

REPORT OF MISSION WITH UK TEAM

20TH APRIL TO 4TH MAY 2007

Introduction

One of John Bunjo's long held dreams has been to have Christians from the West come on short term missions to Uganda, and experience for themselves some of the remarkable things God is doing in this great country. This year this dream became a reality for the first time when a team of 8 Christians from the UK, led by Pastors Paul and Janet Booth of New Life Church located in Stockport, spent 13 days in Uganda, ministering in different parts of the country. This kind of mission is set to be a regular activity in CRM's calendar. The plan is that every year, CRM-Uganda will host 3 or 4 such teams and it is also expected that the teams will keep becoming larger with time.

Preparation for mission

In January 2007, CRM's UK Coordinator, Jane Sullivan, confirmed that she was going to send a team to Uganda in April. Therefore, the CRM Uganda staff was detailed to begin preparations for the mission. John was in constant communication with Jane, and when he travelled to the UK in late March, the two made final touches to many issues that were important to the success of the mission. Meanwhile in Uganda, contacts were made with pastors in Soroti and Nakeseke, as well as a few churches in Kampala for preaching engagements.

Arrival of UK team

The team from UK arrived in Uganda on the night of 20th April 2007. They were received by Sarah Bunjo and others. From Entebbe airport, they checked into a Motel located in Ntinda, a suburb of Kampala, where they stayed all the time they were in Kampala. (Vivian and Bob stayed with the Bunjo's). The team members were Paul and Janet Booth, Bob and Vivian Hunter, Jan Cottrell, Margaret, Claire Hendy and Malcolm Street.

Ministry in 3 churches around Kampala

On Sunday 22nd April 2007, team members visited 3 different churches. Janet, Paul and Jan in preached in the churches, each of them in a different church.

Partners Encounter

John and Sarah arranged for the team to have a brief feel of CRM's ministry by having them participate in a mini-Divine Encounter, organized specifically for a few of CRM's partners. The meetings happened from 22nd to 24th April, from 6.00 to 8.00 pm at Namirembe Guest House. John and Sarah ministered the Word and Janet danced. Team members were prayed for, and they in turn prayed for the partners and CRM staff. Some prophetic words came forth through team members. The Partners Encounter was concluded with everyone being anointed with oil.

Devotions with John and Peter

The team had 2-hour long devotions in the mornings of 23rd and 24th April, with John and his administrator Peter, facilitating. The devotions involved discussions and meditations based on Revelations 2:1-5. All participated in sharing the insights the Lord gave them on the passage.

Visit to Prayer Mountain

In the afternoon of 24th April, team members visited the famed Africa Prayer Mountain where they spent some time seeking God in personal prayer.

Soroti mission

The team travelled to Soroti on 25th April, leaving Kampala in the early afternoon, and arriving sometime around 8.30 pm. Soroti is a sprawling town in mid-eastern Uganda, originally built by commercial Asian immigrants. Located on a flat terrain, the town has a population of about 80,000 and is a 4 to 5 hour drive from Kampala (depending on the speed, the type of vehicle used – private or public – and the number of stoppages en route). The team checked into Golden Ark Hotel, in which they were accommodated, together with John, Sarah and their 9-year old daughter Fre-Sarah for 4 days they spent in the town. The CRM-Uganda Administrator and three volunteers accompanied the team.

The team engaged in house to house (one on one) evangelism for two hours in the morning of 26th April and came back with reports of people being saved, filled with the Holy Spirit and ministered to in other ways. Fre-Sarah who teamed up with Vivian and Bob ministered to a few children. All the team members were accompanied by local believers and pastors in this activity.

In the evening, the team participated in an open air gospel meeting, which had a surprisingly larger attendance than had been anticipated, considering that the meeting was not advertised in the community. After team members were introduced to the gathering, Paul preached, Janet danced, Claire and Jan testified while Vivian and Bob together with Fre-Sarah ministered to the children. Scores of people raised their hands and were led in the prayer of commitment to Christ.

On the 27th, the team travelled out to a rural church community, some 30 minutes drive from Soroti. The team was overwhelmed by the typical rural Ugandan welcome they received, with ululations, etc. Team members were treated to a sumptuous meal (rural African style), after they ministered to the Church. Paul preached, Janet danced, and Jan and Malcolm testified. In the evening crusade, Paul again preached to a large crowd who defied rain and came out on a muddy field to receive from God. Several came to Christ. Also 20 children were registered for possible education sponsorship. Malcolm took the pictures of the children.

The third day in Soroti was for an Encounter. Team members joined believers at 12.00 pm in a building belonging to the Church pastored by Bishop Justin Edweu, who was the main host of the mission in Soroti. The turn up for the Encounter was significantly less than had been anticipated, being only about 150 people. (The reasons for this do not warrant being expounded here). Paul, however, commented that they were not after large numbers for the sake of it but after those whom God wanted them to minister to. Paul and Janet taught, while all the other team members testified. Janet also danced. Vivian, Bob and Fre-Sarah ministered to the children. Team members gave out sweets, handkerchiefs and other gifts to believers. Jan offered to purchase a suit for Bishop Edweu, in appreciation for all the hard work he had put into organizing and hosting the Soroti mission.

