

EWCV Newsletter – October, 2003

Greetings from Uganda

Dear Family/Friends,

Greetings from Uganda! Dad/Grandpa/Bill here. Many things have been happening since our last newsletter. We will attempt to share with you some of the special events.

The electricity continues to go out practically every day here at Kako Hill. We are using many candles and our kerosene lantern is getting good use. At least we should have a savings on our electric bill!

Sunday School Teachers' Training Program

As we mentioned in our last newsletter, the three-day Kako Sunday School Teachers' Training program was to be held at the end of August. There were 35 participants present from the various parishes surrounding Kako Hill including 17 from Kako itself. The three trainers arrived from Kampala on Thursday evening and were here until Sunday afternoon. They did a great job and provided some teaching materials for the participants. On Sunday, we held a Family Service at Kako Cathedral run by the participants. Slightly less than 200 children attended and filled the front of the church. After the service, we fed the participants, guests, and nearly 200 children. We had asked the cook to prepare to feed 80 to 100 children. The number doubled and we had to stretch the food. Our Korean friend, Pastor Yoo, handed out balloons and pens to the children. Then Ann and I distributed candies. Pastor Yoo had been the guest preacher during the service focusing on the importance of Sunday School and that of the need for a strong children's ministry.

The training has now been completed and this leaves the job of implementing the program here at Kako. The school children in Uganda returned to their schools September 22nd after their three-week holiday for the third term of the year. This is now a good time to re-organize the S.S. program. We were invited recently to attend a service at a small parish for their Family Service and found the Sunday School Teachers already doing a great job after their training. This was quite encouraging. We are very thankful for donations received to assist with the training program and teaching materials for S.S. Teachers. Praise God and May He Bless you for your caring and concern for the children's spiritual growth here in Uganda!

Ugandan Culture

Two weeks ago we attended three funerals and two marriage introduction ceremonies within a two-week period. Attending these events gave us another look into the Ugandan culture and

also into the more local traditions of this area. Marriage Introduction ceremonies are held for the bride to introduce her fiancé to her friends and relatives. We wore our traditional Ugandan kanzoo (men's attire) and Gomez (women's dress). The local people quite like it when we attend functions wearing their traditional dress. This ceremony was held deep in a rural village with most of the people of the area attending as well as those from far and wide. It is quite a colorful occasion with a great deal of humor and fun. After attending two of these functions, we observed that most of these introduction ceremonies seem to follow a similar pattern.

On the other hand, when a person in the community dies, most people from the surrounding area converge on the home of the family to pay their respects and spend the night in the yard around the home. If it is a bit chilly, they will build an open fire to keep warm as well as to help prepare some food. It seems that most families/clans have their own burial grounds near the ancestral home. One of the burials we attended took place in a very rural area and we had to get out of the car several times to walk over some very rugged roads. The burial took place at the ancestral home where there were many graves dating back for several generations. Most often we are the only bazoongu (white people) present.

Compassion Uganda

Our friend, Tony, drove us southwest of here about an hours drive during September to see if we could find a young girl who is supported by our cousin, Robyn, from Australia. Tony's cousin, Lawrence, also came with us. Once again the roads were very rugged in several spots and we had to walk so the car could get through. We were hoping that it wouldn't rain because if it did, we would have to stay there for several days until the roads could dry up. It turned out to be a sunny day and we finally reached our destination where we found this child at her school. She was so pleased to see us and we took her along with the project coordinator to visit her family in the small, grass-covered home. All the neighbors came to see the Bazoongu and to find out what the excitement was all about. We were wishing we had taken a bag of balloons to pass out to the many children we encountered.

Mburo National Park

After leaving that area, we proceeded to drive to the nearby Mburo National Park. We only had about four hours of daylight left to tour the park, but Tony was able to drive us so that we could see most of the wild animals roaming freely throughout the park.

We were able to spot many zebras, different types of antelope, wart hogs, buffalo, and of course, many groups of monkeys. The favorite animal for all of us was the hippopotamus which we saw swimming in small herds in Lake Mburo when we stopped at the restaurant for a soda. We were surprised to see so many hippos. One of the larger hippos came out of the water briefly onto the nearby shoreline where we were sitting. He was huge!!! There are no elephants, lions, or giraffes in this park, but there is no shortage of zebras. It was dark when we arrived at our home on Kako Hill. The sun rises at around 7 AM each morning and sets at 7 PM

in the evening all year long. There is little change in the length of daylight as we were used to with the changing seasons at home in Canada.

Visiting Schools

I have begun traveling again to assist the Education Secretary with school visitations as we are now into the third term of the school year. Schools here in Uganda will finish their school year before the Christmas holidays begin during the fourth week in December. This past week I traveled by Boda Boda (motorcycle taxi). When visiting the rural schools, this form of transport is excellent when traveling over terrible road conditions as the Boda Boda drivers are able to maneuver around or through the craters in the roads much better than a motorcar. My responsibilities include collecting church dues from the Headmasters of the schools, checking on the Christian Religious Education programs they are supposed to be running in each school, and delivering a Christian message/praying with the students. I am sometimes able to visit three to four schools in one day when I have proper transport available.

During this time, Ann spends much of her time working on the computer at home typing for some of the office staff as she assists with the overload of typing from the office. They truly appreciate her help! She also enjoys her cross-stitching projects thanks to the many donations of thread and materials/patterns to make bookmarks and pictures. When Joan visited us in May/June from Athens, Greece, she knew how Ann loves cross-stitching and was able to have several ladies from around the world send her supplies. Joan brought these stitching supplies packed in her suitcase.

Livingstone Mugumya in Denmark

Our young friend, Livingstone, was able to fly to Denmark where he is staying for four months receiving training on "The Rights of the Disabled". A Danish Organization sponsors this program for handicapped people from third world countries. Livingstone has access to the Internet and we receive emails from him frequently. The participants spent last week visiting Amsterdam, Holland where they toured the canals, museums, and the city itself. They traveled from Denmark by bus and thoroughly enjoyed the many experiences.

In Denmark, they are staying at a school located by the seaside. Livingstone says that it is a very beautiful location, but somewhat cold due to the winds coming from the sea. We are so pleased that he is able to have these experiences. Meanwhile, back in Masaka, we try to continue visiting MADIPA (Masaka Association for Disabled Persons) at least once each week spending time with the workers in Bible Study, Prayer time, and trying to encourage them with their work. They struggle with trying to make ends meet, and need advocates to speak out for them.