

# Cornerstone

Newsletter & Magazine MARCH 2010

A Family of Friends - Developing the Cornerstones of Africa's Next Generation



## WHY ARE WE DOING ALL THIS?

This year in Cornerstone our theme is: *"Understanding and Strengthening our Purpose, Vision and Mission."* In this Newsletter/Magazine we revisit our purpose, our vision and the various mission statements of our various departments. Sometimes these three words – purpose, vision and mission – are used interchangeably and that is understandable. Because, generally they all describe why we get of the bed in the morning and why we invest time, energy and resources toward a particular end. In our teaching materials we define these words as follows:

**Purpose** – answers the ultimate questions: Why am I alive? What am I here on earth? And, the answer to such questions is the same for every human being. (Tim's article on the back talks more about this.)

**Vision** – portrays an aspiration that we ascribe to in response to the important questions like the purpose of life.

**Mission** – describes how we define our specific calling individually or collectively in response to a particular vision.

In Cornerstone our vision is simply to see Jesus' idea of *"the Kingdom of God coming on earth."* In other words, that the 'Divine order' based on the highest ideals - such as brotherhood, justice, love of neighbor, purity and peace would break into and replace the 'dis-order' we see so much of in our world today and even in our own lives. And, our mission then is the unique contribution we seek to make to further that vision here in the African context:

### The Cornerstone - Mission Statement

*To be a family of friends in the spirit of Jesus, committed to:*

- Equipping and advancing a movement of "servant leaders" with a shared vision for the positive transformation of their communities, nation and region.
- Compassion for the poor – with a focus on young people.
- Working across the lines of culture and faith differences.
- Maintaining a long-term partnership with each other.
- Loving God and neighbor.

Our mission statement first describes *"Who we are"* and then secondly *"What we do."* In other words we seek to put relationships ahead of tasks. This is part of what it means to operate *"in the spirit of Jesus."* He only gave one mark by which he wanted his followers to be identified. *"By this - all men will know that you are my disciples: by your love for one another."* Jn.

13:32 The term "family" speaks to the *nature* of our relationship. We see each other as life-long "brothers and sisters." The term "friends" speaks to the *quality* of our relationships – we seek to love and support each other as we carry out our work.

In pursuit of a great cause some say that *"The end justifies the means."* However, in Jesus' way of thinking the means and end look the same:

*To live – to learn – to love.*



## Inside



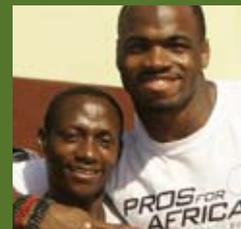
6

School scores:  
Our best year yet!



8

Welcome:  
COSA  
Rwanda



12

Northern  
Homes  
receive US  
celebrities



19

Letters from  
friends Kris-  
ten & Ashley

## and...

- Updates on Cornerstone schools, Youth Corps, and COSA programs
- Where is he now? Martin Ssuna
- Cstone long range strategic vision
- AYLF activities in the East Africa



This newsletter/magazine is published quarterly for family and friends around the world by Cornerstone Development

## Location

### Head Office:

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## Program Overview

### Leadership Schools: Uganda

- CLA Boys, Nakasongola
- CLA Girls, Jakana Matuga
- Primary, Nakasongola
- Secondary, Nakasongola

### Rwanda

- CLA, Rwamagana

### Youth Corps Homes: Uganda

- Ntinda girls, Kampala
- Makerere boys, Kampala
- Bukesa boys, Kampala
- Mengo girls, Kampala
- Lunguja girls, Kampala
- Kibuli boys, Kampala
- Sorority house, Kampala
- Gulu Girls
- Gulu Boys
- Lira Girls
- Lira Boys

### Sudan - Juba

### Tanzania - Dar es Salaam

### Rwanda - Kigali

### Burundi - Bujumbura

### Projects:

#### Ekitangala Ranch

Nakasongola, Uganda

#### Community Development

Nakasongola, Uganda

#### Wolves Soccer Program

Kampala, Uganda

#### Widows Program

Kampala, Uganda

#### Mombasa Youth Outreach

Mombasa, Kenya

## Core Focus

Our core focus is 'youth leadership development' - so all the various programs we run serve this focus by providing a practical "training ground" where the graduates of the Academies can learn to serve and pass on to others what they have received.

# INDEX

OF THINGS YOU WILL FIND IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES

1. Introductory thoughts
3. Where is he now?
4. Long Range Strategic Vision
5. Letter from Ashley
6. Cornerstone Schools
8. Brotherhood & Sisterhood
11. Africa Youth Leadership
12. Pictorial Poster
14. Youth Corps Updates
19. Letter from Kristen
20. Cornerstone Projects
24. Thoughts from Tim

## some explanations for the unacquainted:

**The Cornerstone Schools:** The Cornerstone Leadership Academies (CLA) are "Advanced Level" boarding, high schools that aim at molding young people coming from poor backgrounds, but with high potential - into future leaders. A big part of the aims of this program is to teach young future leaders from various religious backgrounds and different tribes - to learn to live together as brothers and sisters - as part of a movement of men of integrity and women of virtue. In addition to the academic studies, the program involves a comprehensive discipleship program following the principles, precepts and person of Jesus.

We also teach this material in our Elementary and High schools that are open to the public. These schools have boarding facilities and accept students from all over the country, as well as catering to the local community.

**The Brotherhood and Sisterhood :** Our schools are really just the beginning of a long-term relationship with these young people that continues on into University and beyond. Our vision/mission statement is: *To create a life long brotherhood & sisterhood of friends that will support each other in a movement of "men of integrity" and "women of virtue."*

This dream is steadily becoming a reality. Most of these young people come from broken homes or grew up as orphans so the 'Cornerstone family' often becomes their extended family. Many are in positions of leadership at their respective colleges and the university. Others in more quiet ways are making a positive impact on those around them. The long term potential to influence this nation is increasingly becoming evident as we see the maturity and commitment exhibited in the lives of these future leaders who have come up through our programs. To maintain our relationships and commitment to the values we hold in common after the schools- we meet weekly throughout the time they are in University, hold an annual retreat on the ranch for all alumni and organize support groups for those that have begun working and starting families.

**Youth Corps Family:** This is a program that provides loving homes for homeless kids and also serves as a training ground for the young people who have graduated from our Leadership Academies and are involved in running the homes. The homeless children get a place to sleep, a 'family' to belong to and are taught a better way to live - in line with the principles, precepts and person of Jesus. We also have homes for older guys/girls in university to live together, and to learn to love each other and grow spiritually.

**See more online:** [www.CornerstoneDevelopment.org](http://www.CornerstoneDevelopment.org)

In this task oriented modern society most people get their sense of self from the kind of work that they are doing rather than from who they are in terms of the quality of their character. And similarly most organizations today are defining themselves by what they do as opposed to the quality of the working relationships among their members.

In keeping with the mission statement of Cornerstone – which firstly describes who we are as “a family of friends” and then secondly what we do in terms of work – we at the Head Office are constantly striving to strengthen this vision of being a family of friends who love and support each other in the spirit of Jesus. It is like the difference putting the donkey in front of the cart - the way it was designed to run - rather than the other way around.

At the Head Office we seek to support the various missions of the ever growing numbers of initiatives in the Cornerstone family and to ensure that our overall vision trickles down to practically finding expression in all the different departments. Toward that end, since the beginning of the year we have been making changes and having meetings to strengthen our team.

At the Head Office we act as “a hub” shouldering all the other departments and also as a store of refreshments from which all the other departments can draw from. To do this we need to be at ‘the top of our game’ staying motivated at all times and not allowing the cares of the world to eat away our energy – so as to serve everyone effectively.

## Where is he now?

### MARTIN SSUNA

Martin was in the pioneer class of Cornerstone Leadership Academy that graduated in 1996. While at CLA he studied Mathematics, Economics, Geography and Divinity however right from that time heart was always inclined to full time ministry for God. So, immediately after graduation he left Uganda to establish a ministry in South Africa, and then traveled around the world for a while before landing in Kenya from where his ministry is now based.

Today, Dr. Martin Ssuna’s work has been blessed and he is now is the President and founder of World Harvest Evangelistic Ministries International. Currently, he Pastors the World Harvest International Church, one of the fastest growing churches in Kenya in terms of influence and reputation. It is situated right in the Nairobi city’s central business district. Additionally, he is a sought after speaker with a remarkable gift of inspiring faith in listeners and giving hope to the hopeless. He also hosts and ministers on ‘The Power Connection’ that is aired twice weekly on the TBN Family Network in Kenya and Lighthouse TV in Uganda. It is

In the first quarter of this year the Head Office continues to support all our initiatives and environments in order for us to achieve the much needed life-transformation we are striving to effect in the many young people in our programs. And, we recognize that this begins with us ourselves first “being the change” we would like to see in others. To support this effort we continue to have our weekly fellowship every Monday as well as a variety of strategy meetings seeking continuous improvement – both in our personal performance and in our collective performance. In this way all the Head Office staff are regularly able to give in their input. We do not just want to be a place where the funds originate from – but also a place where better ideas originate.

Some the recent changes – involve the arrival of Richard Kirabira to the team in order to strengthen the accounts and specifically assist with the ranch business side of things. This was partly necessary in light of David Mwesigwa’s frequent travels to Arusha in order to establish the Cornerstone Leadership Academy in Tanzania. Furthermore, Simon Kabi taken up a contract that means he is now in Sudan most of the time doing good work there in regards to building housing and other responsibilities with Shelter International.

We are also increasingly seeing the involvement of Michi Paul being assigned different tasks as needed. Finally, in this quarter some of our staff (Tim Kreutter, Alfred Edakasi and Charles Mugabi) were able to join hundreds of delegates from across the world in attending the US National Prayer Breakfast. *By Philip Ojok*



**THEN: 1994**



**...AND NOW: 2010**

estimated that he reaches a combined total of over 5 million people in East Africa with the good news of Jesus.

Nairobi, Kenya is his home now where he is happily married to Mrs Rinah Ssuna. Together, they are blessed with two lovely children, a daughter Antisha and a son Martin Ssuna Jr.

