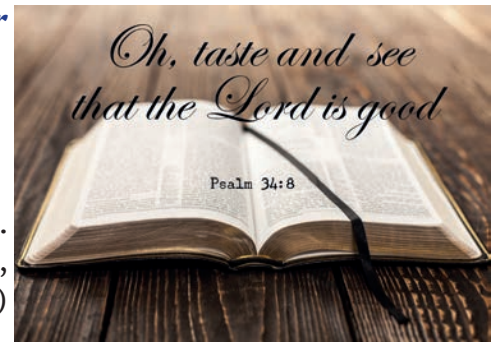


## ***Report of our visit to Uganda from 8 till 23 September 2017, together with bro. Martin Ulrich***

Dear saints of God,

Last month the Lord gave us another opportunity to visit Uganda. Together with bro. Martin Ulrich (from Wetter-Volmarstein, Germany) we could visit the Kasese area (at the Congolese border) again, but also spent one day at the Bible Centre in Mukono.



### ***Camps***

As with previous visits we had camps in Mpondwe/Customs, for the boys and young brothers, followed by a camp for the girls and young sisters. Each camp lasted for three days. The first camp started on the Lord's Day (10 September), after the regular meetings.

With the boys and young brothers we continued studying the life of Joseph, with which we had started in January. We could again draw many practical lessons from the life of Joseph, but also studied some of the parallels between Joseph and the Lord Jesus. The local brothers also asked if Paul could do another study on the tabernacle. This is a beautiful subject which was used to both preach to gospel and teach some of the Assembly principals.

With each camp participation grows; when Paul first was there in 2014 there were about 75 participants, now there were over 150! During those years the Lord has blessed the efforts of the local brothers in preaching the Gospel and teaching the Word, through which more and more contacts are established and groups are formed. This results in more and more young people attending the camps.

It was very helpful and blessed that the responsibilities for the spiritual part of the boys'/young brothers' camp could be shared between Martin and Paul and the local brothers. Especially with the many, many questions it was very good.

This however still is matter of much prayers when it comes to the girls'/young sisters' camps. Renate was the only visiting sister and the local sisters do not feel confident yet to take up much responsibility, when it comes to storytelling and answering questions. This resulted in Renate doing all the storytelling and answering the questions, although Martin and Paul assisted in a Q&A session during the first and last day of the camp.

More visits by (young) sisters to this area would be really helpful, in order to prepare the local sisters for this work. In the end, they should be able to conduct camps by themselves, without help from abroad. This is now already more or less the case with the brothers there, who have much more experience. However, it remains necessary to visit the saints there, also because of the teaching and explaining of the Word.

During the girls'/young sisters' camp, where there were about 100 present, the three Mary's were studied. The booklet, 'The Three Mary's' by Edward Dennett, was used as a guideline for the preparations. By the example of these three women the young sisters could learn many practical lessons about the position of women according to Scripture; both in the Assembly and in daily life. Many questions were asked regarding women teaching and women in offices in the churches, which also in Africa is becoming a big issue, just as it has been in our countries over the past decade or so.



*Bro. Martin explaining on the life of Joseph. Bro. Phesto is translating.*

*Bro. Phesto explaining one of the questions from the booklet (see above).*

*Lessons on the tabernacle.*



Answering the questions from the booklet.

Renate also continued with the sewing lessons. In January the participants had done some embroidery work and Renate had noticed many had never handled needle and thread before. That is why she decided to make felt purses with them this time. For this a lot of preparations had to be done, as all the pieces of felt had to be cut beforehand, as we could not bring dozens of scissors to Uganda and it would have taken up a lot of time for the young girls and sisters anyway. During the Castlewellan Conference in Northern Ireland (a few weeks before our trip to Uganda) many of the young people there helped with these preparations, for which we were very thankful. The girls and young sisters really liked to sewing work and some of them even made two purses!



Preparations during the Castlewellan Conference



Renate explaining the answers, sis. Jennifer translating.

For both camps we had made booklets (as before) with the passages we were to study and questions for each successive story, and also space for jotting down notes and questions. These booklets have proven to be very helpful for the young people over the past years and they keep them to re-read what they have studied and learned before. The two booklets on Joseph are now being translated into Swahili and Kinyarwanda, so they can be used for camps in Congo (DRC) and Rwanda by the end of the year.



The camp booklets



The sewing project.



Group photo.

### Visits

When the boys'/young brothers' camp was going on, Renate made some visits in the area together with some of the sisters, both in the houses and in some of the meetings. One day they went to the Bible Centre in Kasese, where Bible studies for women were held. Also many women from various churches attended, who asked lots of questions. We noticed that more and more people from various denominations attend meetings, camps and conferences, because they showed an interest in the Lord's things and were invited along by the local brethren. These visits were a great encouragement to the sisters, especially those who could not attend the camp. During these meetings always many children were present, as they came along with their mothers or other relatives. This always offers the opportunity to preach the gospel to them.