The following day, the team travelled back to Kampala. En route, they visited Budhagali Falls on the River Nile.

John's Mum's birthday

On Monday the 30th, team members joined John in celebrating his mother's 73rd birthday, together with hundreds of other guests.

Visit with sponsored children

On the 1st of May, the team travelled to Matugga where they met 36 of the children whose education is being sponsored by CRMI in partnership with caring Christians in the UK. The meeting happened at the children's school. Most of the children were accompanied by their parents or guardians. Almost half of the parents/guardians were Muslims. John took time to explain that CRM does not discriminate the sponsorship on religious basis, and that is why several children from Muslim families are beneficiaries. However, CRMI has ensured that these children are placed in a Christian school, and it is hoped that they will turn to Christ with time, and through them, their parents and relatives will be exposed to the gospel.

Vivian and Bob were able to see and hold the child they sponsor, whom they showered with many gifts and hugs. Paul and Janet unfortunately could not interact with the children they sponsor because the kids failed to come to the meeting. Team members toured the school and Malcolm took new pictures of all the sponsored children. The children were enthralled by the gifts of sweets, clothes, teddy bears, etc, that they received from the team.

On the way to see the children, John took the team into the studios of Top Radio from which he broadcasts his daily lunch hour program. Janet, Paul, Jan and Claire had opportunities to briefly give their testimonies to millions of listeners.

Nakeseke Encounter

On the 2nd of May, the team travelled to Nakeseke, a small rural town in Central Uganda. Nakeseke was the centre of the famous Luwero Triangle, where the current Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni, launched his guerrilla civil war that eventually brought him to power after 5 years of fighting. Through the efforts of Sam, a church planter in this area, a few years ago John got in touch with Milly, who later bought air time for John on the local FM radio station to broadcast his radio messages. The broadcast which is aired between 12.00 and 2.00 pm is very popular in the area.

On this day, John went ahead of the team to Nakeseke and preached live on the radio. Vivian and Bob gave their testimonies before John and Joseph (a long time associate of John) preached.

When the team entered the Miracle Life Hall belonging to Milly, they found hundreds of believers who had patiently waited for them for hours. John led the congregation in vigorous praise for 30 minutes, after which several people testified that they were healed as they praised God.

Paul and Janet then introduced the other team members. Janet danced and gave a short teaching. Claire, Vivian and Bob testified. Paul preached before John and Joseph prayed for the people. Again, the children received sweets and other gifts. A few women walked away with handkerchiefs

After the Encounter, the team visited a 6 month old church planted by Sam. It has 45 adult members. Despite the team having had a meal offered by Milly, they had to eat again at Sam's barely two hours later. Such is the hospitality in Africa that wherever you visit, you have to eat something, or else your hosts will take it that you do not love them or you despise them. At the small makeshift church, team members were introduced and the congregation danced their hearts out in joy, enthusiastically joined by Claire and Jan. The team arrived back in Kampala way beyond 9.00 pm.

Visit to source of the Nile and farewell dinner

On the 2nd last day of their stay in Uganda, the team took time to 'cool off' from their hectic schedule by visiting the source of the Nile and doing some shopping. Later in the evening, John and Sarah treated the team to a farewell dinner at Shanghai Restaurant, a Chinese eatery. Words of appreciation by team members and John and Peter (on behalf of CRM staff) were expressed, and a few gifts passed hands.

Last day

On the last day of the mission, the team checked out of the Ntinda Motel early in the morning, visited Munyonyo Resort Beach, a posh Hotel which is going to be the main hosting centre for the Commonwealth Heads of State and Government Conference in November 2007. Later they had time to see and pray over the plot of land which Joseph has rented for the purpose of planting a church. The team travelled to the airport in the evening.

Evaluation

Cost of mission

By the end of the mission, it was found that the mission cost had been grossly underestimated. The 300 pounds that each team member contributed proved inadequate to cover accommodation and vehicle hire for the team, on top of other expenses. John and Sarah had to drive their cars to Soroti because the funds weren't enough to hire a vehicle that could carry all the team members with their bags. This meant the team members weren't probably as comfortable travelling as they had expected. Funds had to be found through other means to pay for all the expenses. Therefore, future teams coming to Uganda will have to be advised to contribute more than was the case this time. At the moment, it is estimated that 500 pounds per team member would effectively cover the costs of a two week mission. However, the exact amount will keep varying since inflation rates and other market forces in Uganda can be erratic. For example, during this mission, diesel shortage hit the country and there was rationing at fuel stations. It was only by the help of God and by John's good connections that we were able to access enough diesel to power John's Land Cruiser to and from Soroti.

Conclusion

For CRM Uganda, this mission was a landmark, since it was the first of its kind. CRM has been hosting a number of guests from overseas, but not for this type of mission. There was therefore a lot of excitement and anticipation. Working with the UK team was eye opening for us: we learnt many lessons, which will help us do things better the next time round. God bless all the 8 people who pioneered this aspect of CRMI's work. Who knows where God is going to take this short-term missions ministry?

Report compiled by Peter Odoi
Administrator - CRM-Uganda