

# OCTOBER 2020



There is much to update you on this month so we are sending two prayer letters! This one will focus on work and ministry and the following one on marriage in the year of corona!

Word of Life has recently restructured the branch of ministry that Rachael is involved with to focus on supporting local churches with their youth ministries. They now have a team of people working under four overall leaders – one each for connecting with pastors, youth leaders, ladies, and training and teaching materials (which Rachael is responsible for). This involves contextualising current Word of Life resources as well as preparing new material for the three main areas in Uganda they are focussing on: the city of Kampala and two rural areas (Kasese and Kayunga). As part of this new role, Rachael has been conducting surveys and interviews with each of the regional co-ordinators to get a feel for the lives that people are living there: the hardships they face, their dreams and fears as well as their functional theology.

She (or perhaps both of us) shall be leading monthly trainings to help familiarise the team with the materials and to provide resources to aid their teaching. October's training will concentrate on the gospel, November's on biblical counselling and December's on how to rightly handle the Scriptures.



As schools remain closed, there has been a dramatic rise in domestic violence and teenage pregnancies. One of the regional leaders recently conducted a training in Kasese for 20 girls both to encourage them from the word as well as to help them navigate the difficult times they find themselves in. We were privileged to write and record four gospel talks teaching into the context that these girls are living in. Bernie then did his computer whizz stuff compressing files and what not before sending them over to the regional co-ordinator. It was a delight to wake up on Saturday morning to a message to our team saying, 'Rachael is teaching us now!' Wonderfully, six girls gave their lives to Christ that day.

Rachael is also involved with the Ladies' ministry branch of Word of Life which seeks to reach out to all the ladies associated with Word of Life in Uganda. She is on a leadership team with Miriam Onen (her accountability partner and the sister of one of Bernie's best friends!) and Amanda Kirabira (the wife of the director). They are currently writing video scripts working through the first four chapters of Genesis. The aim of these videos is to model doing biblical fellowship around the kitchen table! They also want to address particular areas connected with women and challenge these female leaders to be intentional in how they are discipling the younger women within their churches and communities.

The biblical counselling course is proving a great asset to ministry. Rachael is particularly enjoying her current module which is on counselling children and adolescents. She read an excellent book called

*Parenting by Faith and not Formula* which she highly recommends to anybody that interacts with young people in any capacity.

Sadly, the vastly reduced funding for this course (for those living and working in an African context) runs out at the end of this year. We would very much like for Rachael to transfer the modules she's completed this year to the online Masters of Biblical Counselling and Theology that Westminster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania runs. Mr. Kirabira is supportive of that and reminded her that qualifications are highly valued over here so a Masters in theology may well open up more teaching opportunities in higher establishments of education. She could do the Masters part time over four years but the cost is mind-blowing! If anyone is aware of bursaries or scholarships out there for this sort of thing then please do let us know. We are praying that if this is something God would have her do then the finances for it will be out there somewhere!

The above is what takes up most of Rachael's week whilst Bernie beavers away in the guard's quarters turned office on his full time computer software job. Here's the brief description of what he's working on at the moment: 'We are using machine learning techniques to study the milk production/delivery patterns of farmers to enable us to avail them loans to help them grow their businesses.'

Of course, Bernie also works with Rachael on the various talks and recordings going on in any given week. We continue to have Sunday fellowships with the six of us on the compound. We have finished working through 1 Peter and are now working on a series going through the gospel. We are making the sessions more interactive as we seek to involve the boys more. Last week we looked at Genesis 1 and the father's question was, 'Why do we only read this through on Easter Sunday but we never get taught it?' Relationships with this family have strengthened and deepened. The parents are hoping to formalise their marriage legally and spiritually and they recently mentioned that we are their 'elders' in this respect. They look to us for informal marriage counselling which is a reminder to us that our own marriage is daily on display and so we pray that we can speak of and show something of the tremendous relationship between Christ and the Church.



There are a number of pastoral needs around us that we prayerfully try both to speak into and act where we can. We continue to write and produce the audios seeking to reach people who don't have easy access to faithful bible teaching. This ministry has slowed down considerably since we last wrote. Partly because of the new and exciting changes at Word of Life and the subsequent diminishing of available time but we were recently convicted that we both tend to err on the perfectionist side of things. Bernie rightly pointed out that it's good to want to do our utmost for the Lord but when we start thinking that we have to have a certain amount of time and energy to do a good job then we can slip into an attitude of pride and become paralysed and unable to even get started! Please pray that we would persevere with this ministry despite our limitations.

We have been able to help a number of people in crisis with the relief fund we mentioned last time. During the full lockdown, we used 50% of the fund to help with such things as food. Since lockdown lifted partially we have used the money to help people with rent, a roof over a simple living structure, medical bills, funds for people to start small businesses, transport costs (which have more than doubled), school fees (for those accessing online resources) and ministry in the slum. Some has also gone to the four separate friends of ours who have recently been robbed of all their belongings.

We regularly thank God for our partnership with you all: your prayers, finances, letters and parcels and messages of encouragement support us more than we can express in words. Thank you for enabling us to serve the Lord Jesus in this part of the world!

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