# Cornerstone's Long Range Strategic Vision

## "Developing the Cornerstones of Africa's Next Generation"

With our strategic planning process we have sought to clarify our long range strategic vision and the integration of all our various initiatives as Cornerstone Development. These initiatives include the Youth Corps, African Youth Leadership Forum, Prayer Breakfast Fellowships, the Cornerstone Leadership Academies, the Ekitangalla Schools and other schools that we are supporting.

*The underlying foundation of all we are doing is simply to promote in the people and societies of this region - the values embodied in Jesus' conception of the "Kingdom of God coming on earth."* These are values such as harmony, reconciliation, unity, order, justice, wholeness and personal transformation - that leads to social transformation.

### • Our Core Focus:

We are raising up a movement of young servant leaders - men of integrity and women of virtue. They are taking positions of influence within all sectors of society while maintaining life-long brotherhood and sisterhood with each other, in the spirit of Jesus - across all ethnic and religious divisions.

### • The Character Qualities we Champion:

A genuine commitment to the central teachings and character qualities exemplified by Jesus including:

1. Being ambassadors of reconciliation across all that is dividing humanity
2. Maintaining high moral integrity
3. Portraying Servant leadership
4. Being resourceful and hard working
5. Commitment to excellence
6. Balance in all spheres of life
7. Covenant relationship with a few others
8. Practicing spiritual disciplines of prayer, study, fellowship and service/witness.

### • Our Core Values:

The core values flow out of what Jesus called - the sum of all the Law and the Prophets:

**First:** *To love God with all your heart, mind and soul.* This is a personal dedication to grow in the knowledge, love and likeness of God. It implies, a love of life as a gift from God and a desire to make one's life count for something in the eternal scheme of things.

**Secondly,** *To love your neighbor as your self.* This implies an understanding of the Brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God. The distinguishing sign of the followers of Jesus is love for one another. It leads to working for unity across the dividing lines of faith and culture. It also leads to compassion for the least, the last and the lost.

### • Our Organizational Culture:

The broadest aspect of our vision involves a world-wide *family of friends* - who find common ground in the message and ideas of Jesus. We look beyond race, tribe, religious or political affiliation and recognizing each other first as brothers and sisters. We do not view relationships as a temporary convenience but seek to maintain a life long commitment to love and support each other.

### • Three Stages of our Work:

**1. First Stage** - Maintaining the life-transforming learning environments of our programs that serve as the entry points into the movement. We bring young people into loving, family-like environments combined with teachings leading toward individual - spiritual transformation. This takes place in conjunction with equipping them with formal education, leadership principles and life skills. The majority of these young people are in our schools which combine a top-quality academic curriculum with an in-depth discipleship curriculum based on the principles, precepts and person of Jesus.

**2. Second Stage** - Supporting our young people as they go on to higher education after high school to stay together and also assisting them with career development initiatives to get them into key positions within society.

**3. Third Stage** - Maintaining fellowship/support groups for career people to walk through life committed to the relationships and principles we hold in common. As the young people that come up through the Youth Corps Programs, Student Leadership Work on Universities, the Leadership Academies and other programs become productive members of society we will integrate them with the world-wide 'Prayer Breakfast' Fellowship movement that shares our values.

### • Future Expansion:

The Leadership Academies, Youth Corps programs and Student Leadership Work is spreading to our neighboring countries. At the moment we have programs or friends in Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan, South Africa and Burundi who are partners in this vision.

### • Strategic Planning Process:

We continue to strategically orientate our programs, staff, time and resources towards our core focus of *Youth Leadership Development* - as follows:

#### Stage One Objectives:

*Molding the Young People fulltime under our Care:*

1. Ensure that all the staff understands the philosophy and vision - through proper orientation procedures.
2. Ensure that the programs are producing the required transformation in the students.
3. Provide adequate facilities and opportunities to support the spiritual transformation process.
4. Maintain high standards of academic excellence

#### Stage Two Objectives:

*Developing further those in the Transitional Period of Higher Education & Internships.*

1. Ensure that as many of young people get University education
2. Support those who can take up positions of leadership while at campus

3. Ensure that they are meeting together regularly while at campus.
4. Support communal accommodation for college/university students.
5. Career Development Seminars
6. Employment Seminars
7. Internships
8. Development of the African Youth Leadership Forum to influence peers
9. Generally, support them to secure employment, get married and to navigate through major challenges in life.

**Stage Three Objectives:**

*Supporting our members as they take up Careers - to exert Leadership throughout Society in the field of their choice.*

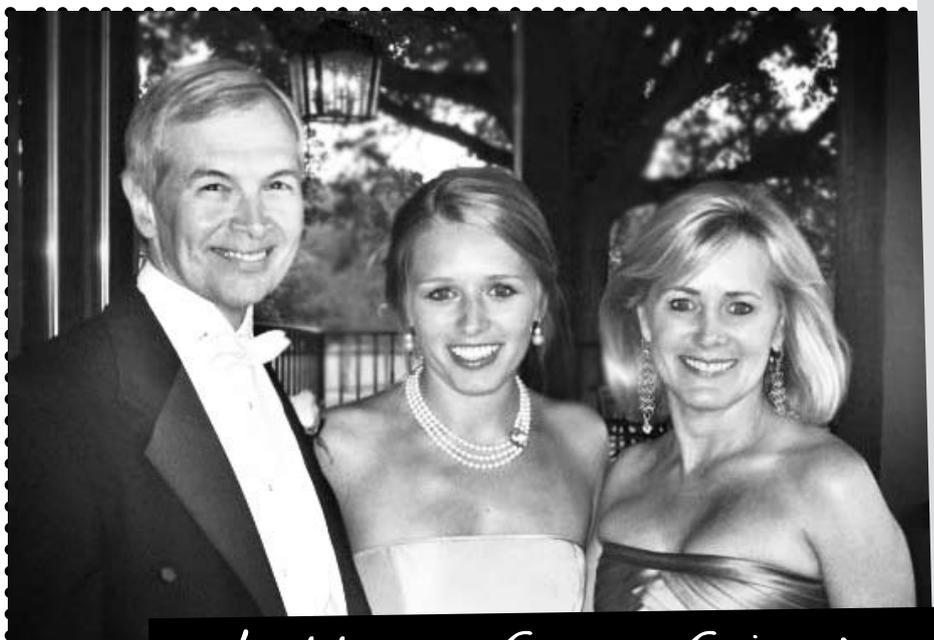
1. Support the vision of positive influence in all areas of society:

- a. Influencing the political arena – democracy, good governance, friendly foreign relations
- b. Influencing the economic sector – through development, elimination of corruption, job creation
- c. Influencing the academic institutions – character development
- d. Influencing the judicial systems – human rights, real justice, law enforcement
- e. Influencing the social structures – stable families, promotion of charitable and development organizations
- f. Influencing the religious institutions – unity and tolerance across denominations and others faiths, depth of teaching on essentials of loving God and loving our neighbors
- g. Influencing the ‘cultural elite’ – music, film, sports, arts and other media and entertainment

2. Support meetings of career people and leaders - in weekly fellowship groups around the person, precepts and principles of Jesus.

3. Link up with existing Godly leaders throughout Africa who are affiliated with the National Prayer Breakfast and help them advance the vision of mentoring young people.

4. Identify and influence other initiatives that operate with similar ‘Kingdom values’ toward greater cooperation and acceptance of one another.



## Letters from friends

**Ashley Zeiger - on the death of her parents**

My dear sweet friends,

Thank you for your kind words of love, your generous outpouring of encouragement, and your genuine sentiments of sympathy. What can I say? My heart and soul are shattered in a million little pieces at the shock of the situation and the fear of the reality that is looming before me and my brothers. But somehow my spirit knows peace. I have never been so weak or experienced so much pain in my life, so it must be a loving Savior surrounding me and hugging me tightly. Praise God my mom and dad are in the arms of a loving Father, who we will now call Dad too.

Their death is a beautiful picture of their souls. My dad would go no other way, flying made his heart sing. And neither would my mom, right by his side, living each moment fully and with an expectation of the eternal. I'm so glad they don't have to go a day without each other because they were madly in love. My brother Doug has been living at home and said it was the happiest he's ever seen them, that they were like little kids in love. They have been an incredible example to us of a loving, serving marriage and gracious parents. They were ready to be with Jesus, they told us over Christmas that very thing. Each child was at an incredible place of peace in our relationships with them and fully knowing the deep love we all have for each other.

The outpouring of love from our community of friends, family, and acquaintances has been sustenance for our souls. While our family has grown smaller, our definition of family will ever be expanding as we come to embrace and be embraced by a great cloud of witnesses. I thank you for your graciousness with us during this time, and I just ask that in the weeks, months, and years to come that you will participate and be part of our new family.

*Editors note: Ashley was with us 3 years ago. She spent a couple months visiting our community and spent time in the Lira Girls Youth Corps Home. This letter is in response to a tragic accident that recently took the lives of both her her parents. Her father was a Neurosurgeon and in his free time enjoyed flying small WW2 era replica planes. Both parents were flying together at an air show when their plane malfunctioned and crashed off the Florida coast on March 6th.*

I miss them with all my heart. I keep hoping each morning that my dad is going to come kiss me on the forehead before he goes to work and that my mom will sit with me in her bathrobe over a cup of tea at the kitchen table.

Then I'm reminded we will have all of eternity to do that. This is only temporary. God is good, all the time.

with much, much love,

By ASHLEY Zeiger



Students at the CLA Uganda campus

# CORNERSTONE SCHOOLS

## CLA Uganda

**BOYS CAMPUS** - *"We seek to create..... a life transforming learning environment that will mold young men into future leaders for Uganda... men of integrity whose lives fully reflect the character qualities and leadership principles embodied in the life of Jesus."*

That is our mission statement and on our campus we are constantly endeavoring to create that "life-transforming environment" for our boys. As they spend their 2 years here with us we strive for academic excellence in their preparations for the national 'Advanced Level' High School curriculum - while at the same time we are aiming for excellence in regards to their spiritual, social and physical development. It is a 24/7 learning atmosphere where we wish to equip them with character qualities and life skills so that they can go out and be change agents and positively influence their communities and nation.

