



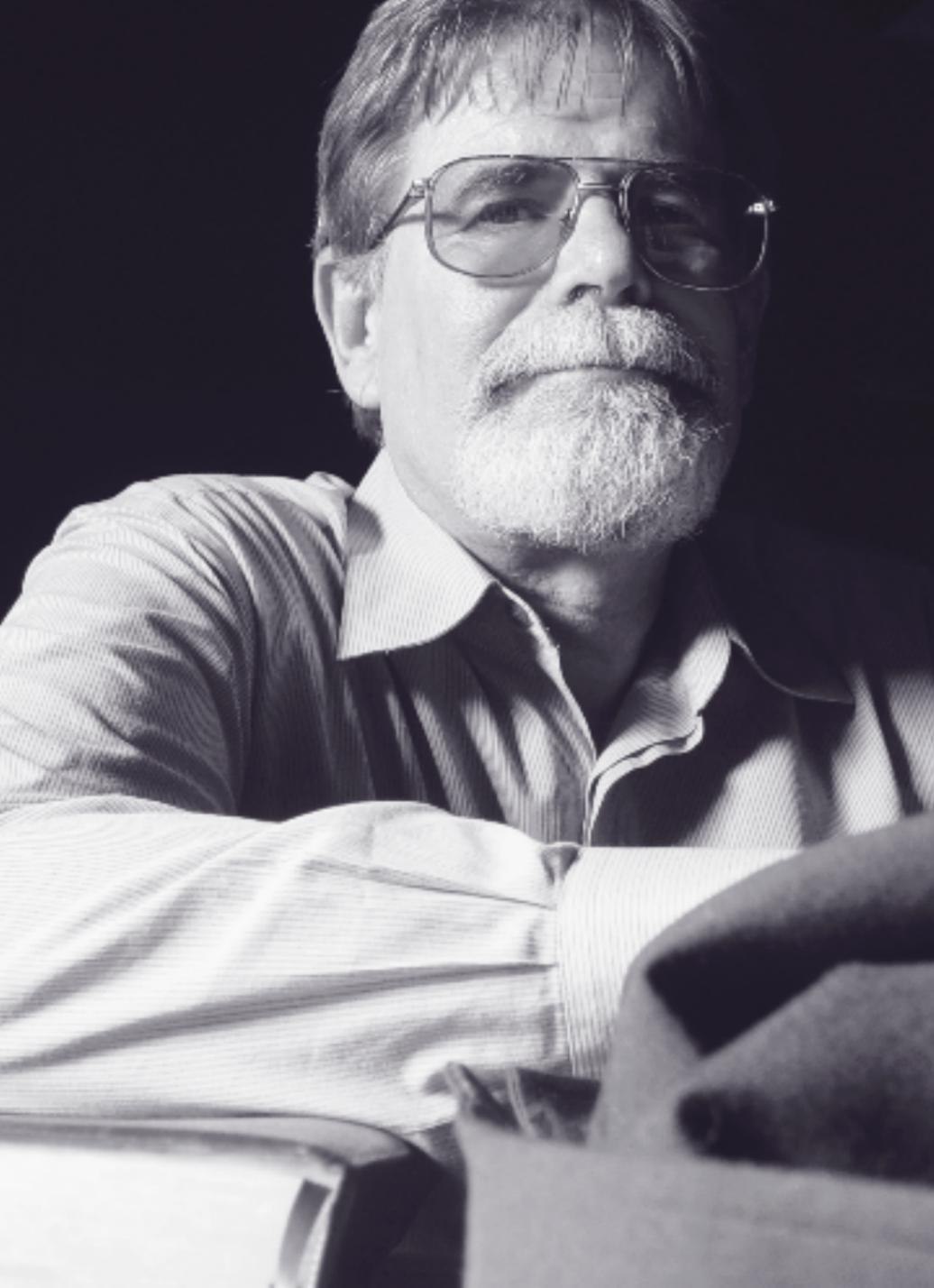
MY HOME IS AFRICA

**Short Stories of the life in East Africa
By Missionary Greg Fisher**

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Foursquare Missions Press © 2005





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Greg Fisher



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My Home is Africa
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About the cover and photography:

Cover and all photography were produced by Nick Onken who visited Greg and Margaret in Burundi and Uganda. Nick is a graphic artist and photographer whose extraordinary work can be viewed at www.nickonken.com

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Acknowledgements

Greg and Margaret Fisher serve in a long, storied line of missionaries. Starting with Aimee Semple McPherson, the missionary history of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel is replete of humble men and women who have laid it all on the line for the Gospel.

Greg and Margaret Fisher are living testimonies to the true spirit of a missionary. Their lives remind us to pray daily for all our missionaries and workers around the world.

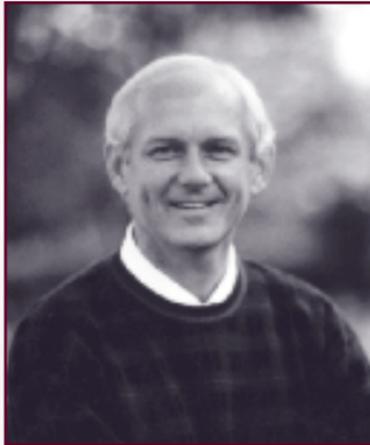
A special thanks to Eloise Clarno who not only had the original vision to publish Greg's writings but spent many hours editing. She was ably assisted by Elizabeth Mehl.

Beaverton Foursquare with Senior Pastor Randy Remington have made the first printing possible with a generous donation. We are very grateful.

Additional thanks to Nick Onken for cover design; Wyce Ghiacy for layout; Eric Jansen for editing; and Bob Hunt for editing and concept.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Ron Mehl. His devotion to the Foursquare missionary, the cause of Foursquare Missions and his love for Foursquare Missions Press continues to touch thousands for Christ—We miss him dearly.



An Introduction

No one could ever accuse Greg and Margaret Fisher of not having a sense of humor. But, maybe that has been one saving sense for them during their 16 years in Africa.

When one lives with the fallout of the Obote and Amin regimes when hundreds of thousands Ugandans were killed and 19 years of civil war in the northern part of this East African nation, an occasional laugh is important.

But would they change their life or location? “No way,” says Margaret. “We are right where we should be and we love it!” So instead of fleeing a sometimes difficult environment, they are working to change it.

The Fishers live in Kampala, the capital of the Republic of Uganda, a city of 1.2 million people. In a market area of this metropolis is a Bible training center and the Kampala Foursquare Church, or the “KFC,” a

church they pioneered and where they meet with about 300 people weekly.

Greg also gives ministry oversight to Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, Sudan and eastern Congo.

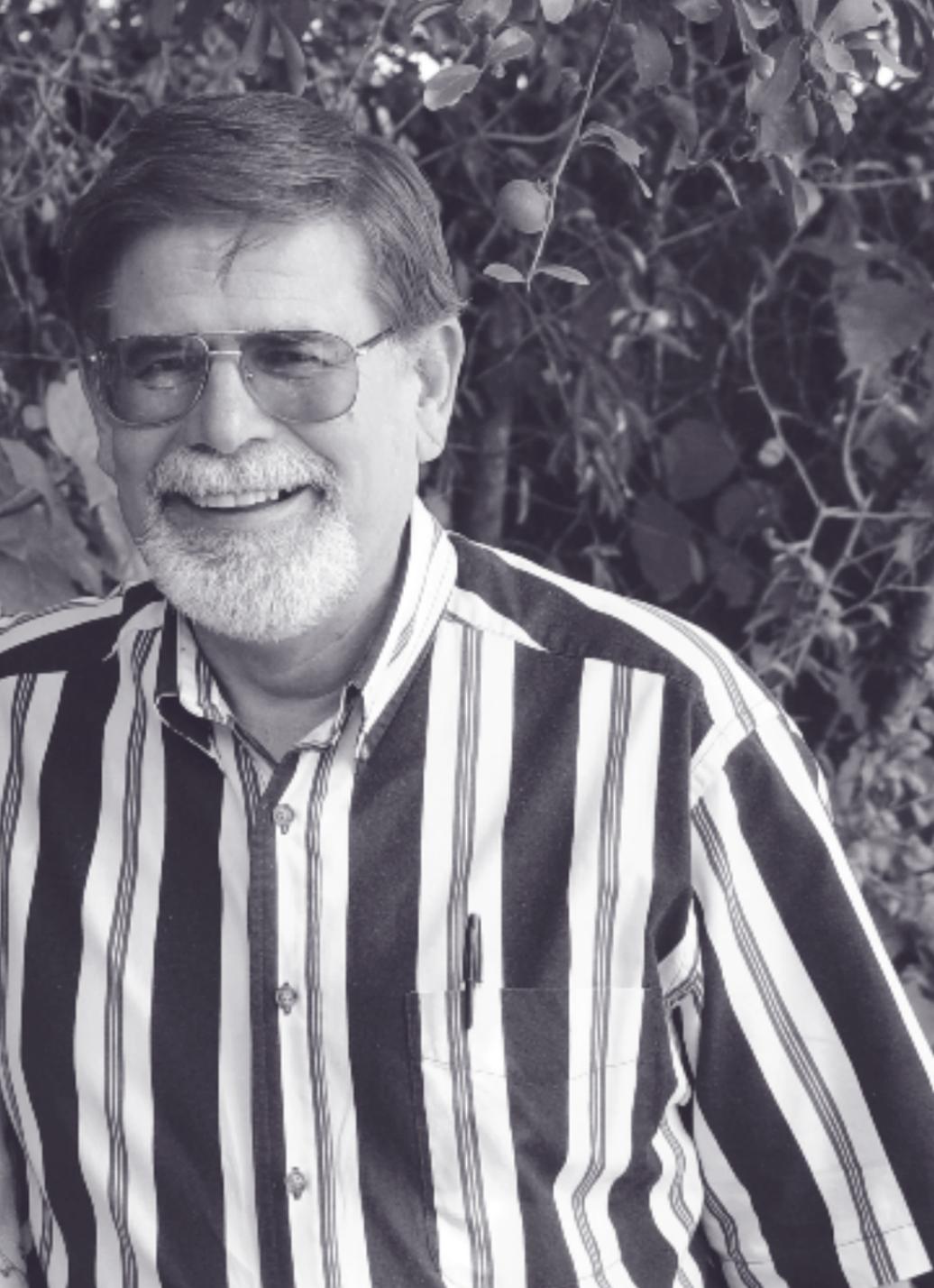
And Greg and Margaret work together as a team, teaching, counseling, preaching and loving people. They delight in food with names like groundnut soup, matooke, nyama choma and omo tuo. Margaret has also picked up some interesting recipes for serving hippopotamus. And they expect African food will show up at the “Marriage Supper of the Lamb.”

