

First Uganda Trip 1992

In 1992 I made my first trip to Uganda with Dr. Bobbi Baker, Al Baker (not related) Laura Snowink, one other young lady from the US. We were accompanied by Jonathan Kisawusi (a Ugandan church of Uganda priest). He took care of us and interpreted for our teaching and outreach sessions. We did not travel from the US as a team but met there under the leadership of Dr. Henry Krabbendam. There were actually several others we met there, but they went in a different direction than our team and we had no interaction with them.

We got there Thursday night. The plan was for us to go to a church of Uganda venue on the Sesse Islands in Lake Victoria by bus and ferry on Saturday. So some of us went to the town of Luwero on Friday morning and conducted an open air crusade. I had never seen anything quite like it. We set up in an open field along side the main highway. There were maybe eight building visible.

A raised platform had been build previously and our group set up a keyboard, some speakers and had a guitar with several microphones for singers. Somewhat off in a distance, a generator was set up and once it was going, the music began. Much to my total surprise, in about 30 minutes well over a hundred folks literally came out of the bush.

We were getting ready to share testimonies and the gospel when a big thunderstorm rolled in. Everyone scattered, we put all the equipment back in the van and watched it rain. After about another half hour, the rain was over, we set back up and wonder of wonders, even more folks showed up and we shared and had numerous responses before we headed back to the Namirembe Guest House for the night.

We got up early Saturday morning and made our way to the bus park by 8:00 a.m. in order to get good seats on the bus. The bus did not actually start the journey until 10:00 a.m. One other small point, the starter in the bus had not worked for years, so when it was time to travel, a dozen or so men got out and rocked the bus back and forth and then with one great push forward, the driver engaged the clutch and the engine cranked. The men got back on and off we went.

We road for what seemed eternity to the town of Masaka and from there we traveled down to Lake Victoria. It must have been 5:00 p.m. by then. We all had to get out of the bus while it was loaded on the ferry. The ferry ride was over a hour. I kept thinking about all the stories you hear in the news of ferries capsizing in Asian countries. I looked around and did not see any fire extinguishers or life vests. In God's providence we made it to the ferry port at the islands but as you might guess, the bus had been at idle the whole time and at some point, stalled out so the dozen men had to do the rocking routine on the ferry to get the bus running again.

We then got back on the bus and took our seats and by about 6:30 we started for the island town of Kalangala. If at this point you are thinking I forgot to mention stopping for snacks and a restroom break, I did not because we did not do either. We stopped at several points along the way to let folks off the bus and finally made it to our stop at the home of the priest. Our guest house was right next door and is in the photo below. The priests home was of similar construction.

By now it was very dark and with no electricity, no lights anywhere. We wanted to go to the guest house and visit the toilets, but the priest insisted we come to his home to be properly greeted. This included tea and small cookie cakes. He also read from the Scriptures, welcomed us and lead us in prayer.

A little after 8:00 we go to the guest house and with our flashlights and kerosene lanterns, we made up out beds for the night. The guest house had separate rooms for men and ladies, but no ceilings so it was a noisy place. We also learned during the first night there were also bats in par of the roof and with no

ceiling, they easily flew around us. It was a trade off, we got the bats, they ate any mosquitoes.

They brought us hot water to bath with and around 10:00 p.m. we were ready for bed, thinking the hot tea and small cookie cakes was our meal for the day. A little after 10:00, there was a knock on the front door and five ladies came in with a full course meal, enough to feed an army.

We were told Sunday School was at 9:30 followed by worship. We agreed I would teach Sunday School and Al Baker would preach. At 9:30 another gigantic thunderstorm came rolling in off Lake Victoria. It lasted well over an hour. We could see the church building from the guest house and no one was there at all. I was not sure what would happen, so I just waited. Around 11:00, a couple of men showed up and started beating on African drums, and again, to my surprise a couple hundred folks seemingly came from no where and the sanctuary filled up and Sunday School began.