We realize that much of this cannot be done just by reading books alone - so our method relies heavily on a high student-teacher ratio with much tutoring and mentoring. We believe that character is "caught" not just "taught" - so the staff at our school must be exemplary in the development of these young men's lives. In line with our role in strengthening the over-arching vision of Cornerstone in Africa, we must play our part to the best of our ability. So we choose to stay focused on God's Kingdom and the values therein as our guiding light, as it is written: *"Whatever is true, what ever is noble, what*

*ever is right, what ever is pure, what ever is lovely, what ever is admirable-if any of these things is excellent or praise worthy, think about such thing."* Philippians 4:8

As far as the this year is concerned, we are looking forward to implementing new activities that the Uganda government is asking of schools in the areas of Physical Education and a government initiative on AIDS communication to the youth (PIASCY). "Healthy minds in healthy bodies" is the slogan of this new effort. We are already in full implementation of these two programs as you can see Julius Ejalam (School Administrator) now out jogging with the boys every morning! *By CHARLES Ayo*

**GIRLS CAMPUS** - *"We seek to create...a life transforming learning environment that will mold young women into future leaders for Uganda..... women of virtue - whose lives fully reflect the character qualities and leadership principles embodied in the life of Jesus."*

In line with our mission as a school, we continue to encourage the spirit of unity amongst the girls by strengthening their care group meetings and promoting student/teacher mentoring relationships. The year began with the selection process for our new class and we were able to bring in 25 exceptional young women for our Senior 5 class. We are praying that they will use this opportunity to become who God wants them to be. This process is always hectic and emotionally tasking on us all - teachers, guardians and students because we have to take on that limited number amidst a very big need. There are so many girls who would qualify, but so few spaces are available. *(Continued p. 7 top)*

We recently received our examinations results from last year's students and full of joy in the outcome. Indeed God has continued to lift us 'from glory to glory' as the results were far better than those of 2008. The best girl scored a perfect 25 points (comparable to almost a 1600 on America's SAT high school tests), 8 girls were above 20 points and the rest also performed well. All of them qualify to join university and other higher institutions- many will go on government scholarships.

As teachers, we are constantly challenged to be the best we can be as living examples of the material we teach the girls. We understand that character is more "caught" than "taught" and I always challenge fellow teachers to have some thing positive that the girls can learn from them. These girls need our help at this stage in the lives to help them to be the women God wants them to become.

By MODERN Tayebwa

## CLA Rwanda

*"We seek to create a life transforming learning environment that will mold young people into future servant leaders; men of integrity and women of virtue whose character will reflect the character qualities that are embodied in the life and leadership principles of Jesus."*

We believe in living a balanced life and providing an environment for students to develop their talents together with academic excellence. We believe that our students, with this character transformation, will seek opportunities for positive impact in society.

To this effect, our students are involved in various outreach ventures in order to be able to share this beautiful vision with others. We do not want them to wait until they graduate to influence their community, but they can do it now. Some of these programs in which we engage in our surrounding community are in music, drama/movie making, leadership workshops, and student conferences. All these activities aim at preaching hope, unity, and reconciliation which also give an opportunity to other Rwanda children that did not get the chance to join CLA



Tim meets with CLA Rwanda students

to learn and participate in transforming their own lives and societies.

In recent news: We are grateful to God that all our first graduating class of 2009 received phenomenal results on their national leaving exams. As a school, we emerged 3rd best in Anglophone schools in Rwanda and the best school overall in the Eastern province. Eight of our students scored grade weight of 55/55 they have made us proud.

By JOHNSON Karamuzi

## Ekitangala Secondary School

*"We strive to be a team providing a modern secondary school education based on Godly discipline, sound character development and promotion of social virtues that glorify God and promote academic excellence."*

That is our mission statement and we believe the principles we teach in our character development along with academic excellence - will make our students to stand out in society and provide leadership as they take up the mantle of decision making and formulation of laws that determine the way our society is governed. In this way we hope that with time evils like corruption can be eradicated in spheres of influence and we can teach our young people how to have stable families.

Our students come from different backgrounds socially, economically and politically but we continuously

encourage them to appreciate their differences and promote those cardinal values and beliefs that bind them together rather than those that divide them. We believe in 'unity in diversity' as far as race, tribe, nationality, and creed is concerned - and following the overall approach of Cornerstone we teach the principles and precepts of Jesus who is respected by our students from both Muslim and Christian backgrounds.

This year has seen us make some large steps forward in actualizing our vision. The most notable being the introduction of Care Groups into our student body. These Care Groups act as small cell groups for students - where they can share their experiences in a more intimate setting so as to help each other through this challenging time in their lives. This concept has proven very effective in the CLA's so we would like to replicate in our school.

By STEPHEN Ongodia

## Ekitangala Primary School

The New Year at Ekitangala Primary School started with Mr. Simon Okwera, our former Headmaster leaving for a new assignment in another school in the Hoima area. We all wish him well in his new assignment and believe that he will continue with the good work he exhibited here - at his new place of work. I, Mrs. Jovia Ayo, have replaced him as the acting Headmistress.

We have started a new teachers' fellowship,

which we hope will bring about a sense of team spirit, which has not been so strong among staff members. The team spirit will improve teacher's performance and we believe will result into better academic standards and character quality of the children. We are also exploring new ways of motivating teachers so that they can give more of their time to children especially to this year's enrollment that seem to be increasing much and yet the number of teachers is small, for instance to day the number of boarders have increase to up to around 50 as compared to 30 last year.

By JOVIA Ayo Kihembo

# Introducing...



(above: CLA Rwanda 2009 grad ceremony)

## C.O.S.A. Rwanda!

We are happy to report to you of the new developments in Rwanda! This January, we officially started COSA (Cornerstone Old Students Association) in Rwanda, with around 40 of our students who finished last year from the CLA Rwanda. We held our first meeting on March 2nd and about 35 members attended. Henry Kigozi (COSA Uganda coordinator) came and spoke passionately about our mission: "To create a life long brotherhood & sisterhood of friends in

the spirit of Jesus that will love and support each other in a movement of "men of integrity" and "women of virtue" within Rwanda and beyond." We agreed that meetings will be held every last Sunday of the month.

This vision continually compels us to grow together in the love of Jesus. We ask you to pray for us as we champion this cause and the Lord bless you all!

By WILLIAM Kinunu

### COSA PROFILE: Working in prisons



Linus

For the past four years my work with prisoners has taken me to some of the most dilapidated prisons in Uganda. Going to the prisons as a volunteer I seek to offer hope to inmates, meeting their physical needs, reconciling them with their victims, re-connecting them with their families and providing legal follow-ups to court processes. Many of my friends don't understand why I keep going to these prisons. People seem to have a negative attitude towards prisoners claiming they cannot change, but if you asked me, I would humbly differ with the propagators of such ideas. Some of these guys were in fact framed for their crimes and are victims of a corrupt society coupled with poverty, which has hindered their efforts to clear their names. What I have seen God do among these prisoners in the last four years explains why I believe that God can do anything!

Sometimes, I imagine that people think that I am frustrated and have failed to find a job because they don't see any financial gain from working with inmates. For me it's about heeding to my calling, it's about going out there and making a difference in the life of others. To me, when I visit inmates- I go to see Jesus (Mathew 25: 36) I know that what I do is not safe nor is it popular, but my conscience tells me it's right, and over the years I've learnt that life is a mission not a career and my mission has to be in line with what God requires of me as his creation. "He has shown you, Oh man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you - to do justice, love kindness and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8.

Its people like Michael Timmis Sr., Chuck Colson and Dr. Ben Nwaochei who've inspired me into believing that, this life is not mine, but belongs to all those who need me. But for the grace of God - we all potential inmates. You realize this when you sit down with them and share their stories. You will actually discover you are no better!

Let's live our lives for others, be selfless and "surely goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life." By JOSEPH Linos Opiyo

# INTEGRITY & VIRTUE

Understanding and strengthening the vision within COSA

## C.O.S.A. *Uganda*

This year we celebrate our fourteenth anniversary of COSA (Cornerstone Old Students Association) existence. Our story began with the graduation of the pioneer class of boys in 1996, from that humble school on Ekitangaala ranch – the Cornerstone Leadership Academy. Over the years, this small little campus has produced some of the brightest students in Uganda, and it has continuously performed well on a national level.

COSA started as a group of committed guys meeting regularly in the CLA chapel on campus as brothers in the spirit of Jesus. Once this group graduated and began university, they continued remaining faithful to the vision. As the group grows with new members joining each year, our commitment to one another has only grown stronger. When Cornerstone built the Academy for young women and we introduced them to our movement of young people we faced certain adjustments, but honestly, it was a glorious addition to the family.

Our mission statement is: *“To create a lifelong brother hood and sisterhood of friends united in Christ that will love and support one another while advancing a movement of men of integrity and women of virtue within in Uganda and beyond”.*

COSA today is involved in a large variety of programs. We run different programs at various universities, we have the Married 's Fellowship, the Monthly COSA Fellowship, the Annual COSA Reunion, the Business Forum, the Performing Arts Forum, the African Leadership Forum and so even many more... and we constantly encourage members to find ways of being more involved and letting these developmental programs bless their lives. These programs dependant on COSA members for their success, for no one else runs them but ourselves! It is up to us to plug in and make the most of the opportunities we have to be together

and help each other thru the different phases of our lives.

If you are a COSA member, and you have not been active in some of these programs before, then it's time to WAKE UP! Get involved! There is no better time than right now, for we all need this, and we all need each other to realize this greater

allows us to give quality educational opportunities to our fresh brothers and sisters- which in turn sustains our growing movement of young people in Uganda. Therefore, I plead with you to give generously and consistently in order for the vision to be realized first amongst us... and then



COSA Guys, and Gal, at Titus' wedding

vision in our lives. Some of our members at times say they feel, “left out” of COSA... Well, the only reason for this is because they merely have left COSA out of their own planning! A case in point in the past three COSA annual reunions, generation '98A', '98B', and '99' have had the lowest turn up. Also, COSA has been organizing annual dinners at the head office every December, but lately, these events mainly involve students and those from the newer generations... these examples have potential to weaken the bond we seek to maintain in order to realize our vision. And we may need to develop new strategies of keeping people united.