Until then the Fishers continue to minister throughout East Africa. This is their story, in their own words—a glimpse of the weeks in the missionary house. You can meet Greg and Margaret regularly at: www.foursquareafrica.inJesus.com

—Eloise Clarno, Beaverton Foursquare

Are You Called?





Failure to Thrive

Doing ministry cross-culturally is difficult. Doing ministry cross-culturally with integrity and authentic relationship is a death-defying feat. But I can say, after 16 years of service, I find serving the Foursquare Church in Africa the most rewarding, fulfilling experience of my life. I love the people. I love the challenge. And frankly, I love the adventure.

I used to think just my calling made this possible. It's true, I am following a calling of God, but that isn't the complete picture. Often, people working here in Africa testify to having been called of God, but in this setting, become discouraged, cynical, and eventually leave the field.

I also used to think that the thriving came because of my focus on vision and mission. That's true too, but, it doesn't completely account for the thriving I experience. Focused mission people still fail to thrive.

It seems there's something deeper—more fundamental—at work in my life, and I am just now beginning to appreciate it. It is called purpose.

As I sat thinking along these lines, I looked at my brand new flashlight. My flashlight was designed by someone for a specific purpose—a purpose that had to be well understood before the flashlight was made. In much the same way, the apostle Paul was chosen in Him (Jesus) before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4) and was predestined to adoption as a son (Ephesians 1:5). So, the Creator of Paul had a specific purpose in mind for Paul long before Paul was born. Paul's ministry, then, wasn't simply found in following his dream. He wasn't seeking to find a need and "fill it." He submitted himself to God's purposes for his life, and in so doing, he was enabled to run his long and peril-filled race with deep satisfaction. Paul thrived because he knew he had a purpose for life.

That's great for flashlights and apostles, but what about me? I sat there realizing that I, too, was designed

by God for a unique purpose long before I was born. When you are doing what God designed you to do, you can thrive no matter what the setting. The flashlight thrives in darkness doing the one simple job it was designed to do: shine a light. I am thriving in a sometimes difficult setting doing the one simple job I was designed for: proclaiming the light of the Gospel in a desperate world.

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.

—Ephesians 1:4,5

What Gets You Up In the Morning?

We are white, middle-class, middle-aged Americans serving the Father as pastors of a growing urban congregation in Uganda. You want to talk about absurdity? We're living it! So, what gets us out of bed each morning?

If our church is representative of the population at large, then maybe 30% of the adults in our congregation are HIV-positive. More than half of our youths are orphans due to the civil war and the HIV crisis. Pastors/friends I know and love are being killed for the sake of the Gospel.

Our church and Bible training center meet on the edge of a huge market and in an urban slum area. We have vision for a television ministry and God is nudging us to have a "stadium event" each year.

Missiologists, pastors, and some church leaders are critical of what we are doing. They say we are out of our place; that obviously we have no business serving as pastors of an African church and traveling through “those dangerous East African countries.” As we train and develop leaders some of this may change, but now we are truly happy and thriving on God’s blessing. We know we have heard the voice of the Master. And it is good.

**My sheep listen to my voice; I know them,
and they follow me.**

—John 10:27

Who Is Your Master Today?

A popular model of missions ministry is often “Find a need and fill it; the need is the call.” But, I don’t find that to be true in Jesus’ ministry. On the cross, He could say “It is finished.” Still there were Gentiles needing an invitation into the kingdom, lepers still needing cleansing, and many more Mary Magdalenes.

As Christians, we are servants. So, who is our master? “Need” is a very harsh taskmaster because the “need” is never finished. The “need” will finish you before you finish with its demands. “Need” is unrelenting in the face of personal vision. When “need” is my master, I am bound for only one destination: despair.

Margaret and I have seen bright, hopeful, visionary people come to Africa and before long they were embittered and angry. Culture shock? Partly. But their personal vision to meet the “need,” a vision they were convinced was godly, was not enough. So, what is?

Like Abraham, we must take our “Isaac,” build an altar and slay our vision, our agenda. We must let our sacrifice die and be consumed in the fire of the holy God. If we can do that, we know how to be a servant of the Father, not of the need. Africa doesn’t need more experts on anything; more educators. Africa needs servants of the Father.

**Whoever serves me must follow me; and
where I am, my servant also will be. My
Father will honor the one who serves me.**

—John 12:26

Giving Birth

You're invited to join us on our eight-hour trip to Kitgum, a city in the north where we are giving birth to a new church. We join Pastor Charles Okongo in his Land Rover.

Along the way, we stop at a small trading area to buy roasted mihogo (cassavah). Later, hopefully, we will be able to feed the wild baboons along the roadside.

As we roll into Kitgum, I notice the mango trees are heavy with ripe fruit. The men gather around in the shade and wash the mangos in cool, fresh, clean water from a nearby bore hole. The mangos taste sweet and refreshing on a hot, dry day.

I watch the children race joyfully around the compound. Soon, the women bring food and we are eating boiled cassavah sticks on which we have

slathered gobs of simsim paste. I sit in the shade and think, “It just doesn’t get any better than this!”

Then Sunday, there were 35 people in the service under yesterday’s mango tree. We later have a delicious meal of boiled okra, millet bread, followed by rice and chickpeas, and mangos. That evening we go to a local FM radio station where I preach, interpreted by Pastor Charles.

Monday morning, Charles arrives for our trip home. We stop at numerous roadside markets to purchase charcoal, bananas, peanuts and other commodities Charles needs at home.

That growing church ministers to many Acholi people who have suffered much from the war in the north.

...in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

—2 Corinthians 7:4

The NGO Certificate

In order for the Foursquare Church to register in Uganda we must have a NGO—Non Governmental Organization—certificate. Every three years, we defend our right to continue in Uganda. Most government officials are very helpful and appreciative of our effort to help the people of Uganda. Occasionally, this is not true.

Even though we are not a relief agency, we do sponsor many students from primary level to university. We have fed thousands in the north. We train community health workers and educate youth about the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases. We operate and partially fund a non-formal educational center for the urban poor. These are not even our primary activities.

Any such secular NGO in the country would be thanked and touted in media as wonderful people. Why then when we, the Pentecostals, provide the same

services, are we treated with the same appreciation as your average cockroach infestation? I've been pondering that question.

It really is simple: the worship of the True and Living God is the single most subversive activity in the world. It flies in the face of the popular culture and exposes the false promises of secular materialism. There is another kingdom! According to Ephesians 3:10, God uses the Church to make His mysteries known to the powers and principalities. And, that humbles all of us.

- There are now 51 Foursquare churches in Uganda.
- There are 62 Foursquare leaders and pastors in Uganda.

**His intent was that now, through the church,
the manifold wisdom of God should be
made known to the rulers and authorities in
the heavenly realms...**

—Ephesians 3:10

Please Don't Send Me to Africa

The past three weeks, I have been teaching classes at our LIFE Ministry Institute in Kampala. I don't usually get called upon to teach that often, so it has been a very stimulating time for me. At the end of a session on "How To Pray," a student asked me a very interesting question:

"Pastor, why don't miracles, signs and wonders happen in the church today like they did in the book of Acts?"

When I get asked something like that, it always stirs my thinking a bit and makes me wonder what has prompted such a question. Behind the question is a very common—but very wrong—idea: The New Testament guys understood and had perfected the meaning and purpose of "church" while the rest of us are just stumbling along in the dark. Earlier in my life, I followed that line of

thought myself and had a strong desire to discover and copy the “true New Testament” church pattern in my ministry. It didn’t take long before I began to realize the impossibility of doing that...and, even if I could, finding and copying the “true” pattern would only be a bit more difficult than the search for the Holy Grail and about as productive for my life as well. Since I gave up that search for a pattern to copy, my ministry life has become increasingly effective. That is why I could answer the student by saying:

“Hmmm...is it possible you are speaking from your own experience? Because in my ministry, what I have experienced is very much like the Book of Acts.”

The student looked a bit shocked at my response, and you may be also. How could I dare to say that?

Because copying a pattern is not the same as knowing and fulfilling your purpose! Back when I was attempting to learn and copy a pattern, I was trying desperately to be someone else. Actually, I was trying to be ANYONE else, because I hardly believed that God was very satisfied with

who I was. That is what made seeking to learn the will of God so frightening. I was sure that God's will would most certainly send me somewhere I didn't want to go to do something I didn't want to do. That is the idea behind a humorous Christian song I heard recently:

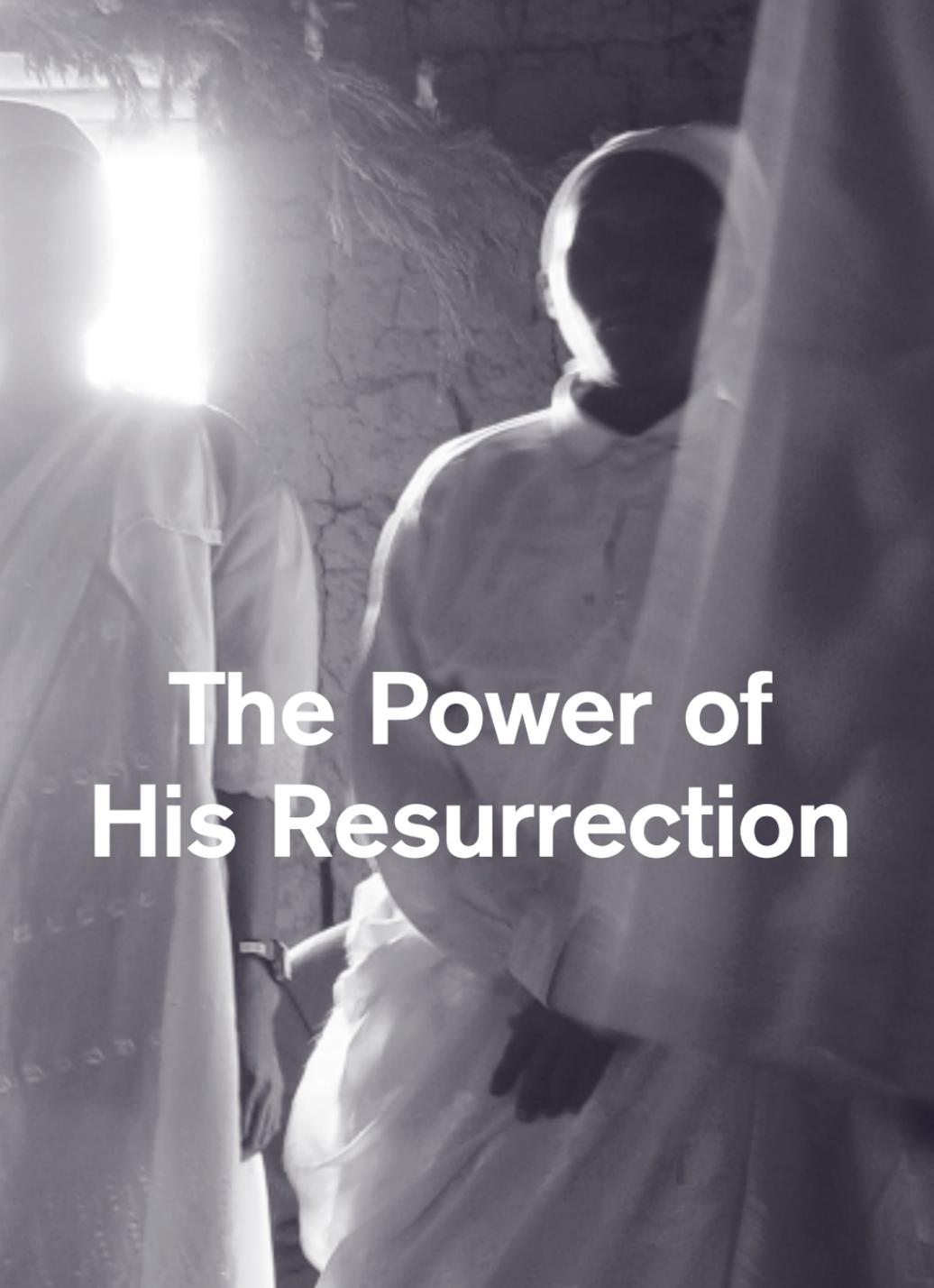
“Please Don't Send Me To Africa!”