After the boys'/young brothers' camp had ended, Martin and Paul made some visits in the area, accompanied by some of the local brothers and bros. Ssemutereke Deo from the Kampala area and Mukama Gérard from Rwanda. They also made visits in various meetings and homes in the area,



Meeting in the Bible Centre in Kasese.



Many children in the Bible Centre.



Group photo after a home visit.



*The bridge near Busingo.*



*Climbing the mountain.*



*After the meeting in Busingo.*

but also in more remote places in the Rwenzori mountains, reaching far above 1,000 metres above sea level (the highest mountain of the Rwenzori is Mount Stanley (DRC), of which the highest peak reaches up to 5,119 metres). There are two meetings there (Mahango and Busingo) which are hard to reach. The last part of the journey has to be done walking! During the trip in January Paul visited Mahango and was supposed to visit Busingo as well, but plans were changed last minute (as happens regularly in Africa), so the brothers there asked again if we could visit there. So they were visited this time. The first part of the journey by mini-bus, followed by a 'walk' of almost an hour, crossing a river via a 'bridge' and climbing one of the steep slopes (35-40%!) on a muddy path (see pictures above). The Lord really gave journeying mercies! And then we heard that the local brethren tend to visit here on a monthly basis! They need our prayers for travelling mercies as well!

### **Conference in Mpondwe/Customs**

The second week of our stay started with a conference, which was attended by some 125 people; saints from various meetings and groups in the area and interested people from various churches. Some had travelled up to 10 hours to attend the conference. We started with the upper room ministry in John 13-17. As the local brothers desired to have thorough studies we decided beforehand not to push in order to finish the five chapters in four days, but to see how far we would come. With the Lord's help and the guidance of the Holy Spirit we could finish chapters 13 and 14. The studies were very profitable and blessed as one could expect, given the precious content of these chapters.

Because of the many questions we had an extensive Q&A session at the close of every day. Especially those from the various groups and churches heard many new things and had many questions related to the studied chapters, but also regarding Christian daily life and Assembly matters. We pray for another opportunity to visit and continue studying these chapters.

As it was the rain season, temperatures sometimes were very low for African standards, even down to 18-20°C. For the locals that was very cold. They covered themselves with blankets (see picture below).

After the end of the conference the book 'The Last Words' by Hamilton Smith, a very nice commentary on John 13-17, was distributed. The local brethren had translated it into Lhukonzo for the conference and it had just been printed by the end of August. This book is now available in English and Lhukonzo and the



*The Last Words - Hamilton Smith*



*The first day of the conference.*



*Bro. Mukama Gérard speaking at the conference.*



*Conference group photo (some had already left). Notice all the blankets!*

desire is there to publish it in French and Kinyarwanda (Rwanda), so it can be used in other countries as well.

### **Conference in Mukono**

The conference in Mpondwe ended on Wednesday and on Thursday we travelled to Mukono (near Kampala) where we would attend another youth conference the following day. We really felt the Lord guiding us there. We had already been discussing going to Kampala a day earlier, in order to be closer to the airport and cut the return journey in two (one day driving and one day flying). By changing our travelling plans like this, we could attend a youth conference on the Friday, after which we could travel on to the airport in Entebbe.

This one day conference was in the end (as during the first hour or so, people kept coming) attended by approximately 90 young people. A few dozen of them had left at 3 o'clock in the morning in order to be in time! Four brothers each spoke about a young believer in Scripture; Joshua, Samuel, Joseph and Timothy. The meeting lasted for about three and a half hours (no breaks) after which a late lunch was served and all went back to their respective homes. It was a blessed time with the brethren there and we could stress the necessity to have young people's meetings and conferences regularly.



*Martin speaking on Joshua at the conference in Mukono*

*Paul speaking on Samuel*

*Bro. Deo speaking on Timothy*

### **Conclusion and prayer points**

Looking back, we have to say again that the Lord has helped and guided us every step of the way! We keep praying that the Lord will grant us another opportunity to visit the saints there.

Here are some points for you to pray for:

- Spiritual growth, both for the saints in the meetings and also for those in the various groups that are visited by the local brethren
- Travelling mercies during the visits by the local brethren
- Visits from Europe and America, by (young) brothers and (especially) sisters
- The literature work; there is a great need (and desire) for books and commentaries in the local languages. The believers are very eager to read books! In this they are an example to many in our own countries! Wisdom is needed in order to decide which books to translate, but also for the translating and proofreading work itself.
- More activities for the young people, as there are many of them, who have a real desire to study the Scriptures and meet with other like-minded young people.

We want to thank you all for your support and your prayers.

Yours in our soon coming Lord,

*Paul & Renate Meijer, Martin Ulbrich*