

MAY 2021



It's been a good (if busy) start to the year. We celebrated our one year wedding anniversary last month (see pic above) and feel highly privileged to have had so much time together during our first year.

We are relieved that coronavirus numbers have stayed relatively low although it was announced recently that the Indian variant of the virus has been detected here in Uganda. The majority of people do not keep to any sort of social distancing measures – even the basics such as mask-wearing and hand-washing. Sadly this is true of many Christians too. However, we are extremely grateful that Word of Life continues to be vigilant in these matters and takes seriously the care of its people. We are also thankful that Bernie's employers, Laboremus, continue to be understanding and respectful of Bernie's desires to follow the government guidelines.

The election, although widely disputed, did not lead to the loss of life that we saw at the end of last year (for which we are very grateful to God) although widespread violence was still a very real feature. We had five days of no internet access and visibly heightened security presence which was an unnerving experience for Rachael in particular. The 'swearing in' of the president is due to take place on 12 May. Whilst we pray against unrest in the country, we also pray for justice to reign and for those that have been 'disappeared' to be found. Ultimately, we pray for the gospel to take deep root in this country and that it will influence every level of society.

To that end, we give thanks for many opportunities to teach the word of God this term. We both had the privilege of teaching on the Living Word Uganda apprentices' ministry training (which Bernie used to oversee). Bernie taught on how to understand and teach from Old Testament narrative and Rachael taught on the principles and practicalities of biblical youth ministry. This is a wonderful programme and we were delighted to see that three members of a local church congregation that we support, as well as a girl that Rachael used to disciple, attend.

A significant amount of Rachael's time this term has been spent on helping to run a Word of Life women's conference which took place at the end of April. Due to COVID, it was decided that this conference should take place in individual homes to reduce large numbers coming together. We spent time planning and recording the teaching sessions (from Genesis 1-3) in advance and then trained the 11 home leaders with the various accompanying activities and discussion questions. The conference ran in 11 homes across Kampala and 117 women in total attended. It was aimed at women in ministry as a way of further training them up as they reach out to many more women within their various ministry contexts. Rachael hosted one of the groups in their home and was delighted that a number of the elders' wives from church attended. It was a wonderful opportunity to get to know them on a deeper level. Do pray that there will be much eternal fruit as a result of this time.

Speaking of church, we have been attending Emmanuel Baptist Community Church since the beginning of the year. We have been very encouraged to see a local biblical church prioritising the preaching of God's word, prayer, fellowship and the remembering of Jesus' sacrifice for all who will trust in him. There is also a great emphasis on reaching the community with the saving hope found in our Lord Jesus. We have enjoyed getting to

know the pastor and his family this term. A particular highlight was having them over on Good Friday and running an informal family celebration on such a significant day. We have been asked to consider running a weekly bible study group for the church family and so we would appreciate your prayers as we consider how best to move forward with this.



Rachael has been discipling a group of Word of Life students this term as she has facilitated a biblical counselling' course for them. The director of Word of Life reminded them that, 'Grief will be a huge door to evangelism over the next few years.' Many people have lost many things – loved ones, their graduation, schooling opportunities, childhood and adolescence (as children give birth to children), important funerals etc. Pray that we may be alert to the needs around us and prepared to always give a reason for

the hope that we have. We were pleased to be able to invite this group for an outdoor BBQ (see pic above left) as a way of being able to get to know them (and their own often formidable challenges) more deeply and to minister to them more personally in a more informal environment. There is much need all around. Do pray for the Spirit's leading in terms of who we invest in and to what extent.

Looking ahead

Rachael has recently resumed her work with the Good Samaritan Primary School (see pic on the right) and is hoping to run a mini outdoor holiday club during the last week of May. Please pray for wisdom in the planning and preparation of that. She is also hoping to have a retreat with Irene and Betty from All Saints Cathedral. Pray for a time of deep spiritual encouragement and fellowship with one another. We may work through the book of Habakkuk together and see how we might be able to teach that to children!



We are also very much hoping to welcome a gap year student to come and stay with us for six weeks between May and July. Please pray for the logistics of that and that it would be a time where we are encouraged in our ministry here as well as a time of spiritual growth and excitement for him.

We are belatedly trying to put together a wedding album of sorts. If you have photos from that most 'unusual' wedding of ours then please do email them to us (even if you did at the time). Our new joint email address is rachaelandbernie@gmail.com. With love from R and B.

Prayer and praise

- Praise God for our one year wedding anniversary.
- Praise God for continued health and for the vigilance of the organisations we work for.
- Praise God for many opportunities to teach the Bible.
- Praise God for the faithfulness of Emmanuel Baptist Community Church.
- Pray for the 'swearing in' of the president and for justice to reign.
- Pray for lasting fruit from the women's conference.
- Pray for wisdom as we consider running a weekly bible study for our church family.
- Pray that we may be prepared (and equip others to be prepared) to always give a reason for the hope that we have.
- Pray for wisdom in who to invest in.
- Pray for wisdom in planning for a holiday club at the end of May.
- Pray for spiritual encouragement as Rachael spends time with Irene and Betty.
- Pray that it will be possible for our gap year student to come and visit and for that to be a significant time all around.