But, God has created you and I both for a specific purpose. A purpose that preceded our birth, and a purpose that will continue with us long after we move into Heaven. Sending us to Africa (or, Asia, America or Europe) or demanding we produce huge ministry results when we aren't “wired” for the task isn't something God is about to do. Instead, He has a specific purpose for which we were designed and created. Fulfilling that purpose brings a deep satisfaction into our lives.

**And we know that in all things God works for
the good of those who love him, who have
been called according to his purpose.**

—Romans 8:28





The Power of His Resurrection

Witches, Fetish Priests Versus Almighty God

An unusual gathering of shamans (witch doctors or fetish priests) from all over Africa, and some even from the U.S., held their "cultural festival" at the huge Nambooli Stadium in Kampala. Their purpose was to "call Africa back from the foreign gods of the missionaries." They also promised a kind of "power encounter" to show that their gods were more powerful than the Christian God.

This same week, the Kampala Foursquare Church was involved in one of our monthly Deliverance Clinics. We haven't really seen what happened at the shamans' convention, but what we can report is this: God—the Living God of heaven and earth—is still

setting people free from bondage to the "weak and beggarly elements" (the traditional gods) spoken of in Galatians 4:9.

One young man came with a long list of physical ailments. He had been seeing a local witch doctor for the past two years. After counseling with one of our pastors, he prayed to receive Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Then, charms were removed from his hands and wrists and God's Holy Spirit began a healing work in his body. He left the clinic testifying that, for the first time in several years, he was completely set free from pain and sickness.

But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?

—Galatians 4:9

Redeeming Back the Land

For the past 19 years, the northern regions of Uganda have been the scene of a very bitter and bloody civil war. Why have a ragtag bunch of “hooligans” led by a “cult style” leader been able to frustrate one of Africa’s best trained armies?

In the fall of 2002, God began revealing the reason for this war as nearly 10,000 Christians gathered for a three-day “Redeeming the Land” outdoor prayer rally in Gulu. Just a mile away, LRA (Lord’s Resistance Army) rebels burned houses, abducted many and killed some.

Speakers addressed breaking curses and witchcraft. They taught about the spiritual importance of altars in the Old Testament. A final speaker pinpointed the spiritual origins of the war, revealing that the rebel leader was using witchcraft, human sacrifice, and demonic spirit mediums

to conduct this ugly war that has killed thousands of people.

Following the teaching, nearly all fell on their faces to cry out in repentance for their involvement in the occult. As people began to renounce certain cultural practices having to do with death—and a long-standing Acholi covenant with death—demons began to manifest in scores of people.

Over 1,000 people came to confess Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. Hundreds were set free from demonic involvement. A huge pile of fetishes, amulets, and charms were thrown away by those confessing Christ as their savior. God was redeeming back the land!

...if my people, who are called by my name,
will humble themselves and pray and seek
my face and turn from their wicked ways,
then will I hear from heaven and will forgive
their sin and will heal their land.

—2 Chronicles 7:14

Ripe Harvests Few Laborers

Sometimes we wonder how God will open doors and bring direction for us to reach out and plant churches in other towns and villages. His direction was not the challenge this time.

A woman had to be almost carried into the church by her grandchildren. As the team prayed over her, the healing power of God began to flow into her body. Later, she walked from the church without a limp and with no assistance whatsoever.

The next Sunday, this woman literally danced in the church, rejoicing that God had healed her crippled leg. After the service, she came to ask us to please plant a Foursquare church in her village, which is about 50 kilometers from Kampala. She told us there are many

demon-possessed and sick people that need to know the healing and delivering power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, I wonder, how will we reach that village with the Gospel? How will we establish a Foursquare church in that place? We can only do that as God raises up more workers for the fields of harvest.

Can you partner with us in prayer for that need? Can you pray the Lord of the harvest to thrust out even more workers into the harvest fields in Uganda?

The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

—Matthew 9:37

A Revolutionary Holy Communion

The way we serve communion at KFC is nothing short of revolutionary.

Each communion Sunday, we ask the entire congregation to come forward in two lines—“Anglican style.” But since we're Pentecostals, we do something else as well. After receiving the bread and the cup, the recipient goes immediately to one of two ministry teams to have hands laid on them. Each and every person is prayed over in the power of the Holy Spirit. What happens is revolutionary.

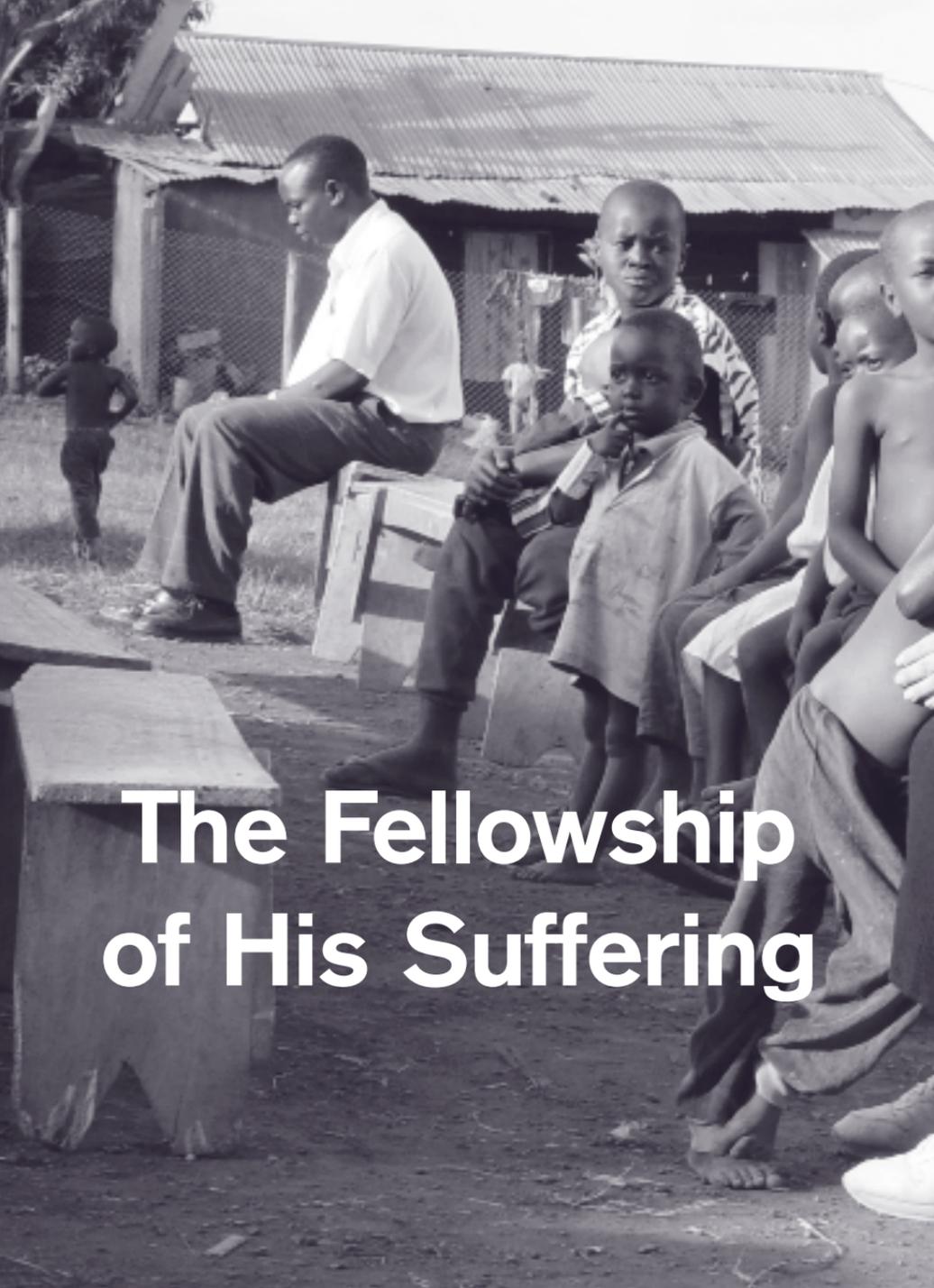
People get healed. People get restored from demonic oppression. People receive words of wisdom concerning their lives. People get baptized in the Holy Spirit. No one goes back to their seat the same way they came.

You see, when you are taking the Lord's Supper you are acting out a sermon. That is what makes it a sacrament—a sermon that declares that you are appropriating the healing, deliverance, forgiveness, and redemption that is available through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. So, we provide a ministry team to agree with in prayer with each one, and minister to those things into their lives.

For many, these moments spent in prayer are the most significant one or two minutes these ones will experience outside of a Deliverance Clinic.

...do this in remembrance of me.