In COSA, each of us is a leader and there is no better way one can support this vision than through internalizing it, owning it and making it an integral part of their life and personal development.

To those of us who have financial obligations still pending on our COSA loans - in order to realize our vision, it is crucial that we make regular contribution towards these to fulfill our loan recovery scheme. This

to the world.

*“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another...”* Heb 10:25. In his letter to the Hebrews I discover that Paul's message is crucial for the health of COSA. Because, it is only through fellowship and meetings that we are able to share in each other's lives, mend hurting hearts, reconcile relationships, pray with, and encourage one another. Fellowship is our chance to celebrate our union in Jesus as sons and daughters of our father, the Creator. Unless we each strive to understand this and take the initiative to make time to be with others - some members of our brotherhood and sisterhood will be left out of the vision.

We were taught to understand and strengthen the dynamics through which COSA operates. Today, the spirit has never been stronger, and the future has never looked brighter! And, as an alumni group, our 'unity in diversity' approach has kept the movement on track. Year by year we grow closer to realizing the impact of our unfolding vision. I love you all. May you be blessed. *By HENRY Kigozi*

# COSA REUNION

Every year we come together over Easter weekend to share our lives with one another, and strengthen our bonds with old friends. It is a time for us to pray and play together, to have fun and grow together in the spirit of Jesus.

In order to stay focused in our vision as an alumni community, we believe that coming together as a family is a bond that unites us and keeps us moving forward. Remember the old saying that, "a family that prays together stays together." As a family of friends it is necessary to come together on a regular basis, we do this through our Sunday gatherings, the campus and regional fellowship groups.

As Brother and Sisters, the mechanical solidarity (being together because of the similarities and common experience) and organic solidarity (togetherness due difference and mutual need that makes us committed to supporting one another) allows us to share the same vision with Jesus as the unifying factor, uniting us despite our differences. This is something of which we are always proud.

It is because of this that all of us get so excited about the upcoming Easter holiday, over which all of us alumni come together. We started this tradition in 1998 with the pioneer CLA boys coming together in the spirit of love they had for one another and their desire to deepen their bond of brotherhood. It has grown bigger and bigger over the years and now includes all the girls as well as associates of COSA. It's a great time for all of us to appreciate our blessings and thank God for the great opportunities he has presented us with, as we strengthen our movement of men of integrity and women of virtue.

*Please remember- Find time to be with us this Easter, your presence means a lot. So do not miss out!* By MARY Nabuma

## PROFESSIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Our basic computer skills program is moving on well and we were recently able to extend the training to the young people in the 6 Kampala Youth Mentoring homes. They are enjoying the program and I would like to thank Eric for coordinating this with me and seeing that this program really happens. Towards the end of last year, we were able to obtain 3 laptops that have greatly enabled us to extend the reach of this program. We started by just teaching the computer skills from our computer lab at our Head Office in Kampala, then with the laptops we were able to include the CLA's and then most recently the Youth Homes. In future we also hope to include EKT S.S. Besides all the accomplishments in the program so far we are still facing some challenges, we could really use more laptops, so that more

people can learn at a time during lessons. By JAVIS Luwumba



## EKOSA (Ekt. SS Alumni)

Last year 7 graduates of Ekitangaala Secondary School managed to join public universities and 5 were able to join other institutions of higher learning. This year we are hoping to have many more entering university since



**I WANT YOU**  
**ALL CORNERSTONE**  
**OLD STUDENTS**  
**(ALUMNI)**

**APRIL 2-4TH 2010**

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**COSA REUNION**

**AT**  
**EKITANGAALA**  
**RANCH**

the exam performance was much higher than previous years. It's really amazing and encouraging to see the progress being made academically in the school and it challenges us alumni to keep striving to do bigger and better things with our lives.

We also really thank Cornerstone Youth Corps Department for the support and encouragement they have given to several EKOSA members who have joined mentoring positions in Uganda and abroad in Burundi. We have 6 members so far in mentoring roles with these homes.

On the 28th of February, several of us went to the Secondary School to welcome the S.5 students and to explain the EKOSA philosophy to the S.5's. It was really a great time we had together. We dearly thank Cornerstone for the continued support toward this growing movement of young people.

By JAVIS Luwumba

# AFRICA YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

The mission of AYLF is: "To be a movement of friends furthering a new breed of African Leaders..." We are reaching out to University Student Leaders around East Africa with the same values and principles taught in our Academies. As the vision grows in the hearts and minds of more and more people - there is a growing need for us to support and coordinate the various activities in the East African region. In this report, I will share with you my recent trip to Tanzania and Kenya which was intended to support the networks of our comrades in the vision.

## Arusha

My first stop was, Arusha. This is the location of Cornerstone's new Leadership Academy which will hopefully open in 2011, so it will be good to build up a base of young people to support our vision here for the years to come. While in Arusha, Peter and I met with our friend Matthias, who had started a small group in 2008-09. We hope that this core group will sup-



Evelyn, Zac & Alan at UDOM

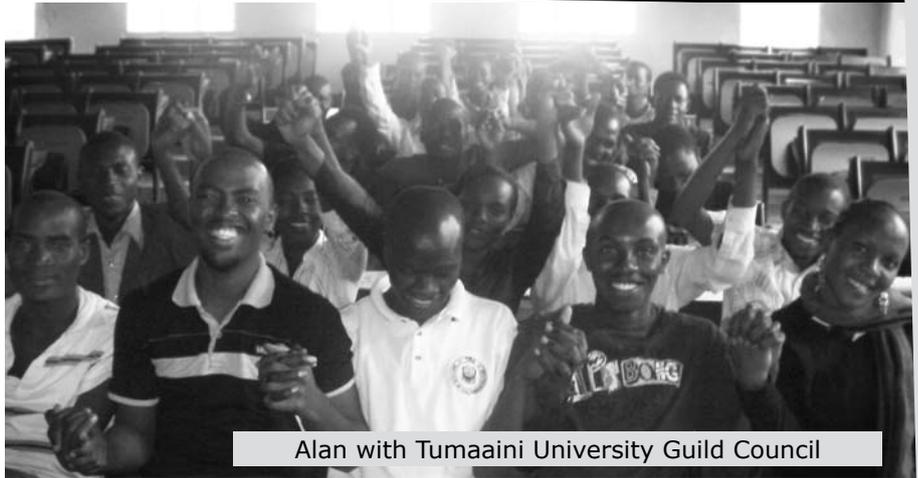
port other campus groups in Arusha ~ specifically at Tumaaini University where we have friends.

## Dodoma

We then traveled south to Dodoma, the administrative capital city of Tanzania. Zak Lukumayo and Evelyn Rutazaha are friends we have at Dodoma University. Evelyn was able to attend our October 2009 Gathering in Kampala and Zak has been a holiday friend of the Youth Mentoring Home in Dar-es-Salaam, so it was a pleasure for Peter and I visit them. While on campus, we held meetings with student groups who we shared the AYLF vision and philosophy.

## Iringa University

Peter and I then traveled east, to Ir-



Alan with Tumaaini University Guild Council

inga, where we met up with Leah R. Mlay, who attended the 2009 AYLF gathering in Kampala as well. She is now at Tumaaini University in Iringa, where she has been retained as a tutor. Her close relationship with administrators was a huge opportunity for us to reach out to the youth here where we were able to meet and share our vision with a full guild team of student leaders. While here, we also met students from Zimbabwe who expressed interest in connecting with this vision and want to see it come to life in their country as well.

## Dar-es-Salaam

This was my second visit to the group in Dar. The core group has grown and is now able to support a prayer breakfast meeting that Peter and the friends are conducting every two weeks at Mediteraneo Hotel. It was also good to do a follow up on Linda Simon Paulo, Jennifer Charles and Victor. I was able to be with the guys who will be in the Youth Mentoring Home here. In a few months, the home is shifting to Arusha, to support the developing Cornerstones interests there. The guys told me that they will miss the family atmosphere the home



Kyambogo University small group

has always provided. However, I encouraged them to think of continuing to stay together, and carrying the vision on their own.

## Nairobi

After a brief stop in Mombasa to be with some friends working with street kids there, I arrived in Nairobi. It is always a pleasure to connect with our friends in Kenya. The AYLF family here has shown great signs of growth and commitment to the integrity of the vision. You can really sense the depth of the meaningful relationships amongst the friends here who meet as a core group every Saturday morning.

While I was here, there was discussion pertaining to the development of another meeting for those who are off campus, as the Nairobi University ('Box Group' as its known) grow and attract more members. This is a new strategy to develop more coordinators who can reach out to current student leaders on campus. Gabriel, Opati, Jennifer and I meet the proposed friends to spearhead the Box Group. In the meantime, the friends here are already planning for their May 2010 gathering.

It's amazing to know how the vision is growing in the hearts and minds of friends in the region. Sometimes it can be frustrating because you can't physically count the great things being done beyond what our earthly eyes can see. But God Himself is working things in amazing ways.