Since this was my first trip, everything was new and I had no way of evaluating what was going on. We did learn one thing very quickly. We announced that an American doctor would be in the clinic there in Kalangala. Very bad idea. The next morning almost everyone living there was in line at the clinic. Just as an aside, we learned from this and some other similar experiences to have the pastors and priest in these area create a list of folks needing medical attention. They are given a number and can only see the doctor when their number comes up. This greatly improves medical ministry.

On Monday Al and I began a teaching ministry in the church, Dr. Baker ran the clinic and the young ladies worked with the youth. We continued this through Wednesday. We also walked around in the later afternoon and shared with whomever we could. On Wednesday afternoon we walked to the edge of the lake and shared with the fishermen there.

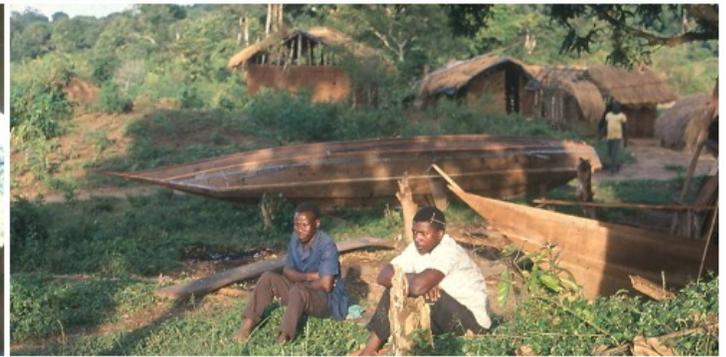
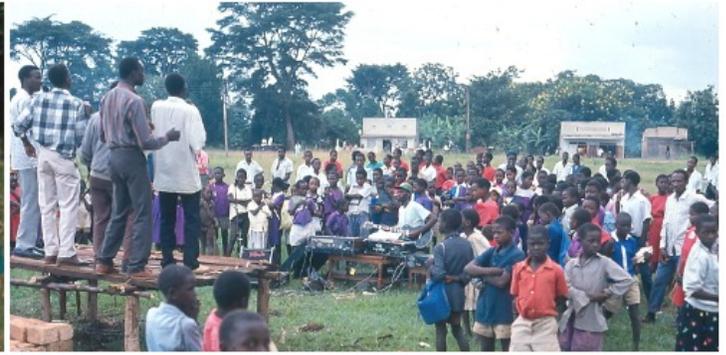
It was fund to see the young boys playing football (soccer) with a couple of dozen plastic grocery bags rolled into a bal for kicking. Below is also the photo of the priest's honey supply behind his house.

On Thursday morning we took the bus that had arrived Wednesday night and made our return journey back to Kampala. I did not mention it before, but both bus rides gave me some idea of how sardines must feel when they are packed in a can.

On Friday our team did different things. Al went north as he was staying another week. Some went shopping and I went to the town of Mokono wth Dr. Krabbendam where he spoke to a meeting of Christian doctors and nurses at Bishop Tucker Theological College (now Uganda Christian University).

On Saturday we started the return trip home and arrive at 7:00 p.m. Sunday evening. Our church was less than 5 minutes from the airport and the evening service was ended early and everyone came to the airport to greet us. I am sure the folks at the airport thought someone important was arriving as there were over 100 folks there to greet them (us).

Photos on next page



<p>Front: Jonathan Kisawuzi, Bobbi Baker, Michelle ?, Laura Snowink, Back: Al Baker, Bob Hayes</p>	<p>Crowd at open air crusade in Luwero</p>
<p>Bus on ferry preparing to cross to islands of Lake Victoria</p>	<p>Kalangaa Guest House</p>
<p>Sunday morning worship</p>	<p>Fishermen listening to sharing of the gospel. Notice boats in background</p>
<p>Young boys playing football (soccer) with a number of plastic grocery sacks rolled into a ball</p>	<p>Beehive providing fresh honey to parish priest</p>