—Luke 22:19



The Fellowship of His Suffering



Dr. Jesus Shows Up

We have enemies, you know, who like to put out misinformation about the Foursquare Church. This time, the disinformation was that medical doctors would be the “healers” at our coming prayer service. I boldly and loudly announced that, indeed, a famous Doctor Specialist would be there—Dr. Jesus. He came.

Irene was a prostitute working the area around our church. She looked like the walking dead. She had been severely beaten. As we began to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit, Irene invited the Lord Jesus into her life and she began to glow with a newfound joy.

Before his conversion six months earlier, Amos, had been involved in occult traditional practices. He came for prayer, seeking release from demonic spirits that troubled him at night—a common complaint from new converts with a history of occult practices.

The truth of the Word of God confronted the powers of darkness and he gained freedom.

Milly suffers from HIV-AIDS. Her life was bound up with anger and unforgiveness towards the man who infected her. Jesus broke through her bitterness and unforgiveness and she experienced a new freedom in Christ.

While our enemies lurked in the darkness just outside, Dr. Jesus came to minister and set free many who believed.

News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

—Matthew 4:24

The Verandah Boys

My heart just got ripped up as one of our fine young Bible college students stood and testified as to how his father had abandoned the family when he was just two years old. He shared how his mother had worked on the streets as a prostitute to support them. And now, she finally died of AIDS.

Then he testified about how, when he was saved, he came to know what real love is because he now has a family. In East Africa, there is an entire generation of young men with stories like this. How do we reach them? How do we communicate the Word of God to them in a way they understand?

I am passionate about reaching these young fellows because I know many of Africa's problems start with the "verandah boys"—disaffected youth who have never had an opportunity. This group is the seedbed of revolution. Every rebellion of the past has been fueled

by the lives of these young men. They became the soldiers of yet another hopeless cause.

As you watch your evening news and see the boy soldiers fighting in Africa, remember they started out as idlers on the verandahs of the shops downtown and nobody reached them with the Gospel.

**Train a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not turn from it.**

—Proverbs 22:6

HIV—Africa's Crisis

Suzanne was a big part of Kampala Foursquare Church almost from the very beginning. She loved the Lord, and she loved the people of KFC. Suzanne spent time with our youth, teaching them about drama. She loved drama as a form of communication and we were very often favored with her dramatic skills. She loved to sing for the Lord and often spoke about the Living Water she had found. She opened up her flat for a home cell group, and I often met the most surprising people there; people she was sharing with about the Living Water.

Suzanne also lived with an enemy that was destroying her body daily. She was a victim of HIV-AIDS. I'm not telling any secrets here; she was open about it with the church family. The disease wore her down physically, but her spirit was always strong.

We said good-bye to Suzanne one morning just as she was passing from death into life. As I looked down at Suzanne's frail body, I was reminded of what this ministry is all about. We are inviting people to a fountain that runs freely with the Living Water. Those that drink deeply of these waters shall never thirst again.

For the Lamb at the center of the throne will
be their shepherd; he will lead them to
springs of living water.

And God will wipe away every tear from
their eyes.

—Revelation 7:17

Survivor Guilt

Throughout our nation, we often conduct “Deliverance Clinics.” These clinics begin with teaching meetings and the attendance usually increases each day until the final prayer day. In Jinja, after three days of teaching, we had an overload of people. It would be impossible to pray for all of these people on Saturday. An emergency call for help to our Kampala prayer team brought four more people.

One of the many people ministered to on the four-hour prayer day was a man from the Teso tribe. He had been saved just two weeks and had come from the Karamoja area where there is fierce fighting. He had seen his wife and children slaughtered during the battle. His life was in complete ruin and he had come to the clinic as a last hope before following through with his plan to commit suicide. He suffered from Survivor Guilt.

After the caring ministry of the clinic team this tribal man received a tremendous healing and was able to forgive himself and finally those who had done the killing. He could return to his town with peace.

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

—Matthew 6:14

Then I Remember Steven

When I am tempted to ask, "What am I doing here?" I remember Steven.

When Kampala Foursquare Church first began to worship in Bakuli Market, the neighborhood children descended like locusts. Of course they viewed us as the invaders, taking away their neighborhood play field. Thus, began a rather tortured relationship.

From the beginning, it was nearly impossible to pray or worship with dozens of kids doing their best to break up the meeting. Steven, in particular, was a real big problem. He wore raggedy clothes that didn't cover the "essentials." Not to mention the smell. We were determined to offer a loving but firm relationship and Steven was our first big test.

James Kakhaato, our property manager, took an interest in Steven. He taught him about bathing and putting on clean clothes and even supplied the clean clothes!

That was then, this is now. When my car appears in the car park, Steven comes roaring over to shout, "How are YOU pastor?" He still looks a bit ragged, but the rags are clean and he is covered.

Having found a place where he receives love and acceptance, Steven never misses a chance to be with his church family. Today one of our loudest off-key singers and most vigorous prayer warriors is Steven.

I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul
rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me
with garments of salvation and arrayed me
in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom
adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride
adorns herself with her jewels.

—Isaiah 61:10

A Martyr for the Faith

Foursquare Pastor Gerald Nyabenda died for his faith in 2002 in his nation of Burundi. This much loved and respected pastor was shot execution style. He left behind his brave wife, five children and one grandchild.

Pastor Nyabenda was a wise and godly man and highly respected in the community. He had a good testimony before the local government officials and was a great gift to our Foursquare Gospel churches. He supervised the Foursquare churches in the north of Burundi.

Burundi has suffered much because of the ethnic divisions between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes. In 1993, Pastor Leopold Banzubaze was led by the Lord to establish the Foursquare Church in Burundi and to

attempt to bring a positive message of reconciliation in this nation. Pastor Nyabenda was a Hutu; Pastor Banzubaze, a Tutsi. These two were trusted teammates in establishing the Foursquare ministry in their nation. Over 25,000 people were positively affected by this effort and committed themselves to making Jesus Christ the Lord over their lives.

The godly life and testimony of Pastor Nyabenda has been a strong encouragement for those pastors and leaders who have remained faithful in their determination to bring peace and reconciliation to this troubled land.

**But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray
for those who persecute you...**

—Matthew 5:44

Do You Know Your HIV Status?

She was burning with fever and sound asleep. Her small lips making a sucking motion. Dreaming, possibly, of the comfort of the mother's breast. A comfort that for her would never exist. I watched as our Pastor Elia gently took the infant in his hands and sat down next to me. Because I speak only a limited level of Kiswahili and because Pastor Elia, too, speaks no English, piecing the story together was a long and tedious task. The child's mother died giving birth to the child. With no parents—the father is not present—and, only an elderly grandmother to care for the infant, this child has a doomed future right from the start. People in the community have shunned the child saying that because the mother died giving birth, the child must have some demons. Our small church at Bulondo—going counter to the community—is

doing what they can to help the grandmother raise the child.

The pastor asked that we pray over the child. I looked down and saw the face of innocence. A wave of grief swept over me and tears streamed down my face. A life condemned before it even begins. Who can ease this suffering? Who can make sense out of this senselessness? Only Jesus! I began to call out to God on behalf of the child.

Halfway through the prayer, I was seized by a thought that terrified me. I tried to shake it off, but it refused to leave me. I tried to pray louder to drown out the sound of that thought in my mind, but it refused to be silenced. I knew the people were going to ask me to take the child to raise! I knew it! My prayer stumbled as I mentally assessed how I would sidestep this request. (I had visions of me coming through the front door, child in arms, shouting, “Hi Honey! I’m home...guess what happened at Bulondo today...” and my longsuffering and patient wife collapsing

on the floor.) I braced myself for the request...a request that never came. I began to breathe again.

But, I was left with the uneasy issue to face. Why had the prospect of that request so terrified me? As a church leader, I am quick to propose that we find a way to “take care of this problem locally.” I am quick to endorse that WE find a way to care. But, is it an editorial “WE” that doesn’t really include me? If I am called upon to take responsibility, would I be able to “step up to the plate”? If it is the responsibility of leadership to model or demonstrate this practice, then have I been a responsible leader?

I hate those kinds of questions.

Just a few months ago I had faced another of those difficult questions. In a meeting in Kampala, the pastor speaking to us as pastors asked, “How many of you know for certain your HIV status?” An uncomfortable and uneasy silence had prevailed in the room. I thought to myself, “I’m sure he doesn’t mean me...” But, he did mean the questions for me; especially me. Wait! I thought to myself. Do you realize what it would mean for me to go for

an HIV test? Wouldn't that demonstrate that I had doubts about myself? Or, worse yet, my wife? Let's not even get into the issue of HIV being a "homosexual" issue in the USA. How would I justify myself when THAT got submitted on my health insurance? What would I say to my wife? Then, it hit me like a hammer: Those are exactly the fears that my people face while I glibly stand in the pulpit advocating abstinence, faithfulness and get an HIV test.

Pastoral leadership is not a clean and simple thing, is it? It can't be done from a ivory tower. It can't be done without walking through some mud—and, getting a bit of mud on yourself as well. I find challenging these words written down by a famous first century pastor, "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain, but eagerly; Nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you shall receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."

I cannot dodge these issues any longer. The Holy Spirit won't allow me that privilege. This week, I am going to do something death defying. Something that will be an example to the flock of God I am called to serve. Something that could result in lives being saved. Something that will shock most people. Something that frightens me more than facing down opposition to the Gospel. I'm going in for an HIV blood test. And, I'm going to share the results with my people.

Does the Chief Shepherd expect anything less than loving leadership that leads by example?

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be...And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

—1 Peter 5:2-4

A Disease That Will Never Say, “Enough!”

I was first alerted when I came back home from Rwanda. I walked into our new offices to find my usually bright and cheery secretary, Margaret Onyait, dialing the telephone with a very grim look on her face. It was very bad news. Another dear sister from Kampala Foursquare Church was dead; a victim of HIV. Proverbs 30:15-16 lists the grave as one of four things that never says, “enough.” Had the wise writer of the book of Proverbs known about HIV-AIDS, he could have made a list of five. The HIV virus never seems to have enough victims.

Maria, definitely NOT her real name, walked into Kampala Foursquare Church about one year ago. She was a lonely woman—a single mother with an infant child and a teenaged son—who had been abused by

several men during her lifetime. I can still remember the Sunday she came to visit and responded to the invitation to receive Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior. It was one of those conversions to Christ that you immediately know is genuine. In those first few months, she absolutely radiated a glow of God's glory.

