

Global Report

September / October 2011

Everyone in the world ... in the Word

The Power of God's Word Is Transforming the Lives of Thousands in Uganda

In 2009, when the Rev. Dr. John Guest's Pittsburgh church introduced CBSI to church leadership in western Uganda, God gave our ministry an amazing start. In one four-day period late in the year, CBSI Directors Frank and Marian Vroegop trained 650 Ugandan leaders. God then called more leaders into place, established classes, changed lives and expanded interest. Today a thriving ministry has emerged, with 7,000 people studying the Word in the Hoima and Masindi districts, in the Lake Albert Basin along Congo's eastern border.

"It is thrilling to see this phenomenal growth with lives being touched and given new hope and joy," says Maury Kapsner, CBSI's Regional Director for Africa.

Mukama, a school teacher, is one of multitudes benefiting spiritually. In sickness a year ago, he sought help through his family's traditional faith. He was asked to pay for prayers and, when no healing or solutions to his problems came, he felt demoralized.

In April, Mukama attended a CBSI study group. Within the context of a caring CBSI community, he read the Word and learned to pray as others prayed for him. He had never experienced this blessing. In the book of Genesis he recognized the reality of almighty God, the Creator, and the light came on. As he read New Testament portions of the lessons, he saw his need for Christ, asked to be baptized and changed his name. "Now I am a child of God," he says with confidence. "I have hope."

Amazing Buy-In

The explosion in enrollment is matched by the passionate embrace of God's Word. Ugandan clergymen are taking hold of CBSI methods and materials and finding, with gratitude, that their teaching is stronger and those listening are being nourished spiritually in refreshing new ways. Class members are so enthralled with what they are learning that they burst forth in poems and songs related to

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Top right: The Rev. Dr. John Guest, a long-time friend of CBSI, led his Pittsburgh church into a 10-year ministry in Uganda.

Photo directly above: The lives of Ugandans of all ages are impacted by the teaching of God's Word in CBSI classes.

Bottom right: Mukama, an elementary school teacher who came to Christ while studying Genesis, pauses with his pastors on the day of his baptism.



Uganda, continued from page 1

CBSI lessons. They also create dramas to share their discoveries with others, glorifying the Lord and helping key concepts sink in and reside.

With most participants paying for lessons and helping others who cannot pay, CBSI Uganda supports itself financially, and with a gifted National Director and plenty of eager leaders in place, it is setting its own ministry course.

“God has led this ministry to work so wonderfully well that I cannot get over it,” says Bob Mann, Caleb to Uganda. “It is absolutely miraculous—and people in other districts, having heard of CBSI, are hungry for what we provide. Church leaders are begging us to come to their areas as quickly as we can.”

Awesome Growth Potential

The only limits to CBSI expansion into 25 other Ugandan provinces are start-up funding and, to a degree, human resources in those areas.

“This is an incredible opportunity for our ministry in particular and for the kingdom of God in general,” says Bob. “We have every confidence in the Lord and in people like Rev. John, CBSI Uganda’s National Director, to carry through. You can imagine the chaos when we began. No matter how good the training is, there is the challenge of pulling churches and church groups into a unified network in a rural area the size of Maryland with poor roads and infrastructure. Rev. John faithfully led the effort of getting classes established and running well and distributing lessons.”

CBSI-Uganda is already making plans, at the invitation of local church leaders, to move into four new districts in Uganda. Three of those areas will require lesson translation into new languages, which has already begun. One of the three is in northern Uganda (Gulu) which, over the last 25 years, has been wracked by war along the Sudanese border. There is extreme



Rev. John, CBSI Uganda's National Director, is a skilled leader with passion for sharing God's Word with his countrymen.



Left: In-depth Bible study available to all gets good publicity from this vehicle's signage.

Below: Dedicated translators convert English language lessons into Runyoro.



poverty there, but church leaders say that spiritual poverty is much greater and that they are desperate for the Word of God to touch weary souls in their region.

Quality translations of lesson materials into local languages and leader training will be needed to accomplish this. Initial costs include translation work, leader training, lesson printing and purchase of Bibles as well as outlay for a simple computer to manage documents. For any given new Ugandan district the financial need is, roughly

- \$4,000 one time
- \$800 per month ongoing

“That is not high,” says Bob. “I do not know of any ministry in which there is a better spiritual return on investment that reaches so many people. The opportunity we have to multiply our effectiveness is exciting. Ugandan class members hope for a day when they can contribute financially to future expansion. In the meantime I pray that our supporters will help.”

Treasuring the Word

In a close-to-cashless economy based on subsistence farming and gathering of food, it is remarkable that people find the means to pay for their lessons.

“While they are not desperately poor, they barely get by,” notes Bob. “We distribute lessons in booklets of three because that's all they can afford

at a time. They actually make covers for these 10-page lesson packets because they want to preserve them. People come to class with sugar cane, melons, eggs or bananas, which they trade for money for lessons. If someone does not have enough, others help, and a collection is kept for future needs of this nature. These people are highly resourceful and will find a way to make it happen. They do not attend Bible study for entertainment or fun. They do it because the Word of God is impacting their lives and becoming their spiritual lifeblood. It's thrilling to witness this!”

As Maury observes, God has put a highly qualified team in place to make Jesus known, loved and served through the study and application of His Holy Word. “I consider it a great and special privilege to help in every way I can,” he says.

Will you contribute financially to this vital ministry?



Left: A class member offers a melon in exchange for money to buy his next CBSI lesson packet.

Below: This rooster was recently bartered for lesson packets.



