



The Joys and Challenges of Ministry in Uganda

11 June 2016

There is seldom a boring moment, let alone a boring day, on the mission field here in Uganda. Both successes and challenges make the time fly by each day. Most of the challenges turn out to be successes as we lift them up to the Lord in prayer and follow his leading as He shows us the way to overcome them.



One challenge came during the recent trip out to the Alito church, on muddy roads, under construction, across a swampy area. The "new" 1994 Toyota, slid into a water-filled ditch as we avoided several piles of gravel.

No problem, the Toyota has 4 wheel drive. Unfortunately, this was the first time we had needed it since purchasing the car and the 4-wheel drive was not working. No problem, our friend Dr. Opio was taking a team of people in his van too, and had 4-wheel drive. We had straps, chains and a "come-along" to attach the two vehicles. Unfortunately, the ditch was deep and long and we were dragged almost to the end of it, but then were deeply mired in the muck. No problem, God was with us, and we prayed for His help which came in the form of about 15 strong young men who "lifted" the Toyota by the roof rack, so the Toyota practically leaped out of the ditch as Dr. Opio pulled it forward! There must have been a band of angels there with the men, as it just couldn't have happened naturally. When you experience God's miraculous answers to prayers, it fills you with awe and joy!



We called these guys our "Feet of Clay Team". Without them we would never have reached the church! All of us went on our way rejoicing - even the men who helped as they experienced God's power and also received some "thank you shillings" for their assistance.



Jean got into the action too! One kind lady brought her a basin of water and some branches to stand on while washing her feet. (Jesus did tell us to do that for others but we rarely have the opportunity). We were only an hour late to the Alito church where all of us were to take part in teaching classes on what the Bible says about how we should live. Stan, Jean and Isaac (our illustrator) taught the young people, and Keith and I the adults.

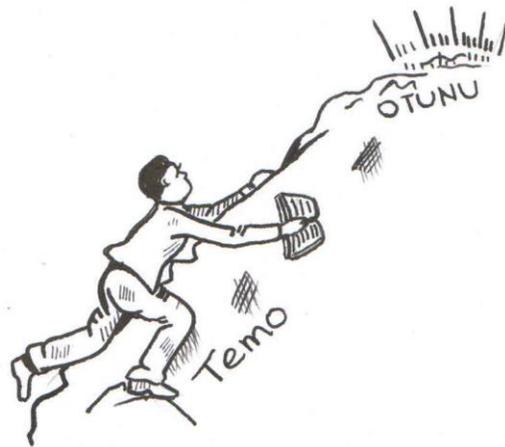


Keith gets a lot of laughs when he talks about God telling husbands to love their wives as they love their own bodies.....then he beats himself with a stick, asking if that's how they love their own bodies. They get the message that it is not ok to beat your wife.

Below, are two of Isaac's new illustrations for the scriptures placed at the back of Primer 2 of the "Learning to Read to Read the Bible" literacy program. His work is so original and delivers a powerful message with each picture. The word "Temo" means trials, and "Otunu" means completeness in the Lango language.



1 John 3:17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?



James 1:2 Consider it pure joy my brothers and sisters whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

The challenging trial the next week was a loss of city water for the entire Lira area for 3 days. Lines for the pumps at the deep wells grew to sometimes 1/2 kilometer long (over 1/4 mile), and there were desperate people fighting for water. In our compound, there is an old "bole hole" well that was dug by the Ugandan Army. The Army took over this house and compound for their headquarters during the 20 year war with Joseph Kony. The pump was broken and had been removed, but no problem, Keith had made a hand pump in 2014 out of PVC pipe, the sidewall of a tire and a marble! He inserted it into the hole and we started taking turns pumping.

Unfortunately, there was a great deal of sand that came up with the water so it was fit only for flushing the toilets, and when the sand settled out, could be used for bathing. So we prayed and thanked God for the water crisis, knowing that He would bring good out of it. Later that day, our house girl, Lucy excitedly came and said that the water coming from the well no longer had sand in it, and was crystal clear, tasting fresh and delicious. We all tasted it, and it was! Many times in the last 3 years since we

have been in this house, we have been without water and have pumped water from that well with that same pump, without ever having clear water. We know it is God's most recent gift to us. .



Delivering baby quilts made by Joy Talbott of Chewelah, WA, is always a pleasure. Sick children and babies delivered at Ayira Hospital are fortunate to be able to take one home with them. Surgeon, Dr. Opio (center of the photo), who does the C-Sections when needed, is not only a surgeon but an evangelist as well! Morris, (wearing the bow tie), grew up at Otinowa Orphanage, started by Bob and Carol Higgins from Bend Oregon. They were the hosts of our first team from Chewelah to come to Lira during the war, way back in 2001. Morris is now director of human resources for a large hotel in Fort Portal Central-Western Uganda. Two Colorado pre-med students, Molly and Asa, learned about tropical medicine while assisting Dr. Opio at Ayira for several weeks.



Joy, pictured at the Chewelah Quilt Show in May with Debbie Barbee, has also donated one of her beautiful quilts for a HAN raffle through Abundant Life Fellowship Church - the winner to be drawn in December. If you would like tickets, you may contact the church at 935-8029 or come to the Hands Across Nations Dinner and Auction on October 1st at the Chewelah Civic Center.

Glasses continue to be a blessing to hundreds of people who are learning to read and write. These men have nearly completed Primer book one, and now have the opportunity to receive glasses. We found that many would get glasses but never come to the classes. So we now require they complete at least 10 lessons before receiving the precious gift of reading glasses. The men have asked us to send blessings to those who have essentially brought sight to the blind. Sight testing is also a great time for us as we are able to listen to their reading of the scriptures that are used on the eyesight testing chart. Stan has been impressed by how quickly and well the men have learned to read.

We want to leave you with one of the many encouraging story from the village of Chawente, in N. Uganda:

Thirty-four year old Anna Obwal so wanted to join the "Learning to Read to Read the Bible" classes that started in her village through the Hands Across Nations Teacher Training. Her husband, Obwol, called her "foolish" and didn't want her to go, saying she was too old, that learning to read is for children, and the teachers would cheat the people buying books. They would "eat" the money given for the books. She decided to attend, going against his wishes. It did take some time for the books to be delivered, but she found that for her 2,000 shillings (63 cents) she received first of all, a brand new book! It had a full teacher's manual in it, and 30 lessons with scriptures and prayers written at the end of the book. Many of the village women were determined to learn to read, so they signed up for class and each class-day

quickly finished all their daily chores and would run to class. They made sure the teacher taught the lesson "fast" so they could run home to finish their work and their husbands would not regret their going to class. After a number of weeks, Anna took her primer and her writing notebook home and asked her family members to read them. Not one of her relatives were able to read her books that she had learned to read! They were the ones who had despised her for going to class, she said.

Obwal, her husband, now wants to learn to read, but Anna's class is currently in Primer 2, having completed the first 30 lessons. Anna says she will teach him and "catch him up". He confessed to the class and to our lead trainer, saying "I am the one who was the fool." This type of story is repeated in many villages, which gives us hope for the future of these communities and families.

Things can sometimes look grim from our perspective, but God is good and will show us the way through them.

Sharing the love of Christ in practical ways,

Keith and Carolyn Jones, Hands Across Nations

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This fairly large monitor lizard, lives in our compound. We think he might be responsible for the disappearance of all the many toads we used to see.