Before long, we began to notice the glow fading... but not the joy and happiness in Jesus. Then, we began to see the weight loss, weakness and respiratory infections. Sarah Adams talked to her at length about her health and took her one day for the HIV blood test. It was positive.

Maria continued coming to worship with us, and she was a regular at the lunchtime fellowship. She never missed a meeting of Women of Worth (W.O.W.). She never missed until the virus began to take away so much of her strength that she was unable to move from the bed. Finally, this week, death came to take her away.

Kampala Foursquare Church continues to be an “HIV Friendly” place to be. We want to tell people, “you are not a ‘status’ you are a PERSON.” We can’t supply the medical needs. We have a few resources to supply food or shelter. We can supply a safe place where afflicted people can be loved and accepted unconditionally. We have no desire to moralistically stigmatize the victims of HIV. We have a gospel that preaches deliverance from sin and disease.

Having said that, let me go on to say HIV-AIDS is a moral problem. As Yoweri Museveni, the President of the Republic of Uganda says, “We know what causes it.” Over eighty-five percent of the HIV transmission in Uganda is through heterosexual contact. That is why the church must stand to speak out on this issue. HIV will never say, “enough”; but, we the people can certainly say, “enough” to AIDS. We can say it by practicing a sexual lifestyle that is in conformity with the Holy Bible.

I know the medical experts in the world are pushing condom use. And, certainly, there is a place for the use of condoms. Here is the problem: Sexual activity outside the biblically sanctioned context of marriage is sin. It is a sin that puts a stain on the very innermost and most basic point of our identity as humans. It is a sin that involves the body, the soul and the spirit. Yes, a condom might protect you from the HIV virus. Where will you get the condom for your soul and spirit? Where will you get protection from the deadly stain of sin?

Please pray for Kampala Foursquare Church as we battle against the aftermath of the killer virus. Our resources are taxed to the breaking point. Pray that God will strengthen our will, our resolve to be shining light in a very dark night on this continent. Pray with us that God will empower us with gifts of healing for the HIV virus. Pray that God will give us strong and gifted teachers for our youths and young married people. Pray that God will raise up even more

community health workers from our congregation. Pray that God will bring to us the resources needed to continue our ministry.

There are three things that are never
satisfied, four that never say, "Enough!":
the grave, the barren womb, land,
which is never satisfied with water, and fire,
which never says, "Enough!"
—Proverbs 30:15,16



Rwanda Ministry

After it was all over we just sat there in a stunned silence. I managed to break the silence with the most foolish question imaginable, “Did you see that car?” Of course we had all seen the car!

The road between Mbarara and Kabale is a narrow two lane affair with plenty of twists and turns through the mountains. The twists and turns are interspersed with one or two kilometer long straight stretches that are well paved. It happened on one of those long straight stretches where drivers like to get up to a high speed. We were driving along in my Land Rover when we noticed a small white car in the opposite lane coming at a high rate of speed. There were two bicycles riding slowly along the edge of the road and the driver of the car made a quick evasive maneuver to avoid hitting them. That evasive maneuver began a series of over corrections that left the car

continuing at the same high rate of speed, only now headed directly at us in our lane. All three of us in the Land Rover began shouting to the Lord for protection.

At the last possible moment, the car corrected one more time back into the proper lane and passed us like a speeding bullet. Before completely passing us, it was already airborne and starting to roll. We watched in horror as it rolled over three times tearing down small sapling trees and mowing a path of destruction before going over the guard rail and down the embankment. Total time for the entire event to occur: about 15 seconds. The occupants of the car were all dead at the scene. It was one of those insane things! Through the entire incident, the driver of the car had never slowed down or even touched a brake. Shaken, we continued our journey.

**What man can live and not see death,
or save himself from the power of the grave?**

—Psalm 89:48

Refugee Camp Ministry

A great door for ministry has opened to us in the refugee and internal displacement camps in western Uganda. This is another ministry we are doing on less than a “shoestring”!

Pastor Justin Amadi visited a camp with nearly 20,000 residents and ministered to people in the Burundi, Rwanda, Somali, Congolese and Sudanese sections. We have opened three small fellowships among these residents.

Daily, Pastor Justin also works with the dozens of refugees that come to our offices seeking assistance. Usually, the only real assistance we can give is friendly advice on how to survive the refugee bureaucracy and help them obtain the proper refugee documents. Occasionally, we have some small food supplies we're able to distribute. We have a refugee fellowship—something like a “mini-church”—that meets every Monday at Kampala Foursquare.

One day one of our KFC men, a Congolese refugee himself and a man who has nearly nothing of his own, came into my office with a huge sack of clothing he had collected for the refugee people. I'm sure someone will be quick to point out what is obviously true: it isn't much! True, but when you are a stranger in a foreign land, just a kind word means a great deal.

- There are more than 11,000 refugees from throughout the nations of Africa now in the city of Kampala.
- Displaced persons are often very open to receive the Gospel.
- The UN has called this refugee problem “a huge humanitarian crisis.”

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

—James 1:27

Land Cruisers, Machine Guns and Donald Duck

I sat, half in and half out of the Land Cruiser, looking across the dirt runway at the Borsasas Palm trees and savannah grass waving slowly in the breeze. Directly in front of me, I saw the brown dirt airstrip, which begins as a small path in a wide swath of mowed grass and then widens considerably; it would be here on this wide dirt spot the pilot would turn the small single engine aircraft around. The heat under the tropical sun has an intensity that is hard to imagine in the northern climates. There may have been a breeze moving the grass, but I wasn't feeling any of it inside the truck. That is what prompted me to open the door and sit sideways on the seat, my feet resting on the door threshold.

I watched as another Land Cruiser rumbled onto the airstrip and parked next to us. Three serious men with dark scowls pasted on their faces sat in the front and half a dozen ragged young men armed with dirty looking submachine guns quickly scrambled out of the back. Weapons in hand, they began checking the other vehicles parked beside us. The heavily armed ragged young men could be here to rob and kill us, or they might be the escort for the important looking man in the front seat of that truck. No one else paid any attention, and I decided on my own that they were bodyguards and not armed robbers—this time, at least.

In a nearby Land Cruiser, a high frequency radio crackled with the funny “Donald Duck” voice of the singer sideband transmission. I listened carefully to the voices talking. It would be another half an hour, the “Donald Duck” voice intoned, before the MAF flight from Kampala would land—if one can talk about schedules and time in this place—and I sat there thinking through what I had seen and heard in this dry and war weary land. I was in the Southern Sudan.

I was in the Southern Sudan and I had looked into the hollowed out empty eyes of the old women who dragged themselves from day to day—no longer with any sense of purpose. The memories of husbands and sons long dead now dim in their minds.

I was in the Southern Sudan and I had chafed in the security office as the young man painfully read each word on my security pass, and got most of the information wrong. He has lived an entire lifetime without knowing what we would call “normalcy.” I had to calm my impatience and remind myself there are no schools operating in wartime.

I was in the Southern Sudan and I had talked with pastors who had labored long and hard with no Bibles, books, or any materials to work with at all. Men who loved the Lord God, but knew very little about His word. What would be the purpose I wondered? Would I hold on as long when faced with a similar bleak experience? Or would I do what many had done and just give up?

War is a very funny thing. I had sat the night before talking with Pastor Andre Leitao, our missionary from the

Foursquare church in Brazil. We had leaned back in our “Sudanese recliners” and watched the stars come out and talked between ourselves about war while local pastors listened intently to our friendly talk; but war isn’t friendly. We talked of war as a concept, as a political expediency, as a show on CNN. But our Sudanese friends had lived it, with all its pain. War robs. War kills. War destroys. It makes a complete mess of things in general. War is one of those human inventions that, once unleashed, doesn’t go away easily or quickly...hanging about in the corners and ravines killing and destroying until the last gasp of energy is gone from it.

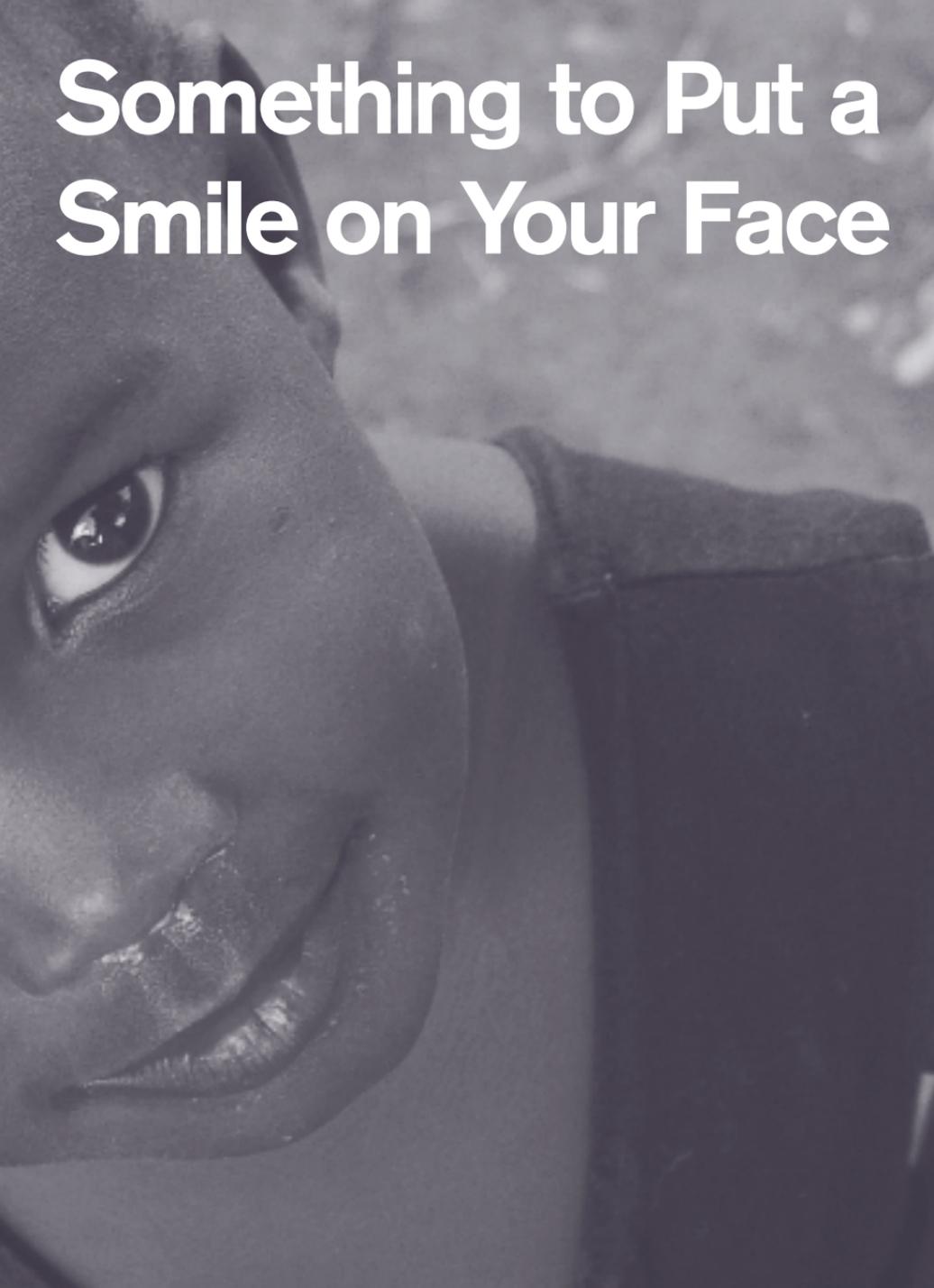
But there is Jesus.