God's Word Changing a Culture

Two years ago, when CBSI began in Uganda, the people chose Genesis because they said, "We do not know how God wants us to live." They wanted to understand their origins and place in the universe. Also, living in tribal organizations, they can relate to the ancient Israelite culture depicted in Genesis.

Caleb Bob Mann says, "Because they are a story-telling culture, they love to employ creativity in applying the truths of Scripture to their lives. You have choirs singing original songs based on the Genesis text and theater groups meet in the backs of churches or in circles around mud huts. They will set up an entire Garden of Eden with props and with actors and actresses in full costume to re-enact the fall of man, complete with Adam and Eve walking out of the garden forlorn, following their sin and its God-ordained consequence."

For one training session involving 250 class leaders, people walked 10 to 15 miles in their best dress and then slept in church pews for a few days



Left: A couple in CBSI, recognizing God's intended sanctity for marriage, exchange vows after living together for years outside of such commitment.

Below, L & R: CBSI class members enact spiritually compelling scenes from Genesis, including Cain slaying Abel.



while sessions unfolded. Trainers had devised skits on what to do and what not to do in conducting class or leading a discussion. "It was hilarious," says Bob. "They had the whole place screaming with laughter."

This high level of involvement, rare in our world, shows the Holy Spirit at work. "It isn't people just coming and going and marking off items on their do-lists or checking boxes," Bob says. "It's people engaging with, thinking about and applying the deep truths of God, and in them finding healing for their lives."

As more Ugandans become steeped in the Word through CBSI, their vision clears, and their spiritual roots, engendered by faith in Christ, can reach deep into their culture, which in places is morally resistant. Recognizing the joy and harmony with each other

and with God that Adam and Eve had before their decision to sin, many CBSI class members affected by the culture's morality have felt convicted regarding the Lord's original purposes for marriage. So they want to come together before Him and be properly and formally married. There has been a significant spike in weddings as a result.

Even if God enlarges CBSI into the four additional provinces it sees in its scope, the ministry will be reaching only 15 to 20 percent of the Ugandan population with God's eternally life-giving Word. There is much work to do. "It is somewhat of a cliché, I know," says Bob, "but our Lord Jesus was the first to observe and declare, as has been recorded for us in John 4:35... *"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest."*



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Following Our Amazing God in Mozambique

By Gene & Frances Shackelford, Calebs

On a beautiful Saturday in May 2011, my wife, Frances, and I told leaders of CBSI in Mozambique good-bye and thanked them for their service. This was sad for us, but it was wonderful to listen to these dear brothers discussing the strategic direction of their ministry.

Since beginning in Mozambique in 2001, CBSI has expanded and its leadership has matured. God called us to the CBSI's Caleb Connection Ministry. When we could leave my father long enough for two-week ministry trips, we watched the Lord bless CBSI Mozambique in amazing ways.

Seeing value in CBSI materials and methods, a missionary with Youth for Christ grabbed the ministry ball and ran with it. The ministry expanded rapidly. We watched ladies in "bush classes" come to Bible study with babies on their backs. Most had never seen a Bible before that.

The Lord had also raised up a CBSI leader in a western province. Pires, now our National Director, had become involved in CBSI while in Bible School in Zimbabwe. Returning to his home church in Mozambique, he started classes.

In 2008 and 2009, we lived in Mozambique for longer periods. By then my father had passed on, and we

wanted to partner with Mozambicans in developing strategic direction and leadership. In March 2010, we returned to the country, planning to live there for most of 2011.

God has blessed the ministry mightily since then. In our strength we could not have accomplished all that has happened—we just joined the Lord in what He was doing in creating a nationally led ministry.

Along the way He provided many blessings that inspired and encouraged us. It is powerful that two or three of the CBSI participants have become pastors. For example, Lazaro, who is now a pastor, is also the vice president of the CBSI Mozambique board. In



Above: Gene ministered joyfully with two CBSI small-group leaders who have also become his friends.

Right: Frances Shackelford (in pink blouse) encouraged many Mozambicans to study God's Word.

addition, he is the National Director of a denomination that plans to establish CBSI classes in all 25 of its churches in Maputo province. Is this a coincidence? Oh my, no! It is God.

A special joy for us is that after considerable prayer and planning we have seen the Lord provide funding for nationals to start a business that will meet the long-term financial needs of CBSI Mozambique. The biblical model of "tent making" is becoming a reality. Praise God!

For health reasons Frances needs to be back in the U.S. We have left Mozambique knowing the ministry is in God's hands and the good care of His faithful servants. We thank the Lord and CBSI for the splendid opportunity we have had to invest our "retirement years" in His kingdom. They have been the best years of our lives!



Testimonies of Changed Lives in Uganda

Class Members Embrace an Entire Family

When Jane, pictured left, became pregnant, she was physically weak, stressed by marital conflict and worried about paying for medical treatment. In this strained condition she accepted an invitation to visit a CBSI class in her community. Class members welcomed her warmly and began to pray for her. When the time came for

her to be operated on for the birth, class members were with her in the clinic, attending to her with love. God blessed her with a lovely baby and (praise Him!) with peace in her home. Her husband, now in the class as well, is learning from the Word with her, appreciating newfound blessings of community in Christ.



Resurrection Sunday Transforming for Teen

On Easter last spring, Kyomuhendo, pictured right, had no idea that the Spirit would move her in a life changing direction. Raised in an Islamic family, she had not heard much about Christ, but she had joined a CBSI class and was participating

in evangelistic outreach with it when she heard the gospel. Her decision to receive Christ as her Lord and Savior was immediate. Along with many others, Rev. John, CBSI Uganda's National Director, has welcomed her into the community of faith.

