

OCTOBER 2020



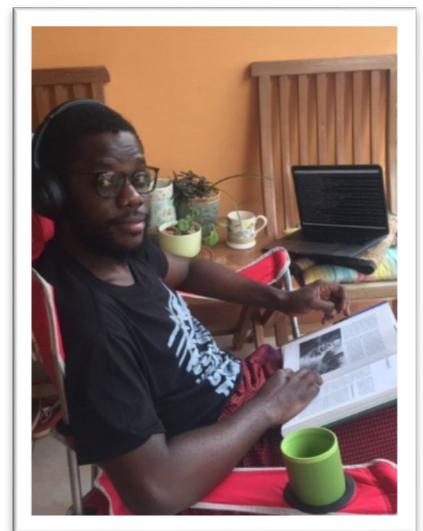
Love in the time of corona

We love being married! Although we are sad not to have been able to stick to our original wedding plans and celebrated with friends and families on both sides of the world, we are delighted to be married. Neither one of us is particularly traditional (some would argue we both somewhat rebel against tradition!) but we never anticipated getting married without the accompaniments of wedding attire, guests, wedding rings, food and a honeymoon. What a joy though to concentrate on what marriage actually is! A union of two people committing before God and the Church to spend the rest of their lives living out those precious vows. Suffice it to say I think we might have broken records in having one of the cheapest weddings in history and one of the first to take place in a totally locked down Uganda! We don't do things by halves! We were so pleased to be able to greet so many of you (via zoom) as Mr and Mrs Muluuta and to be able to do our speeches to one another in front of so many dear to us. Needless to say Rachael is immensely looking forward to a time when there can be big celebrations in both countries (Bernie... not so much!)

Marriage feels surprisingly normal and exciting at the same time. We are privileged to have spent so many years really studying what the Bible says on marriage and so being able to view our similarities and differences through a biblical lens. We are also blessed to have been such good and close friends for almost four years preceding our marriage. It seems Bernie takes an inordinately long time to think, process and reach a conclusion whereas Rachael is blissfully unaware and then catapulted into panic when thrown the curveball of some momentous decision she had not really been thinking about (ie Bernie asking Rachael two weeks after starting dating if we should consider getting married!). But again, neither of them seem to do things by halves and ultimately God's plans prevail!

We are similar in many ways: our outlook on life, ministry and church as well as our sense of good fun and adventure and our desire to keep Jesus central to it all. We are both social and love spending time with people, although Bernie is somewhat missing his 'down-time' these days (see pic right – a rare occasion!). Rachael wishes she could dance like Bernie and Bernie loves Rachael's super playful nature that he gets to see on a regular basis.

We are also different. The biggest difference is not the male/female or Ugandan/British contrast but the extreme-extrovert/mild-introvert contrast which is compounded all the more by living and working mostly from the compound. Rachael can talk all the time about anything or nothing and Bernie only speaks when he has something to say and can quickly 'run out of words'. Rachael is learning not to bombard Bernie the moment he gets in from work and Bernie is learning that Rachael is having to spend far more time alone than she ever has before and so she appreciates what few words he might have, even when he is tired.



We are making progress in our communicating with one another. Bernie is learning that Rachael is not a mind-reader and Rachael is learning that Bernie is not a feelings-reader! We love living in community (see pic right with Kato and the boys and at top of page with Irene who was living with us at the time). We can both struggle quite deeply with feeling weighed down. Rachael by the plight of suffering and evil that surrounds us and Bernie with the corruption, injustice and 'broken systems' that abound. We regularly remind ourselves that we're not in New Creation yet! We can also both struggle with the idols of comfort, pride and certainty/control (which leads to fear and anxiety). We fluctuate between trying to embrace the 'new normal' and being totally fed up with it. It is mentally tiring and socially difficult. We are works in progress!



It is a balancing act to be active members of our community, involved in ministry, working full-time jobs, keeping on top of a house, two dogs and meals (there are no 'quick meals' here!) – so there is still much wisdom to be gleaned. We are happy but also tired. We embarked on our long-awaited honeymoon on 10 October – it is our first holiday in six months!

Corona update

So far that have been 84 deaths and 9,082 confirmed cases in Uganda. Here is a good article on possible reasons for these low numbers: <https://tgam.ca/3iNIThr>. Social distancing and mask-wearing is compulsory but mostly not adhered to, though it is within the ministry of Word of Life. We were plainly told that disobedience to the government and the organisation you work for is in no way classified as ministry.



The airport reopened on 1 October. Curfew still in place. Churches can meet with up to 70 people. Schools remain closed except for candidate classes and independent schools that are able to meet the government standards. Word of Life International School is one of them. Here is an interesting article on mental health of students and teachers: <https://bit.ly/3di4c9u> Crime, domestic and sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies are all rising. The gap between rich and poor is increasing. The economy is stretched. Hospitals are filling rapidly. Here is a good article on the experience of a hospitalised COVID patient in Uganda: <https://bit.ly/2SKQ4Mu>.

Prayer Requests

- Pray for us to grow in our marriage and to continue prioritising the first couple of hours of each day, Thursday evening date night and Saturday as key times to invest in all the delights (and challenges!) of marriage.
- Pray for particular wisdom and help in managing our time and commitments, the social constraints of living in the days of corona and the introvert/extrovert nature of our marriage.
- Pray we would challenge each other to grow in Christ-likeness and continue fighting sin.
- Pray we would keep enjoying marriage, having fun and laughing! Pray we would remain healthy, mentally and physically.
- Pray for justice and for fair campaigning and elections (the elections are in February 2021). Pray the nation would stay connected to the outside world.
- Pray for front line workers and those suffering with the virus.
- Pray the impossible: for the virus to decrease in its impact and for the economy to get back up and running.

With much love to you all, the Muluutas.

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