And He is what I am here about.

**The thief comes only to steal and kill and
destroy; I have come that they may have
life, and have it to the full.**

—John 10:10





**Something to Put a
Smile on Your Face**

You Just Gotta Laugh

BEUPA, Basic Education for Urban Poor, is an informal school co-sponsored by our church and the city which meets at our church site. Those children who attend learn such basic skills as reading and writing.

The students from BEUPA acted out the entire trial-crucifixion-resurrection story for our 2002 Easter service. I later learned the boy who played Jesus was from a Muslim family.

Since we have no actual “stage” or props, our dramas are of the improvisational-audience-participation genre. Jesus was dragged through the chairs and up and down the aisles, being beaten by a crowd of ten-year olds. Adults just moved out of the way of the action.

One boy stood by with a *panga* (short sword) ready to “rend the veil of the temple.” This translated into the cloth “tent walls” around our church. Luckily, two adults intervened. The hammering of the nails in the

crucifixion scene became too realistic when one soldier misjudged and actually pounded the hand of one of the thieves, who spent the rest of the scene weeping loudly and forgetting the “remember me in your kingdom” lines.

At the end of the morning’s ministry, several people came forward to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. It was a good morning.

Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.” The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

—Psalm 126:2,3

One Came Back From the Dead

Kaweesa Dan is one of our very powerful young gospel preachers. He is well known as a born-again Christian and a student leader in his high school.

Someone at school heard a radio report that Dan had been struck down in the street and killed. Based on this report, the school administration made it known that Dan was dead. Various teachers who take delight in abusing the born-again students took the opportunity to tell students that possibly Dan's death was linked to his preaching; that this may be some kind of retribution. "Where was Dan's Jesus when he was struck down?" they asked.

But, Dan wasn't dead; nor was he aware that he had been reported dead. He got that report on Monday but wasn't scheduled to return to school until

Thursday. He knew the anti-Christian people were having a great time at his expense and he was determined to make the most of his "resurrection."

On Thursday, Dan walked into school. Teachers gasped and students ran off in fear. They thought they were seeing a ghost! Dan used this unique opportunity to share the Gospel message with fellow students. The opposition was silenced, and glory came to our Living God!

...but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified.

—Mark 6:49,50

No Carjacking Allowed

Two of my greatest challenges this past week have been: Writing a sermon for American congregations, and learning how to use my new “anti-carjacking” car alarm. The car alarm is now required by our insurance company. Not that our insurance would actually pay us anything in the case of a carjacking. (“Reverend Fisher, it would appear that you have allowed your vehicle to be driven by a party not named on your insurance policy, therefore your insurance does not cover this unfortunate occurrence.”) The insurance company looks good by keeping up the appearance of vigilance in requiring a car alarm. That and, of course, the additional bit of personal income it provides for the agent in the form of kickbacks from the guy who sells you the alarm.

Writing a sermon for the American context is another kind of challenge. First of all, we have been away from America for a very long time. (This year, we complete our

14th year in Africa!) During this period of absence the American culture has reinvented itself about three times. Each time, there has come a wider gap between it and us. That makes it difficult to connect in a meaningful way. Those twenty- somethings now sitting out there in the Saturday evening service were very small Sunday school tikes when we last lived in America. So, I've been trying to do a "cram course" on American culture while also listening to God for a message of some importance. Jim and Jean Stevens have been here this week from Bend, Oregon and they have helped to bring us "up to speed" in several key areas.

One of those key areas has been multimedia. Apparently, it is a good idea to include a few dozen bells and whistles—of the technical variety—with your sermon when you preach in America. This is quite a leap ahead from the kind of multimedia experience I am familiar with from my childhood. Back then, the missionary showed up with about a dozen trays of slides and after the requisite fiddling with the machine and adjusting the screen, held

forth for an hour about this field service. (“And here we see Brother and Sister MacGillicuty and all the precious believers in Lower Slobovia waving good-bye to us from the top of the airport building...”) Today, you have to jam about three trays of slides into three point five minutes with a really driving musical background; the slides are no longer slides, but video stills that need to go by with about the same speed and intensity of the counting sequences on Sesame Street. So, I fired up all the considerable multimedia capability of my one year old—and, all but obsolete—computer and out came a presentation that will speak to American congregations...maybe even to twenty-somethings out there.

It is really those twenty-somethings that I want to reach.

When I was a twenty-something, I was already the senior pastor of a small congregation in Washington State. (True, I did slaughter the entire congregation...but, I was there!) I want to challenge a few of these younger believers to put their lives into the service of the King here in Africa.

And, in order to put the challenge before them, I need to be able to communicate to them. Doing that is a real task, but it is a missionary task, something I am gifted at doing.

**A wise man's heart guides his mouth,
and his lips promote instruction.**

—Proverbs 16:23



Brown Soda Pop

We live directly under the equatorial sun, a fact that occasionally can be a great source of discomfort. In our new missionaries' orientation I always explain the need to drink at least two liters (about two quarts) of water everyday. Then I mention that "brown soda pop" doesn't qualify as water. They smile, nod their heads and I become something of a fuddy duddy. But they always learn.

It's the thirst that drives you to find your two liters.
Water is life!

In John 7:37, Jesus spoke of another kind of thirst. This thirst, for God's Holy Spirit, is built into the spirit of man. This thirst drives man in an unusual way. Unfortunately, this material, secularized world has so many other "brown soda pops" to offer.

The problem with “brown soda pop” is that it doesn’t satisfy your thirst, but rather leaves you craving for more.

It’s this realization that drives Pastor Charles Okong’o to stay and minister in the thick of the northern war.

It’s this craving that drove the five former Muslims we baptized to receive Christ.

It’s this passion that drives any of us to our knees to intercede for a very thirsty world.

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.”

—John 7:37





**“I Will Build My
Church...”**

Church Rises From Clay

For a very long time, Kampala Foursquare Church has been a church without walls—literally.

We meet in an open pavilion in a field—which we own—on the edge of one of the busy market areas in the city. There is almost no way to control the coming and going of people in the crowd. We still function like equal parts "church" and "outdoor crusade."

Because of your prayers and generous giving, we have purchased a brick-making machine. It is "human-powered" and it takes only about a minute to form precisely sized bricks that lock together.

After a class on soil-testing and brick-making, six of our men took up the challenge. By the end of one day, we had made 206 very nice bricks, made from the clay soil on our building site. The Kampala Foursquare Church will literally rise out of the soil as it is turned into bricks.

After the first month, over 2,100 bricks have been made. We only need 6,000 bricks to begin to close in our walls. Soon, Kampala Foursquare Church will be completely enclosed by brick walls.

All of this is happening because you prayed, gave, and supported our ministry here. Thank you very much.

**For every house is built by someone, but
God is the builder of everything.**

—Hebrews 3:4

Mrs. Kyaganji's Drinking Bar

It used to be a place for people to become drunk on the local brew. Now, it is a Foursquare Gospel Church.

Pastor David Livingstone, a recent Glad Tidings Bible College graduate, and his wife, Harriet, were on a preaching mission at Kigaju in Uganda's Masaka District. The very first person to receive David and Harriet—and receive Christ as Savior—was Mrs. Kyaganji, the proprietor of the local drinking bar. Mrs. Kyaganji now radiates the joy of the Lord as she testifies to her neighbors in the village.

After Jesus Christ became her Savior and Lord, Mrs. K closed up the drinking bar and offered it to Pastor David for use as a church. As a result, we now

have a young new pastor establishing a brand new Foursquare Gospel Church in a former drinking bar!

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

—Ephesians 5:18

What's the Purpose of the Church?

What is the purpose of the Church? Is it enough for the Church to merely exist?

Here in Africa, the world squeezes the Church into so many molds. The regional government expects to see works of relief and development aiding the community. The local officials view the church as a “moral force in the community.” They expect us to encourage good family life, reduce drunkenness and domestic violence, and help educate children in moral values. Still others, like the “Apostle John” that tapped on my gate recently, see the church as a job opportunity, if not a potential money-making deal.

My vision, my understanding, of what God wants the Ugandan Church to be is a bit more radical. We are locked in combat with a very real enemy; an enemy

who has established a dominion of darkness everywhere in our community. This enemy, Satan himself, has entrenched himself in our land.

People are in poverty because of his plan to destroy the dignity of man.

People are sick because of Satan's desire to destroy God's image in this creation by destroying mankind.

Families are broken and brutalized by violence because of his desire to destroy the basic unit through which God intends to extend His over-rulership.

Take away any material advantage, leadership techniques, or slick programs and this ministry will continue because we depend on the anointing of the Holy Spirit! Holy Spirit-filled and anointed teams are being released into the enemy's fields to destroy his hold in the lives of people around us.

**...upon this rock I will build my church; and
the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**

—Matthew 16:18 (KJV)

CAPS Program

CAPS is short for Center for Advanced Pastoral Studies. Every quarter, Foursquare pastors from all over Uganda come to Kampala for a week of intensive study. At each week-long session, we teach two courses of study. For instance: Major Prophets and Old Testament Theology. Or the Book of Acts and Systematic Theology.

Many pastors come from remote villages—some never having progressed beyond the third grade. At first, they might struggle to understand the simplest ideas. But after pushing them hard, holding them to high standards, we end up seeing them discuss complex theological issues—and doing it well! They are learning to study the Word of God, so they can go back and teach their people.

As wonderful as these times of training are for bringing us all together, I never spend a week with our pastors without being driven to my knees in prayer.