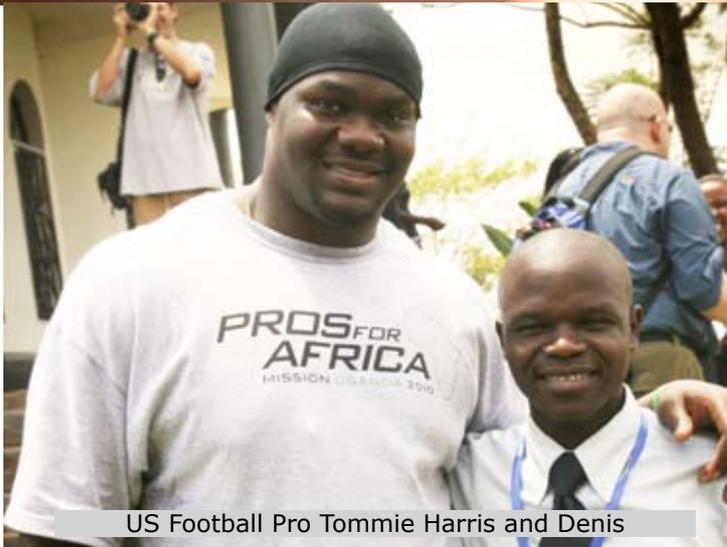
By ALLAN Shepherd

# Cornerstone

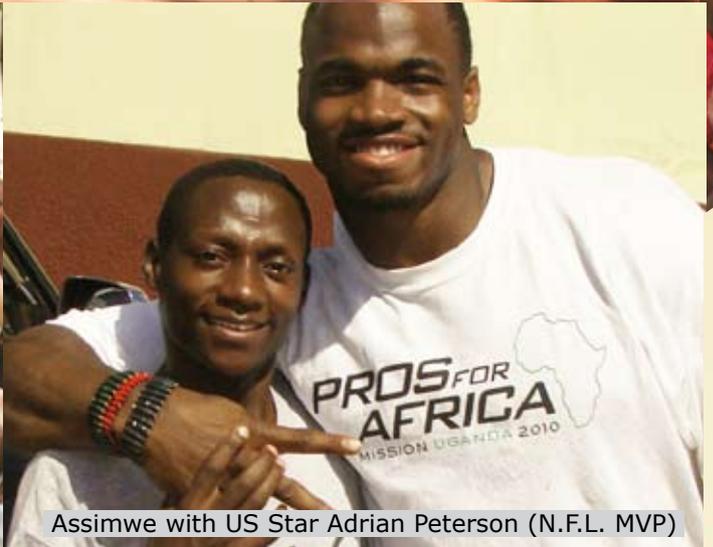
## Newsletter Pictorial



The "Pro's for Africa" team visit the Gulu Girls home



US Football Pro Tommie Harris and Denis



Assimwe with US Star Adrian Peterson (N.F.L. MVP)



Mbazira gets married!



Our students graduating from University



Best student, Binta, who scored a perfect 25 points on the National Exams



CLA Rwanda's 1st Graduation



Relief team distributes clothes to Mt. Elgon Landslide victims



She puts on a traditional Ugandan dress for her good bye party



CLA Rwanda staff visit CLA Girls Uganda



Youth Corps kids enjoy their Christmas party



*A Family of Friends!*

## Ntinda Home



We thank God for the gift of life we have been given to us. The new year began with a great start for us in Ntinda, and we have had to refresh our minds and focus on new changes taking place in the home. Several girls have switched to new school, and mentors have taken up new activities. We are also happy for our former Aunt Adrienne who is soon saying "I DO" this month. She is really a great inspiration to our young

girls and also to her peers. We are all so proud of her! Last year in December, some of our girls were able to go back to their villages to have holidays with their existing families and relatives. Wonderful testimonies have been relayed from them regarding their experiences. This effort is in line with our vision as a home not to run an orphanage, but to always try and reconcile children with whatever families they have. In the same spirit, we have been reaching out to our community in the form of cleaning compounds, clearing bushes around the

neighborhood and helping widows. We would also like to send our sincere appreciation to the entire Youth Corps Family in Kampala and to our girls who participated in the painting of our house a few weeks ago. Most thought that this was only a job for men, but we proved that women can also do great things! Looking at the year ahead, we want to work hard and strive to fulfill the ideals we have set before us. It is very easy to talk about the great things you have in mind, but it is another to really get them done.

By AGNES Nakimbugwe

# Youth Corps Homes

## The life together

## Makerere Home



I am blessed to be a mentor to kids who are less privileged, who had lost love and peace in their hearts but with a little support and encouragement, these rejected kids are turning into the cornerstones of their generation.

Our home is usually the final stop for boys in their rehabilitation and growth process as developing young men.

Kibuli is our drop-in-center where they come fresh off the streets, then they move to Bukessa as they start going to school, then once they mature a little bit they come to Makerere Home. In line with the vision of our youth mentoring work, we successfully graduated six boys from the home at the end of last year. We had reconciled them with what ever surviving guardians or families they had remaining. They are now able to live a positive life and we pray that God continues transforming them, their families and their communities. The vacancy they left in the home was filled by 7 new boys from Kibuli and Bukessa.

**Our Mission Statement:** "We seek to mobilize a worldwide family of young people committed to the principles, precepts and person of Jesus of Nazareth - transforming their own lives, communities and nations with the love of God."

**Our Approach:** Trained mentors live with a group of young people leading by example for a period of up to 3 years. The setting and structure may vary, but we will seek to offer them a place to live, provision of food, a family of brothers/sisters to belong to and training in a better way to live.

In regard to understanding and strengthening the vision of our home this year - we plan to embark on 'walking the talk' more and living up to many of the ideals we have set for our lives. Since character is more 'caught than taught' it is our continued commitment as mentors to keep our home an inspiring place to live in, committed to community service, and dedicated to growing closer to God thru the example left by Jesus. Great thanks to the people who have sacrificed their resources to transform our lives and the boys we work with. By SULAH Kibuuka

## Lunguja Home



Our community is now a little over one year old and our vision still keeps strong because of basis of our strong foundation that was first established. One of our girls, Monica, would like to share her story with you:

"when I joined home I was hopeless, very timid and not active... but today I must confess, I am a different person.

*Christmas, my relatives could not believe that I was the same girl they knew. People were very surprised... I treated and acted hospitably, other girls admired my lifestyle and wondered what could have changed my life. Being in the home, I have developed a stronger sense of purpose in life know now that I want to be not only a woman of God but also a woman who knows God. A big thanks to the mentors who have always encouraged me, rebuked me, counseled me and prayed with me. May God bless*

*you so much". - Monica*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Christine Vogel whose vision saw our home become a reality. She lived with us for about a year, but has recently gone back to the U.S. -Cristine, we miss you sister, your tender heart and humble life style. We pray that God blesses you for all what you did here in Uganda. Your absence has caused a void of "muzungu" presence in our home, so please come and visit us again!

By FLORENCE Nambafu

## Bukesa Home

We would like to share with you the story of one of our boys. He is someone that has transformed tremendously during the time he has stayed with. Here is his story in his own words:

My parents disappeared when I was very young, and I grew up with my younger sister and an Uncle. Wohever, he was killed after a few years and I we went to stay with another uncle (who was suspected of killing the first). This was a very difficult time for me as I was forced to do all kinds of labor around his house- I was a slave boy. My step-aunt and uncle were alcoholics and would drink all money that they had. I kept telling them that their drinking habits were bad and that they were wasting the money that they could use to send me to school. Their habits disgusted me so much that I became very vocal about them. They soon became fed up with me

and they told me to leave, and never come back to their village again! They broke a pot on my head as I was leaving which is a sign of banishment and humiliation.

I walked for over 40 miles to a town called Nebbi where I started living on the streets. I begged for food and would get lunch out of the trash. After about a year, I eventually got transport to Kampala, where I joined a gang of street boys called Bayaye. I started doing stupid things like stealing, smoking, and using bad language.

After staying on the streets for three more years I was really sick, tired and hungry, and I was about to die but I finally met a mentor at the Kibuli Youth Mentoring Home. They took me to Kibuli where I stayed for several months as I rehabilitated to normal life. Next I was taken to Bukesa Home to start school. I am so grateful and thankful to everyone for mentoring me and enabling me to grow. I now see myself as a person who has



Kennedy Mungujjakisa

purpose and a reason to live! At the end of last year the mentors in Bukesa gave me a chance to trace my family. We traveled back to Nebbi for my Christmas holiday, and people were shocked to see me as they thought I died long time ago. I forgave those who hated me and I pray to God to change their hearts. Everyone was so happy to see me when I went home. They were amazed at how responsible I had become and how smart and strong I was. They even killed a goat in my honor! I could not believe it! They used to beat me and tell me I was not worth living. They banished me from their village... but now they love me! They see me as a valuable asset, no longer as a burden. This has changed my life and I am so determined now to do the best with the opportunity I have been given and help as many other people as I can with my life.

By KENNEDY Mungujjakisa



Computer training is an aspect of informal education that occurs in the homes

## Mengo Home

We have just begun a new school term and the girls are very excited because they all passed and were promoted to new classes. Currently we have 18 girls and 4 mentors including Mugane Brenda who has just joined us in the home. We hope her stay at the house will add great value to the lives of the girls.

Several girls were able to reconnect with existing relatives and went to be



with them for the Christmas season. Many of the parents of these girls were glad to see the amount of transformation in lives of their children. One of the girls guardians had this say, "I do not believe how much my grand daughter's character habits have changed I believe she will become responsible person in future." This was inspiring and encouraging for us as mentors to hear.

One huge success story was with a Joy Nasasira's family whom she had not seen in years. She was able

to track them down and reconcile some of the differences that forced her to run away from home in the first place. Joy's father appreciated the great work we were doing in the home and what the Cornerstone family is doing in the lives of directionless children. What excited him most was the fact that we teach girls the principles and precepts of Jesus. This encouraged each one of us mentors to get deeply committed to guiding and empowering our girls to have a better future.

By JOSEPHINE

### Kibuli Home

Usually over the Christmas holidays, we encourage our boys to try and reconnect with whatever existing relatives they have. So, most of our boys were able to find someone somewhere to be with over Christmas.

Only one boy, Nasan, was really disappointed as when, after many years, he tried to re-connect with his mother he went all the way to Mbale, but could not locate where she had moved. An arrangement had to be made and thankfully, he was able to come back to Kibuli to be with us over the holidays. Despite this short-term disappointment, we were overwhelmed with joy to see Nasan later in January reconnect with his father who had apparently been looking for him everywhere. His father was facing serious threats and insults from his relatives who had thought that he sacrificed Nasan in a witch doctors ritual. The real reason was that Nasan had ran away from home in a simple misunderstanding that they



had. Through the character development he received in our mentoring home he was willing to forgive his parents. His father was so relieved to see his son, and grateful that he was alive and had matured in a more responsible person. This is a powerful example of the vision of our work being fulfilled, and it is a testimony that what we are doing really works.

In other news, we would like to report the miraculous recovery of our dear Uncle Babu who had an emergency medical situation that rushed him to the operating room in Kibuli Hospital last month. Thru the prayers and support of our family, he was able to have a successful surgery and has been recovering well from his near death experience.

