

APRIL 2020



RACHAEL IN KAMPALA

'...in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by.' Psalm 57:1



Strange times

This photo of the children's team at All Saint's Cathedral was taken during what was to be one of our last times of meeting in person before lockdown. I miss them terribly. Do pray for Irene (in the black and white dress) as she walks almost three hours to and from the church each Sunday to record the children's devotions. Pray for energy for her,

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encouragement from me, electricity to be functioning and for technical matters to run smoothly. Most importantly, pray that God's word faithfully taught would impact hundreds of Kampala families during this difficult season.

What strange times we are living in and yet these times are not without hope. I was recently part of a team teaching university students from the book of Joel. God's people were experiencing a national disaster, the like of which had never been seen before: an invasion of locusts wreaking havoc on livestock, the land, the people and the economy. Indeed, *'gladness dried up from the children of man'*. The heart of the problem? A broken relationship with God. The locusts were a loving warning from God of a greater disaster to come, *'the day of the LORD is coming'* - a day of judgement for all. The repeated refrain from the LORD: *'Yet even now...return to me with all your heart.'* (2:12) Joel wants our hearts to be changed and calls for wholehearted devotion to God. He reminds us of the nature and character of God who is *'gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love'* and that for his repentant people he is *'a refuge... a stronghold to the people of Israel.'* (3:16).

It was good timing to be able to teach this during such uncertain times for the world. I was personally struck by two things. Firstly, that sin (our opposition to God) is serious and breaks my relationship with God which is the most essential aspect of my life. I need to be taking sin seriously and repenting daily. Secondly, priorities. What will the final outcome of COVID-19 be? Will COVID-19 ravage Uganda? Will people die of starvation? What will become of mine and Bernie's wedding plans that seem to

change on a weekly basis? I don't know. I don't have answers to any of these questions but I do know that now is the time to take stock of our relationship with the Lord. Now is the time to turn and repent. Now is the time to take refuge in the Lord who is a stronghold for his people. *'I am the LORD your God and there is none else.'* (2:27). Jesus takes up these themes in Mark's Gospel and Mark 1:14-15 is as true now as ever: *'The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'*



Silver linings

As many of you know, Bernie was granted a visa and was able to enjoy Christmas with me and my family. We got engaged late on Christmas Eve and apparently we still have 'an engagement glow', or at least we did! We had hoped to get married in the UK at the end of May but that is no longer possible. We are planning, God-willing, to wed on 15 April. We hope to be able to celebrate in both countries as and when the Lord allows.

With love, Mrs Muluuta to be! (One day... finally... we hope!)

Prayer requests

- **With Uganda on lockdown and no transport allowed (except for exceptional circumstances) thousands of people have no way of earning a living. It is illegal for individuals and organisations to offer food to others. Pray that the government would be able to distribute food where it most needs to go.**
- **Pray against corruption and politicising of the crisis.**
- **Pray for wise management of the crisis to be conducted with integrity. There is much to be thankful for in terms of how the government has managed the situation so far. Pray that would continue.**
- **Pray for churches, Word of Life and Living Word Uganda to sensitively reach out to people with the truth about Jesus who alone offers peace, security and hope whether we are living in the times of a world pandemic or not!**
- **Pray for our wedding and start of marriage: that we would love one another well and be a signpost to the relationship between Christ and the Church.**

Lessons I am Learning

- ✓ The biblical counselling course is helpful and timely. My struggles with fear highlight my struggles to fully trust the LORD.
- ✓ I find security in being able to control aspects of my life but that control is always an illusion. What a waste of time to strive for something I was never meant to have! God has and is and will be forever always in control. Hallelujah!
- ✓ This is a time for me to apply the gospel to myself and rest in God, rather than do for God. I set myself such high standards in many areas of life and yet our attempts at goodness are futile. God deals with us according to his goodness (Psalm 25).
- ✓ I need God's help more than ever as I seek to survive as an extreme extrovert in a time of social-distancing. It's hard! I often feel demotivated and demoralised.
- ✓ Bernie is a very godly man and a huge blessing to me. He is truly a wonderful gift from the Lord. I can't wait for you to meet him!