These are pastors that serve in difficult areas. From the war-torn northern Uganda, to the rebel-occupied areas near the southern border, to western Uganda where government officials have harassed our pastors for years, they come with stories of both victory and need. Yet they will always testify that, because of Christ's love, *"in all these things we are more than conquerors"*!

...in all these things we are more than
conquerors through him who loved us.

—Romans 8:37

Two Were Raised From the Dead

When the Foursquare Pastors in Uganda gather for the annual national convention, it is like homecoming. People from every corner of Uganda meet in Kampala to celebrate the victories of the past year. There was such a great spirit of love in this convention. More experienced pastors helping the new pastors with the processes; pastors praying for one another; and a renewed sense of purpose and dedication. This year's convention was intentionally called a "mini-convention" because it was a scaled down version of previous meetings. This year, it was just our licensed and ordained pastors who attended the meeting. The pastors left the convention saying it was the best ever.

There were several surprises in store for us this year. First, we discovered that Foursquare had planted a new church among the Karamajong people in North Eastern Uganda. These are a fierce tribe of warriors who are noted for their raids into neighboring areas in search of cattle. The Karamajong are largely unreached with the Gospel message. Then, two of our pastors testified to seeing God raise people from the dead. I knew right away this was not going to be your average Foursquare convention! Try putting THAT kind of information onto a spiritual report form.

The ladies of Kampala Foursquare Church are great cooks. They served the meals for all the pastors at convention. They can make a wonderful dish of cowpeas, rice and beef stew. Maggie is working on a new income-generating project for our ladies. She looked around and discovered that we are well-equipped for doing catering. We have tents, chairs, sound systems, cooking pots big enough to cook for all the Israelites wandering the wilderness, and enough

willing workers to feed them all. She had begun getting donations of old wedding dresses from the USA. The plan is for our Kampala Foursquare ladies to earn money catering weddings and supplying the wedding equipment.

This next week, I will be up in Southern Sudan meeting with local pastors up there. Traveling with me will be Andre de Almeida Leitao. Andre is a missionary to Africa from the Foursquare Church in Brazil. Reaching Sudan will be a coordinated effort between Foursquare Church in three countries: USA, Brazil, and Uganda. I love the strength that comes from that kind of networking together. We already have several Foursquare churches planted in Southern Sudan, but the registration for those congregations is a bit of a problem. Officially, Southern Sudan still belongs to the Khortoum government. Unofficially, the area is controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). We are trusting the Lord to walk with us as we

begin the official registration process for the Foursquare Gospel Church in Sudan.

So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.”

—Luke 7:22

Building Bridges? Or Buildings?

“**S**o, what kind of structure do you think it will be?”

For the past six years, we have been ministering in Uganda and explaining to people that we are simply putting in the foundations for something God is going to do through the Foursquare Gospel Church. Laying the foundations for a new structure isn't glamorous work. It doesn't win many awards. It doesn't produce spectacular results. It is just plain hard, frustrating, grinding work.

Several weeks ago, the LORD asked me a very important question. If we are putting in a foundation, what kind of structure will go on it? To tell you the truth, I've been so busy laying the foundation I hadn't given too much thought to the structure! I guess I

thought the LORD would put a modestly nice “building not made with human hands” on the foundation. “NOT SO!” He was quick to point out. Then, the LORD showed me that we are to be a BRIDGE and not a BUILDING. The Foursquare Church in Uganda will be a bridge between people of different ethnic groups, different ecclesiastical traditions, different nationalities, and different levels of affluence. We are to be a bridge of reconciliation and a bridge over troubled waters for people needing restoration from the trauma of war and genocide.

After that brief conversation, the LORD challenged me to look around and see how much of the bridge structure was already in place. As I walked through our new office complex this week, I was simply amazed! There is a lot of “bridge structure” that has sprung up in—and, around—Kampala Foursquare Church this year.

Refugee Ministry: Pastor Justin Amadi works with the dozens of refugees that daily come to our offices

seeking assistance. Usually, the only real assistance we can give them is friendly advice on how to survive the refugee bureaucracy and assist them with obtaining the proper refugee documents. Occasionally, we have some small food supplies, and we can give them two kilos of rice or posho twice in one month. We have a refugee fellowship—something like a mini-church—that meets every Monday at Kampala Foursquare Church. I'm sure someone will be quick to point out what is obviously true: It isn't much! True, but when you are a stranger in a foreign land, just a kind word means a great deal.

Women of Worth: The ladies of Kampala Foursquare Church are incredible workers. They have managed to start a small “peanut” grinding business that employs some of the women and, hopefully, will fund other small enterprises. Sarah Adams and my wife are working to help establish something REALLY BIG for the ladies: A wedding catering business. Over the years, we have accumulated tents, chairs, sound

system, huge cooking pots, and ladies skilled at cooking. Lately, we have had donations of wedding dresses and bridesmaids dresses from churches in the USA. The pieces are coming together, and this next year should see a number of our ladies employed in this small industry. When needy women come in off the streets, we simply MUST be able to put them into something wholesome and profitable to sustain their lives.

Community Health Workers: One of our staff members has been training to work with HIV-positive people in our community. He is busy making a register of those afflicted with AIDS and touches those homes often with some small help and prayer for the sick. In another exciting development, a new program to teach First Aid is off the ground. We have 14 students ready for graduation. (Our local city councilman is so impressed with this program that he is inviting the Mayor of Kampala to the graduation.) This small program will have a spot in the office where our

workers can report in on their activities in the community.

Education for Urban Poor: Our BEUPA school (Basic Education for Urban Poor) is in its second year. We have a student body of about 120 children who are gaining reading, writing, and math skills in our free school. Reports from the local officials in our area indicate that we are truly transforming the slum areas around the church through this program. Should our BEUPA program turn into a form school? NO! Doing that would cut out the students from the slums that we are reaching now.

Student Scholarships: This is really a project of my dear wife, Margaret. Currently, we are supporting 20 students in school from primary to university level. These students know they have a real advocate in Pastor Margaret. She is active in caring for their welfare, sorting out problems at school, and scolding them when they get off the track. Over the past six years, we have had 14 young people graduate from

various levels of education and many have found jobs and become active members of Kampala Foursquare Church.

These projects—with the exception of the student scholarship—run on very little funding from outside of Uganda. Primarily, these have been locally funded. Not that we would turn down gifts from outside, but, we can't wait for help to get here before doing something to meet the need. (Our personal ministry is supported by Foursquare Missions International. If you want to assist our ministry financially, you should send your donations through Foursquare Missions International, 1910 W. Sunset Blvd., #200, Los Angeles, CA 90026.)

**I will instruct you and teach you in the
way you should go; I will counsel you and
watch over you.**

—Psalm 32:8

Tesfay, the Ethiopian

Tesfay (we always called him “Testify”) had fled his nation of Ethiopia and in December, 2001, came to Kampala. For 17 years, he had been a freedom fighter in the bush in Ethiopia and finally political persecution drove him from his home. Now in Kampala, he met up with missionary Sarah Adams, and shortly after found his way into the Kampala Foursquare Church.

The huge cultural disconnect between Ugandan culture and his native culture sorely challenged Tesfay to press through his Ethiopian pride to be part of a Ugandan church. But then he found Jesus irresistible and received Christ as his savior.

Six months later, we were saying good-bye to Testify. He was on his way back to Ethiopia. Oh sure, he missed his family and friends. But a driving force pushed him to return to his homeland. In spite of the

threat of arrest or death, he desired to plant a Foursquare church in his hometown. He knew many who had not heard of the Living Water he had received in Kampala.

Tesfay returned to Addis Ababa and started a small home fellowship. He continues to “testify” to the hope and joy of knowing Jesus and trusting Him.

...the eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus...

—Acts 8:26-40

Under the Blood





Smart Bombs and Sacrificial Lambs

On my bookshelf, sits a valuable guide book for tracking African game animals in the bush. It is titled, *The Behavior Guide to African Mammals*, and I use it quite often when I go on safari in the bush tracking these magnificent animals. The book describes nearly every feature of the lives and habits of animals, including how they live with one another in their “society” if they are relational animals.

“How they live in society” is not confined just to animals. Humans, too, live their lives as social beings in society. How we do that is much more intricate than how animals do it, of course. For one thing, we have a complicated system of symbols—called art and language—which animals lack; and we use those symbols to communicate with one another, socialize

our young into society, and to enforce the rules of “how we live in society.”

All of us, as we grow up in our societies, learn these rules of behavior and ways of thinking that are particular to our culture. We drink it in with our mother’s milk (or “formula” if you were born in the Western world). These rules shape the way we think, live, and view reality. They are the assumptions on which we build our daily lives without even thinking. On airplanes and in various social settings in the west, I am always running into people who build their lives around very typical western secular “life scripts” (their assumptions about reality). These scripts automatically tell them that the Holy Bible is full of errors and contradictions; that spiritual life and realities are “not real;” and that this “now” life is all there is. They usually also are convinced—in a very politically correct way—of the superiority of western culture and thought. I am always fascinated by the way in which any breaking or bending of these rules is immediately

termed “deviant” behavior. Since this western life script is based on relativity and denial of any absolute truth, I always wonder, “Deviance from what, exactly?” And, “Who determined the benchmark for normalcy and deviance, anyway?”

Of course, western society and culture are not usually the focus of my interest; it is African culture and society that catch my attention. For instance, the way in which African cultures view blood.

Traditionally, African cultures value highly the close knit society of tribe, clan, and family. Every person in the community is needed and serves a valuable purpose to the community at large. Individuality, the cornerstone of western society, is seen as an evil that can break the harmony of community life and is to be avoided. So, every person is subordinate to the community and lives a life that is proscribed by community values.

When there is an offense between two people...or two groups of people...the harmony of community

life is now broken and must be mended. Usually, an intermediary person—a chief or a fetish priest—is called in to mediate an agreement between the parties that acknowledges the break, punishes the offenders, and brings peace to the two parties. Many times, this peace making involves the sacrifice of an animal in which the blood of the animal is used to cleanse the offense and restore harmony and relationship.

A good example of this happened in Burundi following the ethnic cleansing when the Hutu and Tutsi were killing one another. The time came when elders of the village, Ruyigi in the northeast part of Burundi, wished to cleanse the people and land of the offense of the killings. After a ceremony in which the people forgave one another and promised to live together in peace, the elders slaughtered a sheep and washed their hands in the blood of the lamb to cleanse their hands from the blood of the genocide and, to show that they are starting a fresh relationship between the Hutu and the Tutsi. So, the blood of the lamb

also covers the offense as well as cleansing the guilty parties.

