read Lango language translation of the "Learner's Bible", 2,712 Bible verses which are used in the 2 primers of our literacy program and others from the "Farming God's Way" program. Richard is a pastor in the Pentecostal Denomination and Victor an elder in the Catholic Church who has translated the Catholic Bible in the past. Together, they have worked to translate the "Learner's Bible" without putting denominational doctrines into it - strictly translating what the scripture says.

Pray for Uganda, America, the world, and for those God lays on your heart.

Praise the Lord, Jesus is alive!!

Sharing the love of Christ, our risen Lord, in practical ways, Carolyn and Keith Jones

We love hearing from you, and hearing how the Lord has impacted your life and those around you. It always encourages us to see how He is always at work.

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