

The life and work of brother Ernie Barnes (report of brothers from Northeastern Congo, Kenya and Uganda)

“Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.” (Rev. 14:13).

Dear brothers,

The time our dear brother Ernie Barnes labored in the east of the DRC left lasting traces at the spiritual, material, and social levels.



He arrived in Mandima-Mambasa in 1969 with his whole family. He started immediately to teach the Word of God to the workers and other people. Sister Marilyn, his wife, began literacy programs because many people could neither write nor even read a Bible verse. This literacy program furthered brother Barnes' efforts for the work of the Lord throughout all of Mambasa.

[< Ernie and Marilyn Barnes in front of their house in Mandima \(Bible Conference , Nov., 2004\).](#)

Many people, including the pygmies, turned to Jesus Christ by accepting Him as their Lord and Savior. The main chief of Mambasa, a committed Muslim, authorized Brother Barnes to continue to teach the Word of God among them (the Muslims). Brother Barnes organized the Bible courses from village to village.

He did the work of an evangelist, walking very long distances accompanied by local brothers, as the apostle Paul did. During these trips, he was accompanied by his wife and brother Ndilififi Ernest to Dingbo and Adudu, about 95 miles from the center of Mambasa. Even

in 1996, he traveled walking through the four corners of the territory. The Assembly began to grow considerably following the announcement of the Good News of salvation.

[Ernie Barnes' ministry from village to village >](#)

He opened many schools and was the first Director of the school at Mandima whose fruits are very rewarding: doctors, engineers, teachers and others.

He looked after lepers. He also took care of widows and orphans. He enabled many patients to go to the Evangelical Nyankunde Hospital by taking care of their bills and food. He built the meeting room in Mandima and Alambi. The Mandima airstrip and the evangelical Mandima hospital were carried out by him. In Eboyo / Epulu he built the chapel for assembly meetings; there he also established two camps of pygmies who were interested in the Word of God.



Brother Ernie Barnes was one of those who joined brother Hilvert in helping the brothers and sisters of Eastern Congo to take a stand against deviation and the spoiling of the truth, and to contribute to the precious work of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ at Mputu-Mambasa.

All of us brothers and sisters are grateful to the Lord that Brother Ernie Barnes and his wife Marilyn made enormous sacrifices, sometimes at the risk of their lives, for the advancement of the



spiritual work.



Saying goodbye on their parting in the village of Mayuano

ON BEHALF OF ALL THE BROTHERS IN NORTHEASTERN CONGO WHO HAVE KNOWN BROTHER ERNIE

"Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in the sight of our God and the Father" (1 Th. 1:3).

Following the chaos in the DRC (Congo), at the time known as Zaire, our beloved brother and sister Ernie and Marilyn Barnes settled in Mombasa, Kenya. Shortly after, as a result of their interaction, a small testimony for the Lord was established in Mombasa at Likoni. Following this, brother Ernie and sister Marilyn started a Bible correspondence work which they named "Tafuteni." This grew to eventually supply periodicals and other edifying literature and gospel tracts across Kenya.

Along with this ministry, Ernie and Marilyn labored in children and youth Sunday school work, resulting in some later becoming part of the Mombasa assembly as adults, for example, < brothers Richard Owino and Norman Omwenga.

"Trust on God for your provision"—Our brother Ernie often quoted this in exhortation. "Do you not have your Father in heaven?!" Such points of expression were a trademark with Ernie, while the tender touches of sister Marilyn in hospitality and musical ability playing the piano gave an ornamental covering to their valuable ministry. Defying ill health and numerous challenges common to



missionaries in Africa, brother Ernie and Marilyn made regular visits to other spheres of service in the central and western regions of Kenya – often accompanied by brother Muigai - where small testimonies were also found. > The road to these places were difficult, and the condition of service challenging, but God always came through for their faith in the sufficiency of His grace.

When in the late 1990s their health would no longer permit our dear brother and sister Ernie and Marilyn to be with us in Kenya physically, in spirit their presence continued with us in support and spiritual encouragement. Even during the very last days of the month of November 2016, when our brother Ernie was in physical pain but with confidence resigned to the will of God for his



own circumstances, he made a phone call requesting assistance for the material welfare of brother Cosmos' family. Brother Cosmas had recently received his own call to be with the Lord.

