

Report visit Uganda September 2019

Kilkeel, Bucharest, Gummersbach, 18 October 2019

Dear saints of God,

From 6 to 17 September we could visit the Kasese area in Uganda again. For Rahel it was the first time to join us. We can look back on a very blessed time together as visitors, but also with the local saints in Uganda. We flew from various directions to Amsterdam, where we met at the departure gate for our flight to Entebbe. We arrived at Entebbe airport late in the evening of the 6th. We stayed overnight in Entebbe and travelled onwards to Mpondwe, at the Congolese border the following morning.

Many have been concerned about the ebola issue, which a few months before our departure even caused a ban in Uganda on all public events, including conferences. However, the Ugandan government has been very adequate in dealing with the issue and the few times an ebola case occurred in Uganda, they were always 'imported' from the Congo. The people concerned were immediately put into quarantine and the matter was contained. For the time of the camps and the conference the local authorities provided disinfecting soap in a special dispenser that was put at the entrance of the premises of the meeting hall. Everyone had to wash their hands before entering the meeting hall grounds. Also we were not supposed to shake hands and avoid all physical contact. Not shaking hands was very difficult for all of us, as we're so accustomed to greet each other, especially if you haven't seen each other for a year or even longer.

Boys' and young brothers' camp

The first three days of our stay in Mpondwe, the boys' and young brothers' camp was held. We started on Lord's Day afternoon, after the regular meetings. This year's topic was 'Running the Race'. We had brought bro. Tim Hadley's booklet on this topic, in a bilingual edition (English and Lhukonzo). Over the course of the three days we looked at the requirements for running, the cost of running, the finish line and the rewards after running with perseverance. One or two brothers introduced the subject, after which we discussed it together, using questions which had been prepared beforehand.



Emanuel speaking, Festo translating

Paul answering questions, Dario translating Group photo

Besides the prepared questions, we also dealt with the many, many questions that were asked by the attendees. Due to ebola not all those who would attend usually were present, but still around 130 to 150 could attend.

Girls' and young sisters' camp

The next three days were used for the second camp, for girls and young sisters. During those three days the lives of some women in Scripture were studied; Dorcas, Rhoda and Lois & Eunice. Again a booklet was provided with the studied Scriptures, questions and room for notes.

The afternoons were used for crafts; sewing a small handbag and making cards. The progress in the sisters' sewing skills is noticeable. Some of the brothers said the last evening of our stay that they were very happy that the Renate had started with the sewing lessons for their wives. They profited from this. Their conclusion: "Keep up the good work!"



Crafts



Crafts



Group photo

But more importantly, Renate could really notice the spiritual growth with some of the sisters, who had attended previous camps. This was especially evident with those who took part in the camp. About 110 attended.

Visits

During the first camp the sisters made visits in the area, visiting sisters in their homes, but also to have some small meetings in the homes. These visits help in the contacts with the sisters, so they realise that others have an interest in them. This especially applied to the sick they visited. In one of the homes they visited an old sister who had a broken hip, for whom apparently no medical help was available. Every day she was carried outside to lie under a tree in the shade. That is her daily programme...

During the second camp the brothers made some visits in the area and also had some more administrative meetings with some of the local brothers, in order to deal with certain matters. It was nice to meet some of the younger ones who had attended the camp and told about the blessings they had enjoyed.

These visits also provide time to have discussions with the Ugandan brothers, as sometimes the travelling time was a couple of hours. This helps us to understand the issues our brethren are dealing with in daily life, in their struggle to earn a living, but also in other matters like marriage and problems in the meetings. During these talks it becomes evident how important it is to establish a relationship with the local brethren, through which there are opportunities to deal and address certain matters.



Visit in a home



Visiting the Mahango meeting



Bad and steep road, continuing on foot

Conference on the tabernacle

The last three days were spent on studying the tabernacle, where about 150 were present. The brethren in Mpondwe had requested the study of this subject. We tried to keep things simple and apply the lessons to daily (assembly) life. For most of the brethren (not just those who attended from other denominations) this was an entirely new subject. In the three days we looked at the tabernacle building, the furniture connected with it, but also the sweet savour offerings. Because it was a new subject, we had left ample time in the programme to deal with questions and again dozens of questions were asked.

We were pleasantly amazed about the interest. Most took notes, some pages full! We had prepared a booklet with the Scriptures to be studied, but also pictures of the things studied each session, in

order to make things visible. It made us realise how privileged we are in the countries to live in, to have these teachings available to us. The question and challenge then is: do we take advantage of these privileges? During the course of our three days of conference, we heard many say that they couldn't understand why the local brothers had chosen such a difficult subject, that no doubt would leave them with many questions. But as the conference progressed they admitted they had never thought that this is such a helpful and practical subject! We were asked to take up this subject in other places as well, so we are currently prayerfully considering what the Lord wants us to do with that.



In conclusion

Looking back we can again say that He made all things well. There was a very good atmosphere among the four of us. The Lord helped in the meetings, the visits and the more private conversations. He blessed our time together.

We again noticed the relentless efforts of the local brethren in visiting the meetings in the area, but also in preaching the gospel to those who show an interest. We were told that almost every week they get in touch with new believers who show an interest in the (assembly) truth and request further visits.

Let us pray for the brothers and sisters who make these visits, for wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but also for journeying mercies, as not all roads are very safe... Please keep also praying for the spiritual growth for the believers in Uganda. Many still lack teaching, because they are either new converts or never received much teaching in the denominations they came from. This also puts before us the need for more (local) workers in Uganda (and other countries in Africa).

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

In our soon coming Lord and Saviour,

Paul & Renate Meijer, Emauel Munteanu, Rahel Moubacher