

January 18, 2013

Dear Susan,

It's Hot! Summer in Uganda is a different beast. The temperature gets all the way up to 85 and in the shade with the breeze it is very pleasant but the minute you step into the sun you burn and get warm quick. The humidity is probably 99 %. The evening drops to 75 by early morning which makes the night sleep okay. Actually I have felt great this trip. Thank every one for their prayers.

Wednesday morning Kamanda and I went to visit the Ebbys. Randy was still in Hoima and now it seemed all the buyers wanted him to give them the building. Even now there are still people wanting to meet with him but no one has met the price and Randy is thinking about investing in improvements and keeping the building. It really is a great piece of property and I have encouraged him to hang onto it if he can. So I thought I would take advantage and get caught up with Dave and Darlene. It was a great meeting. I so enjoy them and their commitment to educating and training pastors. Darlene was able to help me find a doctor for the boy with the bladder problem from Masindi (incidentally this is the correct spelling).

There have been problems and issues in the MTW team so Dave and Darlene are no longer serving as part of the team. They will continue to teach at Westminster Bible College and do Church planting and Development. I hope ACTI can use them. They had a lot to get off their chest. It has hurt them and they do not feel cared for. I stayed through lunch and for half the afternoon. I was glad I was here to talk but not surprised from several angles. The PCU will honor them and extend them a call and I think all will be happier with the new arrangement.

Kamanda and I then went to the new shopping center... Pretty fancy! Then he took me to see the house he is building nearby. He doing all the work himself and the house will cost \$5000.00 when he is finished. He told me his life story as an immigrant from Rwanda who married a Baganda woman. She lost her family and inheritance to marry an outsider. He found work as a house boy, servant to the wealthy, then a servant to a powerful Police officer. I was fascinated. All these years he has worked for Rashid I never knew his story. I spent the rest of the evening reading fiction.

Great night sleep then off to find Titus. Being with Tito is always an adventure this was no exception. We caught up for a couple of hours in his office as the Provincial Missions Coordinator. The New Arch-Bishop has asked him to continue in the post. His basic job is to bring money into the country for missions and outreach. His compensation is the use of a house on Namerembe Hill, at the site of the Anglican Cathedral. He is also on the staff of Words of Hope and draws a little salary from them to train the radio broadcasters and production crews. Titus always gets me laughing. His insight and brilliance is keen to see the twisted nature of things, especially Christians and all without cynicism.

He told me he had someone he wanted me to meet. We went to the house he has use of and there I met a man, named Philip. His wife, Miriam and there newly born daughter Julia were also there. Philip is an Egyptian Christian, a university graduate and a lawyer by profession. Miriam was a Muslim.

Philip began a story that took an hour, the summary of which follows. Philip was representing a family up the Nile river from Cairo in the tullies (bulrushes) when he met and fell in love with Miriam the daughter of one of the parties in the suit. Miriam moved in with Philip which is a sin but does not in it self bring sharia justice. They enjoyed a few months of bliss but then the family became alarmed that she might convert. Philip was picked up by the religious police taken to a dungeon and tortured until he said he would convert to Islam. They wanted all this done in secret so as not to raise the ire of many in the community and because what they were doing was illegal according to the Egyptian constitution.

Mean while Miriam was also taken and beaten she was told she could never see Philip again. She managed to get away from her captors and tried to find him but he had disappeared and she didn't know what had happened to him.

What happened was that he refused to convert unless it was in public so when they took him to the square he managed to escape and fled up river to Khartoum in Sudan. A friend found Miriam and gave her a cell phone with his number. She called him and they made a plan. First he told her that we would become a Muslim because of his love for her but she said no that she hated Islam and she had committed Shirk. She renounced Allah and burned her hand as the mark of her commitment to Christianity. Now she had to escape the country traveling without her Fathers permission is not allow even for a grown single woman. She went to tourist town up the Nile. There's he met just the right person a Christian who helped her get forged papers saying she was going to meet her husband in Juba, South Sudan. She proceeded to Khartoum where she found Philip.

They wanted to get married and she wanted to be baptized. They went to the Evangelical Church they refused because of close relationship to the Muslim government. They went to the Catholic Church same story. Then they went to the Ethiopian Church and she was baptized and they were married. Then they fled to South Sudan a Christian nation. They realized quickly they couldn't stay because the costs were too great to sustain them long. Finally they fled into Uganda and applied for refugee status. Now here was Titus taking care of them. The LORD knew who to send them to.

After leaving them we went to Mukono and Titus' house. I saw Mary the house and grounds all doing well. His guest house is getting better. Then Tito told me we were going out to Lugazi to meet up with a team of young people doing a mission there. This was the very first place I preached in Uganda 24 years ago and Titus was my translator. It was really fun to see this next generation of evangelist. Both Titus and I spoke. I was blessed. We got back to Mukono around eight and met up with Randy and Kamanda Who had come to pick me up. Randy and I took the all to dinner.

The two of us dog tired got to bed after a two hour slog through Kampala traffic at midnight. It was a great day of surprises.

Well that will do it for this update.

Greetings to all the brothers and sisters  
John

Practice the Resurrection every day! It is the Glory of the Ascended One.