

WALK UGANDA 2018 by Bob Hyatt

This is a personal account of my time with the Walk Uganda team in Uganda from 1st to 20th February 2018. But first my observation on the state of that Church in the nation as I have come to see it on my three visits to that country over the last three years.

THE CHURCH IN UGANDA

Unlike the UK there is no hesitancy in talking about God. "Praise the Lord" is a common conversation opener. Prayers are offered at every opportunity. Not even a cup of tea is taken for granted. Thanksgiving for safety through the night and the gift of a new day is heartfelt. The Bible is treasured. Worship is exuberant and joyful. Churches are busy with fellowship groups, youth groups, choirs, Mothers Union, Fathers' Union, prayer meetings and more. People are in Church frequently and for a long time.

At the same time something is seriously wrong. If Christians form 85% of the Ugandan population, why are the elections often prone to violence? Why is Ugandan government and business riddled with corruption, nepotism and inequality? Why are the streets so full of litter and the environment polluted? Why is there so much disease and poverty?

Often the gospel seed that is sown is for personal salvation only. It is buried in the heart of the believer to secure safe passage from this wicked world to an ill-defined place called 'heaven' and is a safeguard against the sin and suffering that many experience daily in this world. It is escapist and sterile. Jesus is a personal Saviour but not necessarily Lord.

There is a real need for the Church to learn whole-life discipleship which effects the behaviour of those who call themselves Christians and transforms society; that will make a difference to life on earth now, not merely in the new heaven and new earth which are to come.

My conviction is that this will only happen when pastors teach their people the whole gospel of God, the whole Bible, and apply it to the life of the Church, the nation and to the individual believer.

This is why training pastors in biblical preaching is so important.

A TEACHING COURSE FOR PASTORS IN NDEJJE, NEAR KAMPALA.

On my first visit to the Life Changing Church in Ndejje, the pastor David Katende and I discussed the need of the churches and he encouraged me to lead a course for local pastors to help them to learn to preach the bible to their people, I have been interested in the work of the Langham Partnership founded by John Stott and particularly in its Langham Preaching branch which seeks to train pastors especially in what is called 'the majority world'. So I contacted David Isoke who is the Langham Preaching national co-ordinator in Uganda to ask him to work with me in doing this. In 2017 I organised the programme and gave the majority of the lectures and David

introduced and guided the practical application and the group work. For 2018 when we would be trying to teach at two levels, for new-comers and for those who had attended previously, I asked David to lead and to recruit some other facilitators to work with us.

Unfortunately the other facilitators failed to come at the last minute and David and I - with the help of the pastor David Katende - had to lead everything. I think that the Level 1 students made a lot of progress. They were very enthusiastic and seemed eager to put what they were learning into practice and to encourage and support one another by forming small local pastors preaching groups. I have heard from David Isoke who has been in touch with them that all but two have already met. The Level 2 students did not seem to have remembered much from the previous year and our studies in preaching from the epistles were not as good as I would have liked them to be with more time and opportunity for preparation.

REJOINING THE WALK UGANDA TEAM.

Pastor Sam kindly came to collect me from Ndejje to drive me to meet up with the West team of Walk Uganda in Nakasake. (WUG had split into two teams after the first week in Mukono). For five evenings there was an evangelistic crusade from a temporary wooden stage in the middle of the little town. Singing, dancing, testimonies and preaching with an appeal for a response to pray to God for salvation and his Holy Spirit and to pray for healing.

Many people came forward to accept Christ or for prayer and the team together with interpreters had the privilege of praying with them.

During the day, we visited primary and secondary schools, a hospital and a prison and were able to act out bible stories, preach, pray and distribute literature. We also took gifts of food, school equipment and bibles.

We also lead some seminars on Marriage, Money, False Prophets and Finishing Well/Looking to heaven and all of us preached and/or gave testimonies at different churches on the Sunday.

The pastor at Nakaseke is Daniel Kato, a Rwandan orphan and a lovely man who has adopted me as his father. He is the father of Joanna who has a cancerous eye. This has not been operated on, but seems no worse and has some sight.



Daniel, Grace with Joel (6), Jemima (4), Joanna (3) and Joy (6 mths)

Monday had been given us as a day-off, *but* Daniel asked me to speak to the Pastors Fellowship. I spoke about a Pastor's priorities; 1.God: his kingdom, will and glory, 2.Self: the pastor's personal walk with the Lord, 3.Family: How can he manage the Church if he cannot govern his own family? 4.Church; worship, nurture and training and 5.The World: outreach and service. Then I expounded Titus 2.1- 6, emphasising godliness in Christ's Church to make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive. A

throw away line about our responsibility to the environment, suggesting that if the Church in their community cleaned up the plastic litter in the streets it would be a good witness to their community seemed to provoke great surprise! I wonder if they will act upon it.

On the following Tuesday we travelled on to Kagadi - a 5-hour journey by mini-bus. There we stayed in some rather better accommodation at the Rural University meeting up with the Archdeacon, Eric Twine, and Rev. David Kato, our Church of Uganda guide, interpreter and mentor. We had most of our meals in our own dining room there but were working in the neighbouring deanery of Nyaigana. This meant travelling further each day. We went to schools, a hospital, a prison, a clinic and visited many people in their homes. Some of these are extremely poor and we were not only able to share the good news of Christ with them but also to make gifts of food and other essentials. There is a lot of witchcraft and a sect called Berseka, after its leader, which have held many in thralldom. We ended our mission at a Deliverance and Healing service at St Luke's Church, Kagadi, just next to the new cathedral which is being built for the new diocese when it is inaugurated.

The next day we travelled some 10-hours by mini-bus to Mukono for a farewell dinner with some of the Ugandan friends we have made, and then to Entebbe airport for our flight home departing at 5.00a.m, reaching Gatwick at 15.45 p.m.



The new cathedral

A school welcomes us with dancing and singing