By ANDREW Wanzonele

### The northern Uganda homes welcome visitors to Gulu Girls



### Gulu girls home



We are so grateful for our community and the girls because they have been really cooperative and disciplined which has made the mentors' work easy! I surely believe that the knowledge imparted in them by the mentors is yielding good fruit.

We are also appreciative to the coordination office for having bought us new double decker metallic beds recently, because the former wooden beds had got broken. And, for the other things that have been provided. We received new furniture in the living room, a new dining room table, and more chairs for our veranda. This is in an effort to make our home more welcoming and an inviting place for everyone in our community. It has caused a new sense of enthusiasm in the home, it has made the girls really happy and they show more respect for their surroundings.

As regards last year's school performance, we had two girls who did their Primary Leaving exams. One got 15 aggregates and has joined Sacred Heart secondary school. The other will join a catering institute. We are very proud of all our girls!

By MORINE Asimwe

### Lira girls home



We send our greetings to all of the Cornerstone family and

friends and wish you the best in the year 2010. We thank God for his provision and blessings towards the home - though we will always have challenges we believe in God for the best.

Two of our girls took their Primary Leaving exams last year and performed well but still struggle with the finances to join Secondary School. We hope that you stand with us in prayers for God's provision towards their education.

As the term began, 11 girls returned in the home. One, named Auma Juliana, had broken her leg after an accident over the holidays is still recovering in her village. Recently the home was blessed with a new mentor, Achola Nelly a graduate of CLA girls. She has been very helpful especially as the kids are practicing dances and songs preparing for our good friend, Bob Hunter's visit. We wish you the best.

By NELLY & ALICE



Kids returning to Kibuli home in the afternoon

## Lira boys home



Congratulations to you all who made it with us to the year 2010. We the Lira boys wish you all the best. Our greater vision has always

been: "To mobilize a worldwide family of young people committed to the principles, precepts and person of Jesus of Nazareth while transforming their lives, communities and nations with the love of God." In line with this, our home is currently housing eleven boys with whom we have always shared the precepts that we have witnessed actively playing out in their lives. And we are always inspired more by such visits as our brother Fulukas who of recent came to be with us and gave the children a wonderful message that inspired them to become great men like him. However, we also beg you to stand with us especially in seeking for opportunity to push these children academically. Out of the six boys and girls who sat PLE for the last two years, only one is maintained at school.

Due to the nature of living together, one realizes that mentoring is never a one sided learning process. A mentor mentors a mentee as he or she also learns valuable lessons in the process. As uncle Tim always says, "the biggest part of mentoring is caught and not taught." Indeed, this is a powerful practical message that keeps all of us motivated. You can mentor wherever you are, so be the light that shines in your family, your workplace or your friends, and let it shine for others regardless of tribe, culture or religion.

By JACOB

## Gulu boys home



On behalf of the Gulu boys I send greetings to all our friends in the various places of the world. For the year 2009 the home saw some progress in the boys as we watched them grow and witnessed more discipline instilled in them.

On the issue of academics most of the boys performed well and were promoted to their next classes. We are proud of Opiyo Christopher and Opiyo William did very well on their exams and came out

with aggregates of 12 and 19 respectively. Both of them were admitted in Restore Leadership Academy. Due to their outstanding character, the two boys also got scholarships in the school and this is of great joy to us.

As we wrapped up last year we decided to shift gears with the home. Experiencing a void in our leadership we realized that we had got a little off track from the vision. At this point we really want to turn a fresh page and revamp the integrity of our work. To this end we decided to really focus on the category of boys who we can really be most effective with- the older teenage group. For the next few months we will be really working with these guys who are in vocational training, and running a smaller operation until we can shift to a new property we are developing and add some more committed mentors to the team.

I would like to conclude by giving words of appreciation to those who support and coordinate this program. Thanks for everything!

By PATRICK Omony

## Burundi- Bujumbura Home



Hi friends! We are really grateful for the progress we have made in the last year, and how our vision is continuing to spread... all over the world! With each new relationship we make we inspire more and more people to join us in this movement. God is using us to build his Kingdom- he is changing our own lives as well as those around us.

We are so happy that Godfrey, an alumni or Ekitangaala S.S. in Uganda, has joined us after he graduated at the end of last year. He is a great support to us as he has been studying the precepts and principles of Jesus in school for the past few years, and living and learning from the Cornerstone community in Uganda. He is very much in line with the vision and can articulate it very well to the other guys in the home. After staying with us for the holidays, he was recently admitted to join one of the best universities here in Burundi for a French language course.

In line with understanding the vision of being one family under the fatherhood of God, we must learn to ac-

cept and love one another despite all of our tribal, cultural, and religious differences. We must try to think, talk, love and act like Jesus in our daily life. We believe in the importance of understanding that we are not yet perfect and we desire to grow closer to God thru the example Jesus left for us, and to do so we really need to 'go the extra mile' and strive to achieve true inner-transformation. As a group of friends who share this common desire we know that one way to be effective in reaching out to others is to lift up Jesus alone, leaving all our differences and finding a common ground as God's children. Our prayer is that we continue to have faith and pray and strengthen one another as we follow Jesus. PSALM 25:4-5.

Shalom (Hebrew word for 'Peace'),

By BERNARD Niyonzima

### Sudan - Juba Home



"As-Salamu Alay-kum" (Arabic words for, "peace be with you"). Thank you for the opportunity to share with you the great things God is doing in our

home. We thank God for the graduation from University of our old friend Mading Gabriel. He was one of the initial founders of the work in Sudan, but moved to Kampala to work on his University education. He is now finished and has been great support to our home as a mentor. The young men in our home are doing well and

are doing great things with their lives, three of them were recently admitted to different government universities. These are Emmanuel Sunday who was accepted into Khartoum University, Mac Ayual was accepted into Rumbek University, and Lega Martin (an alumni of CLA Uganda) was accepted into Juba University. The other boys in the home, Dominic Assis and John Abui are sitting for their final high-school leaving exams on 20th March 2010, thus keep praying for them!

Following the progress and recent success of our young men, we will be soon graduating this batch from the home in order to allow space for new

members to gain from the powerful life transforming principles and precept of Jesus that we share with each other here. On another note, our country (Sudan) needs your prayers as we prepare for elections in April-2010 and campaigns have started. We have never had these presidential and parliamentary elections before, and it is an effort to step into the new age of peace, prosperity and democracy... lets just hope that the election process does not start a new in these lands. I am confident that, with God all things are possible.

By EMMANUEL Gita & MADING Piel

### Tanzania - Dar Home



Deep inside of each of us, we believe that there is a 'principle-centered' leader. We realize that we are all born with the beautiful potential to be God's light to the world, but this does not come naturally to us humans. To be able to access this divine heritage, we must be in a continual state of learning, constantly growing via literature, formal training/classes, through interactions with our peers and by being mentored by others who have gone before us. We must continuously push ourselves to be the best we can be.

But, where do we draw our strength from? I am slowly realizing the power of community, in such trying times when you have little power left yourself. We must share our experiences with other, our joys and our burdens.

It has helped me to view difficult life situations not as "weights" that should be laid aside- rather, they are valleys that we must walk through with the Lord at our side. Tests and trials are often necessary in our lives in order to shape us into the man or woman God wants us to be. Too



Boys hanging out in the Juba Home

often we panic when we ought to pray; we faint when we ought to have faith... seeing things in a new perspective and with a supportive community helps us get through the storm.

Regarding the home, we are going through a transitional phase as we plan on shifting the home to Arusha in the coming months. Several of the guys who have been with us for a long time have moved on and are now in good paying jobs. Salum, Isaac, Julius, and Philex are finishing up their studies and will be done by the time the shift happens. We are shifting to Arusha in order to coincide with and support the building and development plans for Cornerstone Leadership Academy Tanzania.

I am so proud of the relationships we have maintained as a home of brothers in Jesus. It has not been easy with the end in sight, but we are inspired to end strong and end this phase of the home having overcome all the challenges that have shaped us in to the men of integrity we are today.

By PETER Nyalandu

### Rwanda - Kigali Home



We are grateful to everyone involved in this building of this movement of young people - for the opportunity we have to

be together and grow together. This year, we have a fresh sense of enthusiasm as we have just moved

to a new house and we have a whole new group of guys in the program. Right now, there are 6 guys in living with us- Emma, Stanley and Lugolobi (an Old Boy of Cornerstone Leadership Academy Uganda) - all three are at the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology doing Engineering courses. Then we have Charles and Michael at Kigali Institute of Education doing Education courses and lastly we have Olivie who has been doing a Diploma

in Public Health. They are really great guys and we hope that the Jesus will continue to change their lives as they have the opportunity to understand him better while staying with us.

Our new house is really a blessing as it is in fact cheaper in rent, but a better deal in terms of space and functionality. We will be using part of it as an office for our growing COSA (Alumni) group to coordinate and mobilize the fresh batch of graduates from CLA Rwanda. By WILLIAM Kinunu



## Letters from friends

Kristen with the Lungujja girls

### Kristen Vogel

*My dearest Cornerstone brothers and sisters,*

Greetings from your lost friend! Since my departure and bittersweet good-byes, not a day has gone by that I don't miss each and every one of you. I've been back in the US for about one month. However, my heart remains in Uganda. I even dream about Africa about every other night!

It's not an easy feat for me to articulate what Uganda and the entire Cornerstone family means to me. When I signed up for a two-year time commitment serving in Uganda, I didn't even know what Cornerstone was. Through a series of events out of my control and thus God-sent, the organization I represent (The HALO Foundation) and Cornerstone Development began a partnership that has forever changed my life.

The open arms and hospitality I found in the Cornerstone family was without a doubt the strength that kept me going. Far away from everything familiar is difficult, and the challenges I met in the work easily became overwhelming and defeating. Being alone, I wouldn't have been able to pull through. But that's the beautiful part. I wasn't alone. I was embraced, supported, and loved by

the Cornerstone family. Furthermore, this support taught me the most valuable lesson I could ever learn.