Isn't it surprising how much this parallels what is written in Hebrews 9:22? "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." What told the Hutu and the Watutsi in Ruyigi that the blood of a lamb would cleanse and cover the offense between them? It was the "life script" of their culture! It is a life script that recognizes a universal law that is built into our world; a law that always requires the shedding of blood for the covering of sin. This is a law that precedes even the writing of the Holy Bible for blood sacrifices to cover sin is even more ancient than the Hebrew laws and sacrifices. It goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden when God provided the first sacrifice and covering for sinful man.

I know very well that our modern western world view finds this abhorrent. After all, we are far too modern and sophisticated to participate in animal

sacrifice. No, we have a far more superior way of dealing with these things. When an offense arises between two nations, and other peaceful means of settling the conflict fail, we simply go to war and bomb the “living daylights” out of each other. It is in the blood of the conflict we will eventually come to a settlement—in which one is the conqueror and one is the conquered—and live in peace for a time. Like it or not, the shed blood of thousands of innocent victims becomes the blood of our covenant.

Oh, we have our councils and our dialogues, but to what avail? Only to discover increasingly more complex and technical ways in which we enter into offense between one another. And, why do these dialogical approaches fail to bring about lasting peace and reconciliation between warring parties? Why, for instance, was the United Nations such a colossal failure in bringing about a solution to the genocide in Rwanda? Or, anywhere else, for that matter? It is because not all of the offended parties are present at

the negotiating table! God is also offended by our actions; and yet God is rarely, if ever, recognized as an offended party in the conflict.

As a Christian, I have had to go against my society's life script and recognize this truth. As a Christian, I have had to challenge the assumptions of my culture and move away from the safety of my culture's assumptions and by faith come into agreement with the Eternal Word of God. That Eternal Word clearly explains God's position in the offense by saying, for instance, "...the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them."

I am a sinner. My sin has put me in opposition to God and in the direct line of God's wrath; however, it isn't a hopeless situation. God has provided a perfect sacrifice for my sin. A sacrifice that will, indeed, cleanse my sin-soiled hands and establish a new

community of relationship with Him and with those “others” against whom I struggle. The Holy Bible says this: “...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation [propitiation: a covering of an offense] by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate his righteousness, because in His forbearance God has passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus....” (Romans 3:23-26)

My friend, as a white American male of European ancestry living and working as a pastor of an African church, I must stand constantly in that cleansing stream of sacrificial blood from the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. It is my only hope of existence. It is my only hope of acceptance in this society and culture where I live. It is the only hope that

can be offered in this world. It is the only hope I can offer to you.

I love so much the words of the old song that was a “regular” at the church where I grew up as a boy:

There is a fountain filled with blood

Drawn from Immanuel’s veins.

And, sinners plunged beneath that flood

Lose all their guilty stains.

May I invite you to take the plunge into that great fountain today—in opposition to all that your society’s life script has prepared you for—and lose your guilt and stain and gain eternal life?

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

—John 1:29

Where Thieves Break In and Steal

I felt the tug at my sleeve just as I was about to step out onto the platform to preach a crusade message. It was going to be a good message, too. I had felt it all afternoon; there was a Gospel message burning in my heart once again. I had spent the day in prayer and study of the Word of God. I could sense the anointing power of the Holy Spirit in my heart. I was fully expecting to see people come to eternal life.

But there was this tug at my sleeve.

I turned to see Margaret's face looking up, and I could immediately see it wasn't good news. Our house—six hundred miles away in Uganda—had been robbed. No news on what was taken.

The thief, Jesus told us, comes to rob, to kill, and to destroy. I am not—and was not—about to let “the

thief” set the agenda for my emotions, my focus, or my faith at that moment. I stood up to preach a message of mighty victory in the PERSON of Jesus Christ.

That is what is so interesting about Christianity. Christianity centers on the person of Jesus Christ. The teachings of Jesus are so wonderful, and I have a great love for His word. But, Christianity is not centered in the teachings of Jesus Christ. This “person-centeredness” is something that set Christianity apart from Islam. Islam centers on the revelation of Allah given through the prophet Muhammad, and on the teachings of the prophet. But Muhammad never identified himself with Allah. It is the revelation to the prophet and his teachings that are at the center of Islam. The teachings of the prophet tell us how to find God through submission to His will.

The same can be said of Judaism. Judaism concerns itself with the revelation of Jehovah, His covenant, and Jehovah’s Holy Laws as revealed through

Moses. But Moses never identified himself with Jehovah. It is the teachings of Moses and Jehovah's revelation to Moses that are at the center of Judaism.

When we come to look at Christianity, we see something exceptionally different. Jesus not only brought a remarkable new message, He was a message! What was remarkable about His message? Jesus revealed to us that instead of man seeking to find God, it is God who is searching and seeking for man! Remarkable! The Living God of Heaven and of Earth searching and seeking for his lost sheep.

Why did Jesus come? To establish a new religion? NO! To establish a church? NO! He came, according to Luke 19:10 "...to seek and to save that which was lost." In saying that, He put Himself at the center of God's saving mission. And further, identified Himself WITH the Mighty God. "I and the Father are one." Jesus tells us in John 10:30. And, "He who has seen me has seen the father." (John 14:9) That is what makes

Christianity so different. It is none other than the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, once the message to the crusade grounds was finished, I had to help Margaret piece together by cell phone what had happened to our house in Kampala. In fact, very little was damaged or taken for which we give great thanks to our Lord. The matter is now with the police who have instructed us to try to figure out who could have done this...go find them...and, bring them in for questioning. I suspect this is one that will “get away” with it.

**For the Son of Man came to seek and to
save what was lost.**

—Luke 19:10

Proud Parents and Dreams

Maggie and I had the honor of being the “parents” for Hellen Nabisaalu, a very remarkable young lady. You see, Hellen is an orphan who came to KFC five years ago. She's been on her own since early on—and has had to rely on various guardians and sponsors to help her with her education. Maggie and I sponsored her through her final years in secondary school, and then on through completion of her BA degree in education. Hellen is now teaching in a secondary school about 25 miles from Kampala.

Hellen's story is important in that most sponsored youths are constantly ridiculed by their teachers and administrators throughout their secondary school education. They're told they won't get far because of their situation. Yet they consistently outperform their

critics. As proof of this, Hellen was the only one of her classmates to gain admission to a university!

Hellen is a very good reason why Maggie and I would like to start a secondary school just outside Kampala. Right now, it's just a dream, as our Father hasn't given us the "green light" to get started just yet. So, in the meantime, we'll go on sponsoring the students the Lord lays on our hearts; students just like Hellen.

**But he gives us more grace. That is why
Scripture says: "God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble."**

—James 4:6

Serendipity and Refugees

The dictionary defines serendipity as “the faculty of making happy discoveries by accident” and I certainly had one of those serendipity moments this week. During my frequent meetings with Pastor Justin Amadi, our refugee pastor at Kampala Foursquare Church, I notice he had someone's resumé on his desk. That caught my attention, and in following up his project I learned that one of our Kampala Foursquare Church members, a university graduate and very nice young lady, has now finished a postgraduate diploma in Refugee Law. Now THAT is what I call serendipity: A law school diploma in Refugee Law sitting in our congregation. And, without a job, too.

One of the things that we do at Kampala Foursquare Church is to advocate for the refugees

when they appear before various government officials. That part of our refugee ministry is growing quite rapidly because refugees are among the most vulnerable people in our society. You would not believe how these precious people are abused in society. Doing advocacy is an important part of what we do because we are committed to giving people what other agencies cannot give: Human dignity.

The refugee ministry is one of those “by faith” things that we are doing. You can find it in Hebrews 11:41, “By faith Kampala Foursquare Church when they grew to maturity refused to allow the aliens in their community to be abused and began to feed, clothe, and care for them.” OK. Maybe it isn't actually there in Hebrews, but you get the idea. We don't have a guarantee of funds from anywhere, simply a mandate from God to do the work.

Like the women's ministry (that has now put several of our ladies into business for themselves), the BEUPA School, the student scholarships, and the

LIFE Ministry Institute, the refugee ministry works without guarantee and solely on faith. We'd like to employ this sister in the refugee ministry, too. To do it we are going to need to trust the Lord for an additional US\$250 per month. I wonder, can you pray with us about this need? Can you believe God with us for the additional funds to make a qualified Refugee Advocate available to work on our staff?

**And we know that in all things God works
for the good of those who love him, who
have been called according to his purpose.**

—Romans 8:28

Epilogue

The Next Five Years

As we anticipate God's direction for the years ahead, we are guided to work towards these things. We invite your prayers with us to see the kingdom of God built in East Africa.

- Complete construction of our Kampala Foursquare Church building. The plans we have are for an 8,000 square foot brick building. The cost? US\$150,000.
 - Expand our student aid program. Currently, we are sponsoring 17 students ranging from primary school to university level. In just a very few years, these students will be the leaders of the Foursquare Church.
-

- Plant urban churches, patterned after Kampala Foursquare Church, in towns throughout Uganda.
- Bring our Center for Advanced Pastoral Studies to the level of granting diplomas. (In the US, we would call it an A.A. degree.)
- Transition the complete responsibility and leadership of the Foursquare Gospel Church in Uganda into the hands of Ugandan leaders.
- Send a fully trained Uganda Foursquare missionary to another country to plant a vibrant urban church that will reproduce itself through that nation.
- Establish a Foursquare radio station in Uganda.

There is one thing we do *not* intend to do:

- Sit back and rest.
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About Foursquare Missions Press

Foursquare Missions Press has been dedicated since 1981 to printing and distributing free gospel literature to the mission field. Over 150 million tracts, booklets and books have been sent to leaders like Greg and Margaret Fisher through the years.

Foursquare Missions Press also sponsors the Children's Gospel Box, which has sent hundreds of free boxes to help establish Sunday school and children evangelism for poorer churches overseas.

If you'd like to learn more about how you and your church can order more copies of this book or assist the cause of gospel literature, contact us at 11661 Firestone Blvd, Norwalk, CA 90650 or by phone at 562-863-9800 and visit our website at www.foursquaremissionspress.com.



Have you ever wondered what it is like to be a missionary in Africa? For some it is a dream, others a nightmare! However, all would confess to a great amount of respect for those who give up the comforts and security of the American way of life for the cause of Christ.

Yet for missionaries Greg and Margaret Fisher their choice is not so much a matter of giving up a lifestyle as it is receiving the joy of serving others. Greg's recollections will candidly expose many of those joys along with the trials of mission work. His stories coupled with insights, images, wit and wisdom will inform you while exhorting you. Enjoy!



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