Having reason for all gratitude to God for the life of Ernie and Marilyn Barnes His servants, we would commend our sister Marilyn and the family and all the brethren with them to our Father, the God of all comfort, and to Jesus Christ our Lord who is the resurrection and the life.

ON BEHALF OF ALL THE BROTHERS IN KENYA
WHO HAVE KNOWN BROTHER ERNIE

“You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ Therefore, I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2)

From 1995 as a missionary in Uganda, our dear brother Ernie Barnes faithfully ministered to believers in Western Uganda before falling ill, helping them to find greater fulfillment in their relationship with God.

Many of us, brethren from both Northeastern Congo and Western Uganda, had the great privilege of enjoying fellowship with brother Barnes and sister Marilyn in the years of his missionary work in East Africa. Brothers and sisters have lost a devoted and inspirational brother. Brother Ernie and Marilyn dearly loved us for the sake of Christ.

Brother Barnes and sister Marilyn were very helpful in the Lord's work here in the Kyanduli local assembly in the Kasese area. Brother Barnes was valuable in teaching the local brothers in Kyanduli how to organizing Bible conferences, and also sister Marilyn helped in teaching the sisters how to have Bible studies for the sisters in the Kyanduli local assembly >.

In 1995 and 1996, we held Bible conferences for both brothers and sisters.

Beginning in 1997 brother Barnes was joined by brother Hilvert to help him in doing the Lord's work in Western Uganda. During this period of his missionary time with brother Hilvert, they went on teaching us how to preach the gospel and present truths about the Assembly.

Brother Barnes in his illness has been our counsellor as to the Lord's work in Uganda together with brother Hilvert. They have been helping us where needed to continue the Lord's work in all areas. Many challenges were faced by brother Barnes as he sought to get the gospel to those in need. He is known to many brothers and sisters here as a brother who had a real burden for those who had never heard the Gospel.

He taught us how to organize conferences and gospel meetings. It was during this time that we carried out some Gospel tent meetings both in Mpondwe and Kyanduli assemblies.

[< Ministering the Word in Swahili](#)

Thanks be to the Lord who taught him how to live with us here in an environment which was new to him: new food, new language and culture. Being determined, he learned the Swahili language which



he later spoke fluently. Many local brethren liked him for this and were able to interact freely with him. He shared our locally prepared food and slept in our houses.



We also remember the Bible Conference in Bwera in brother Barnes' tent, set up next to brother Seezi's house, in 1999. This conference was attended by brother Barnes, sister Marilyn, and brother Hilvert. The three of them slept in Seezi's small house, shared our food and simple life conditions, and enjoyed our hospitality in every respect.

During the time that he traveled from Kenya, crossing Uganda on his way to Congo, his body started to get weak. So local brothers drove him to

Beni in Congo, where they looked for all available means to get some treatment for him. The Lord did His work, our brother was healed, and they continued the journey to other local assemblies in Northeastern Congo. On his way, back to Kenya, he promised us that he will come and stay with us in Western Uganda for the Lord's work.

In 2005 brothers Barnes and Hilvert attended the conference in Kasese town where brother Barnes shared with us his last words when we were sitting together, discussing aspects of the Lord's work in Western Uganda. We were sad when we heard that brother Barnes would not be able to come to Africa due to much illness, but we thank our Lord who used brother Barnes to do His work and brought us other brothers to continue helping us in the Lord's work in Western Uganda.

We have much to say about brother Barnes and sister Marilyn for the years we lived with him as missionaries here, but we know the Lord has recorded all that they did as missionaries. And we give our thanks to our Lord for the work He is still doing, both through brothers as well as brothers from abroad who visit Uganda.



ON BEHALF OF ALL THE BROTHERS IN WESTERN UGANDA
WHO HAVE KNOWN BROTHER ERNIE

[Ernie & Marilyn Barnes, leafing through the new hymnbook in Swahili, during a visit of Hilvert&Jeanette Wijnholds in Charlotte, NC, USA \(2010\)](#)