In all we do in life, the only thing that lasts is the relationships we create with God and with one another. We can strive for wealth and success, we can strive for beauty, and we can strive for knowledge, but without community and love, nothing else matters. I found this true and authentic community with you. For me to be a young, American girl who had only been to Africa once before, yet was able to feel fully connected to people of a different culture and country is truly reflective of the Cornerstone community. People coming together from all walks of life, different religions and political views, yet loving each other and standing next to each other through trials and tribulations, celebrations and setbacks. I was always embraced with open arms.

Words can't thank you enough for that support. I have carried it back with me, sharing my journey and Cornerstone with others. Whether it was the weekly fellowships, the mentors' meetings, the faces of each child in a Youth Corps home, or the retreats full of laughter and love, I always looked forward to the joy my time spent with you would bring.

The best part about a large community is that every relationship we have with each other is unique, because it is two unique humans in their own interaction. Therefore, every relationship was valuable in its own way, teaching me a variety of things. Imagine the endless growth and lessons one can learn from the wonderful vibrancy of a community so big and diverse as Cornerstone.

My only fear is that I'll never find anything like it again. And God willing I do, know that you will never be replaced. The relationships we have begun will last a lifetime, and I look forward to that amazing day in the future when we can see each other again. Until then, you are in my thoughts and prayers, walking with me throughout my day, as I pray is the same for you. God bless you all.

*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3*

By KRISTEN Vogel



## The Wolves Soccer Club



Stone

The Wolves soccer program has started the year off with as much enthusiasm as always. We have around 200 youth involved in the training and mentoring that takes place here on the pitch everyday of the week. Many of these are directionless men, some living on the streets, but they share a common interest in soccer. Engaging in sports

allows these young guys to exercise their minds and bodies. They come for the physical benefits, but the real work on them is in their hearts and minds. By being a part of our program the boys are mentored and taught about hard work and discipline. They are also taught about Jesus and how

Coach Stone on the pitch- training and mentoring his boys

they can learn to live together and operate as successful citizens of their countries. We teach them how to be leaders in their communities through love and forgiveness. By playing together the boys learn to share, to be patient, to work as a team set goals, and score goals. These boys will go on to have families... what kind of fathers will they be?

As for me, I have been quite busy in my professional career. I have been out on the pitch mentoring and training these boys for 20 years, and the hard work is starting to pay off. My peer group of coaches in Uganda are beginning to see the value in our method of training and more responsibilities are being added unto me. I am now a Vice President of Uganda's Football Federation, and I recently came back from a trip to Egypt where I completed a training as an instructor for Football Coaches in Africa.

By STONE Kyambade

## The Widows Program

When I first met the widows in early 2007, my only aim was to love them... emotionally, physically and spiritually. I didn't have a well-crafted vision statement or a strategic plan for the next 5 years. I was just a simple woman who wanted to learn how to love our neighbors as our selves and how to love in action and in truth. So, I became friends with the widows...I went to their homes and ate with them...I sat with them in the midst of death or deep pain...I visited them in the hospital...I worshipped the Lord with them...I prayed for them and with them...I met their physical needs when I could. In it all...I fiercely held fast to the action and essence of love. Love became my one and only vision, my strategic plan. But as all things grow, change and become—Dorcas Widows Ministry too grew up and needed to define itself to the outside world. Even as the widows and I knew what our relationship was, most others on the outside



Joyce



Kari

did not. Thus, I sat down with a group of women who loved Jesus and loved the widows to create our vision...to define the work and relationship God had created. As we saw it the vision of Dorcas Widows Ministry was and is to serve Ugandan Widows and their children by providing funding for housing, school fees, employment training, medical treatment and emergency feeding. In doing so we hoped to move them from poverty to self-sufficiency. While those words are the facts of what we do, somehow they don't mention the most vital part of who we are and how we relate to each other. So, at every opportunity we get, the widows, the Dorcas Widows staff and I remind each other that love is and always will be our greatest and most important vision...to love others as we love our great Savior. For without love, even the grandest vision is worthless and meaningless: "a chasing of the wind" as the ancient preacher of Ecclesiastes put it.

By KARI Miller

## The Ekitangaala Ranch

The mission statement for the ranch is: a "harvest of friends living and working together." We express it that way because we deal with agriculture and we recognize that there are many things we can harvest in our lives from good friendships

Our focus this year is to increase the profitability of the ranch by increasing our income and trimming our fat in order to produce a lead business model for the future. Mr. Kirabira Richard is working very hard to follow through with this mandate. Some of the improvements we have made include:

- (1) Improving on our records - which is being done by bringing on Grace Namaganda (a graduate of EKT S.S.) as an office book-keeper to record expenses, milk sales, cow sales, and new born calves.
- (2) Build a strong team of staff by empowering different individuals to support one in their various roles and meeting weekly to plan together.
- (3) Realizing that our ranch staff face the challenges an increasing cost of living, we have allocated them some space in paddocks to begin small scale agricultural initiatives.



Gesa and Son



Richard

The last several months at the ranch, can be characterized by one word, 'drought'. Because of the El Nino phenomenon of 2009 - our rainfall was so low that for the first time our dam had completely dried up. We used this time to de-silt the dam and we were able to continue drawing water from one

of the un-used fish ponds of Hope for the Hungry. A big thank-you goes to Rand Blair who gave us one of his ponds to draw water for our animals. Despite this, we are generally doing very well and have recently opened up a third milking station for the many heifers in order to increase on our milk production.

Mr. Richard Hone is doing great work in the community and in the villages surrounding the ranch. He has supplied many families with piglets, motivating people in their garden preparations as the season approaches. He is a just a blessing to the children out there.

Finally, we are thankful to the community and people around the ranch for their continued cooperation and support! *By GESA and RICHARD Kirabira*

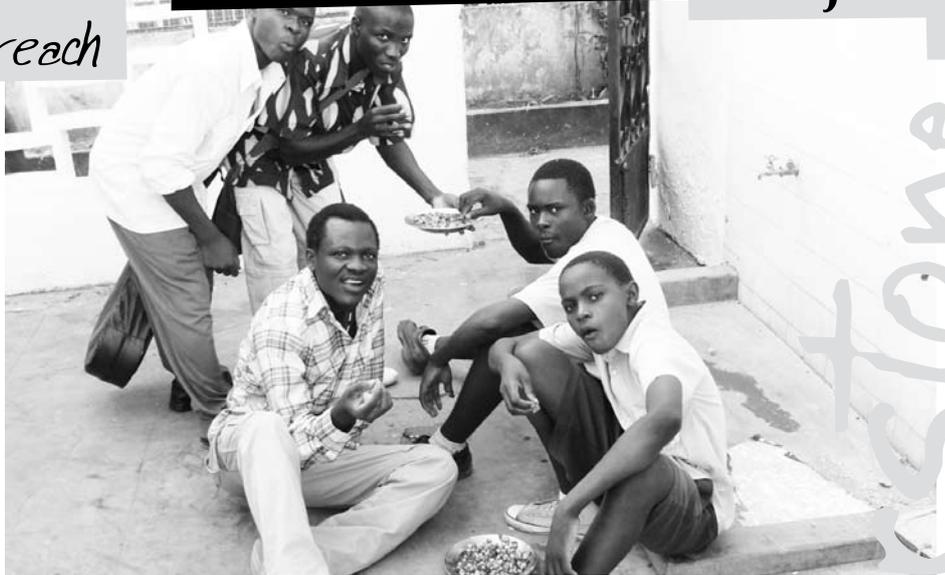
## Cornerstone Projects

### Mombasa Youth Outreach

We wish, 'To play a part in leading children off the streets of Africa, and providing them a brighter future.' As a community here, we seek to be lovers of God, working across denominational, tribal, cultural and other divides as vessels of love and integrity, using the example Jesus left with us.

Joseph Bedi, Sam Sanya and I have been in Mombasa since mid-November last year. The task of getting used to this new community and the climate here has been our biggest challenge so far. This place is HOT! Sometimes it is hard to figure out what you want to eat because of the cultural differences- but we are gaining ground on these small challenges. We've been aligning our initial expectations with the reality of things on ground and also understanding what our presence and work related aspirations might mean to the community here.

We realize that this type of ministry is people based. Therefore as we associate with community around us, and we intend to provide opportunity for the stakeholders to realize that we work together to improve



Daniel and Joseph in Mombasa having lunch with boys

others lives! We have been mentored by several people who have been doing this kind of work here for a while, and thru these connections we have ended up associating with many other circles of friends.

Part of our efforts at this time have been to find a local fellowship to belong to, which may also provide supplementary discipleship to our children. So far, Crossroads Fellowship, located a few kilometers from our house has shown a degree of potential. To demonstrate our com-

mitment to the church and service to community we have seen it necessary to take part in ministries of the church. I (Daniel) joined the worship team and Bedi my ministry partner participates in community outreaches.

At this point we are building a strong culture in the home founded in Jesus. We are legally registering the program and volunteering with other groups here doing similar work so that we can better understand how our presence can enhance the work here. *By DANIEL Bennon Okiror*

-St. Augustine wrote: *"We are made for God and we are restless until we rest in him."*

- Apostle Paul also addressed purpose in his speech on the Areopagus in Athens: *"From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us."*

- Some more modern spiritual authors have described the purpose of life as: To make the journey from ego to spirit or to learn to live as if you are not an ego.

All of these statements are very helpful to reflect on and contain truth. But some seem to add too much, others seem to leave out something. And, at the end of the day - all these ways of explaining our purpose still seem to fit within that simple, elegant formula of Jesus - when he said that the sum total of it all was captured in the two great commandments.

So, where I have come out on all this - I too, feel it's best to stay with the wisdom of the Master. In part because I have found that there is a hidden depth and power to his simple precepts that progressively unfolds over time as you meditate on them over the years. As he put it, "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."

Therefore, the way I would state it is: Our purpose in life is: To Learn to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength & to love our neighbor as our self - which I will elaborate on in my own experience shortly. But first to set the stage - let's zoom out to the wide angle view - which contains a few basic truths:

1. The vast, unbounded, eternal One that we know as God - for his own delight poured out of his own being the 15 billion year old universe that we know of with its hundreds of millions of galaxies each one containing hundreds of millions stars - such

as our dear Sun with several planets rotating around it.

2. This infinite, omniscient One - for his own delight also poured out of his own being and in his "image" the billions of Souls that we know of as humans. "We are his offspring - in Him we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17) He is the source of all life.

3. This beautiful 3rd planet from our Sun that we call Earth - exists for the purpose of giving humans experiences designed for our own growth

*We all appear here involuntarily and uninvited, for a short stay without knowing why. To me it's enough to wonder at the secrets.*

*There are only two ways to live your life. One is, as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.*

*-Albert Einstein*

in perfection as we respond to the inner urge to make the journey back to where we came from. Thus, Jesus' story of the Prodigal Son becomes a description of everyone's journey. *"To return to where we came from and know it for the first time."* (TS Eliot)

All that has been written about the meaning of life - is commentary and elaboration on these basic truths. We get lost in the woods the more we forget this, the more we get distracted by the cares and pursuits of this world, and the more we 'major in minors.'

Jesus came to remind us of all this, to show us the way home and to invite us to participate in the great divine enterprise of helping all other souls find their direction home:

*First*, by restoring our own connection to our Maker;

*Secondly*, by playing our part in the sacred task of reconciling all of life with the divine order - a venture which he called *"the Kingdom of God"* coming *"on earth as it is in heaven."*

To the degree that this second bit happens - we help set the conditions needed for the growth and nurturing of all human souls. We will lessen the alienation, greed, callousness, ignorance, loneliness, suffering, grinding poverty, drug abuse, wars, injustice and other such conditions that have been so soul degrading for much of human-kind, for 'our neighbors.' Furthermore, by active involvement in this divine enterprise we end up also maximizing our own growth and development.

It is in this second part that we individually discover our own unique mission - based on the talents, the gifting, the passion and the burdens we hold. And yet - while we will each have our specific calling, mission, or vision - the ultimate purpose of life remains the same for all us: To learn to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength & to love our neighbor as our self.

Many books have been written on these two commandments - I will only touch on a couple points that have helped make this more understandable to me personally. And, ultimately we each have to work out in our own understanding - that's part of the plan.

The question of how to "Love God" has always bothered me. Much of what we know and the ideas we have about God has come to us totally second-hand - through reading the Bible or the writings of others. How can we love anything or someone with all our heart, mind, soul and strength without having that first hand experience? It's like the difference between knowing about China from reading books on it compared with really knowing and loving China from having lived there for many years. That's been an issue for me.

One thing that has helped me with this comes from what I feel is the best description of God we have in our scriptures: "In him we live and move and have our being." From that I can understand that "G-o-d" is nearly synonymous with "Life." Now, this really brings it into the range of first-

hand experience. Because, I definitely experience life- surrounding me, pressing in on me, penetrating me, engaging me – every moment of each and every day.

So, it's helpful then to express the Greatest Commandment this way: Love Life with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. Now, that really challenges me. It's far less abstract and it asks of me a response in each present moment: What is my attitude toward all that is going on right now in my life?

There are two responses to this that I am working on:

*First*, I am learning to Love Life as it is manifested in everything around me. That is, the wonder of it all - the Presence that permeates and sustains it all. Once the eyes have learned to observe the Presence they can see the Presence everywhere.

*Secondly*, I am also learning to love 'my little life' with all its ups and downs, joys and pains. To just 'love what is.' In doing this I am acknowledging the greater scheme of things that is providing me with this relentless stream of experiences perfectly designed for my own growth in wisdom and love.

Love is the eternal quality of the Being in whom we live, and move and

have our being. It is the connection that holds all things together. We experience love when we experience this connection that we have to All.

The Second Greatest commandment is always stated: "to love our neighbor as our self." (And, not as is commonly quoted: 'to love our neighbor as we love our self.')

In the original phrasing there is the implication that despite our apparent separateness from others – the truth is we are all connected to each other on a level we cannot see. And this means that our individual liberation, our personal salvation is somehow bound up in the freedom of our brothers and sisters. We are all in this boat together. We can't help another without helping ourselves and we can't hurt another without hurting ourselves. "We are members of one body." So: "I pray that they may be one as we are one, I in them and You in me, that they may be perfected in One."

Love always seeks union with the beloved. The ultimate realization of love for God is the experience of oneness with God. "I and the Father are one." And in the same way to our neighbor: "I and my brother, my sister are one." "The two shall become one."

To really learn these things is our ultimate purpose in life. So, in conclusion a few points in summary:

1. There is a greater design, a reason for all that happens, a direction that it is all moving toward.

2. We are called to intentionally discover and make our contribution toward this great sacred task – this kingdom of God that is trying to break into this world.

3. We are all far more connected than what we realize – it's almost like we are cells in one great body – "The Son of Man."

4. Be open to life – receive it as a gift not a punishment. Despite all the chaos – see through it to the beauty, the purpose behind it all.

5. Fear not. There is really hardly anything worth worrying about in life. Ultimately: All is well. Everything works together for good when you love God – when you love Life.

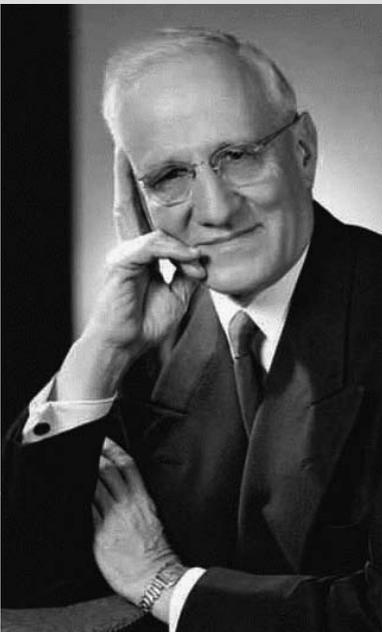
6. Death is just a stepping through into the next chapter. The only things we take out of here are the lessons learned in love and wisdom.

7. Never stop learning and growing – even Heaven will be a place of growth. As E. Stanley Jones wrote in his biography "The Song of Ascents:" "I have been ascending, am ascending and shall forever be ascending. I believe that even heaven is a place of growth, the finite forever approaching the infinite."

*"The finite... forever approaching the infinite"*

### **E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973)**

Jones was born in Baltimore, Maryland in the United States. After attending Asbury College, he traveled to India and began working with the lowest castes, including Dalits. However, he also developed close friendships with many leaders in the Indian Independence movement, and became known for his interfaith work. His position was: "Peace is a by-product of conditions out of which peace naturally comes. If reconciliation is God's chief business, it is ours – between man and God, between man and himself, and between man and man." He was nominated for Nobel Peace Prize for his reconciliation work in Asia, Africa, and between Japan and the United States.



He is remembered chiefly for his lectures on the ideas of Jesus to the educated classes in India, thousands of which were held across the Indian sub-continent during the first decades of the 20th century. According to his and other contemporary reports, his friendship for the cause of Indian self-determination allowed him to become friends with leaders of the up-and-coming Indian National Congress party. He spent much time with Mahatma Gandhi, and the Nehru family. Gandhi challenged Jones and, through Jones' writing, the thousands of Western missionaries working there during the last decades of the British Raj, to include greater respect for the mindset and strengths of the Indian character and traditions in their work.

# What is *the point* of it all?

## Thoughts from Tim

*Why was I born? What is life all really about? Why do we struggle to get an education, to get work, to raise a family - only to grow old and eventually die?*

I seem to have been born with an unquenchable thirst to try and figure out the real meaning and purpose of things. I have always found it hard to engage myself in any venture unless I clearly understand the point of it. As a teenager one of my brothers observed that whenever our family would go over to another family's house for dinner - I would head straight to their bookshelves to see what it contained. In retrospect, I see that what I was looking for was "something more" - any information of a spiritual nature that would reveal to me what lies beyond our fingertips when we reach out to God in the dark of night - craving answers to life's mysteries. I was never entirely satisfied with the answers I was getting.

My parents were missionaries and I went to Christian schools from day one. By the time I was thirteen I could recite a dozen entire chapters of the Bible (King James Version) verbatim - purely from memory - as well as scores of other sections of scripture. My first year of university was at a Bible College and then later I also studied theology at the seminary level. All this gave me a great foundation to stand on. But on the other hand, all the biblical and theological studies I was doing eventually made my own belief system so overcomplicated that I missed the main point.

During the era when Albert Einstein was searching for the "Theory of Relativity" that would explain the basic nature of physics - the prevailing formulas that attempted to describe it would fill an entire black board with mathematical notations. When Einstein eventually came up with " $E=MC^2$ " - the truth turned out to be something so simple, clear and elegant. This is often so true in other areas of life. Most of the time - we can't see the forest because there are too many trees in the way. Anybody can make simple things complicated. It takes a genius to make complicated things simple and clear.

God gave the people of Israel the 10 Commandments. By the time of Jesus - they had so over complicated things they now had over 600 rules and regulations about all sorts of things.

Jesus boiled it all back down to 2: ***"Love God with all your heart, mind, strength and soul & Love your neighbor as your self."*** And he said if you just simply focused on these 2 commandments you would fulfill all the other stuff contained in the "law and the prophets." That was genius.

Along my life's journey I had the good fortune of meeting a mentor who also had this ability to simplify things. He pretty much just taught on 7 basic principles. One of them was that: our purpose in life was found in those two Greatest Commandments of Jesus.

True to my questioning nature - I did not entirely accept this at first and continued to compare what my mentor taught with the wisdom of all other sages, saints and mystics on this question of man's ultimate purpose. For instance:

- Mother Teresa said: *"We are here to learn how to give love and how to receive love."*

- In the Westminster Catechism the question was put: What is the chief end of Man? And the answer: *Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever.*

- Rick Warren's popular book *The Purpose Driven Life* - sought to answer the question: What on earth am I here for? And he came up with 5 points:

*Purpose #1:*

You Were Planned for God's Pleasure (Worship)

*Purpose #2:*

You Were Formed for God's Family (Fellowship)

*Purpose #3:*

You Were Created to Become Like Christ (Discipleship)

*Purpose #4:*

You Were Shaped for Serving God (Ministry)

*Purpose #5:*

You Were Made for a Mission (Mission)

