

# Cornerstone

Newsletter & Magazine JANUARY 2011

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

## a "NEW" year

The way something begins is important, as it often sets a trend for what follows. Every January as our calendars mark the passage of time we like to say: "A new year has begun." We are creatures of time. At least twice a year, on our birthdays and on New Years day - we are unavoidably confronted with the elapse of time. And as the years keep going by, we move into particular patterns of habits, activities, ways of thinking and being - that ultimately determine our destiny.

In America they say, "Time is money." But Africans like to joke; "America may have most of the clocks and watches in the world but they don't seem to have time - on the other hand here in Africa we don't have very many clocks and watches but we have all the time in the world!" And by that they mean, time for people, time to relax and enjoy life. The Western orientation toward time seems to create more economic progress while the African orientation seems to produce more community and contentment.

In any case, the New Year comes with the sense of closing one chapter of life and starting a new one. So it holds the possibility of a new beginning, a fresh start. It's a periodic window of opportunity to reflect back on what has transpired in the last season and then to look ahead and decide what we might do differently in the coming year. But it is just that, 'an opportunity' - which we may or may not choose to act upon.

To recognize and to engage with that opportunity is to activate a power that has been given to us all. It is the God given ability to determine our own destiny through the choices we make and the intentions that we set for ourselves.

Sometimes it is so hard for us to see any connection between our choices or intentions, and what is happening that we feel like helpless pawns in the game of life. Perhaps that is why many people do not bother to make New Year's resolutions or to put out the effort to change bad habits and old patterns. Nonetheless, it remains true that today is a continuation of what happened yesterday, tomorrow will follow on from today's trend - and then the months, the years and eventually the whole of one's life ends up taking a certain direction.

Of course there are some 'not-so-nice' things that happen to us all that we have no control over and there is little to gain by being upset about these. But there are also those painful consequences that we bring on ourselves through poor choices. And, with this second group - we could include the failure to exercise the authority and ability God has given us to develop a vision and set our intentions.

*Regardless of our backgrounds, it is our personal vision and the choices we make daily that are the greatest creative force in our life.* Even God can't do much in our life without us realizing and doing our part. Each New Year provides an opportunity to clarify our highest and best aspirations and then set intentions that help to move us in the right direction. Tim's article on the back explores this theme further.



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Wendy and Phil get married... again!



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## and...

- Updates on Cornerstone schools, Youth Corps, and COSA programs
- Vision Conference Rwanda
- Progress on Tanzania Academy
- The Transformers at U.C. University

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

## Location

### Head Office:

Plot 37 Acacia Avenue  
P.O. Box 9242  
Kampala - Uganda  
Cstone@imul.com

## Program Overview

### Leadership Schools:

#### Uganda

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

#### Rwanda

- CLA, Rwamagana

#### Tanzania

- CLA, Arusha

### 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

#### Sudan - Juba

#### Kenya - Mombasa

#### 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.

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## some explanations for the unacquainted:

**The Cornerstone Schools:** The Cornerstone Leadership Academies (CLA) are "Advanced Level" boarding high schools that aim to mold young people coming from poor backgrounds, but with high potential, into future leaders. A major aim 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 cater to the local community.

**The Brotherhood and Sisterhood :** Our schools are 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, we meet weekly through-out 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)

Welcome to the New Year! We wound up last year with our huge annual retreat at Ankrah Foundation where most of our staff from different departments came together under the theme "Stirring up one another in love." It was a great motivator to each of us in our various roles in the community. Unlike the schools for the Head Office - the December holiday season is the one long break we get all year as the Office closes. So it is a great time to rest, relax and revise our vision for our lives and community in the coming year.

Our office staff continues to grow, both in maturity, academics and numbers. Mary and Allan both graduated from University in January. Alfred is running in the February political elections for the Parliamentary seat representing his home constituency, Kaberamaido county in Teso region. He and all our other friends and family running in these coming political elections need our prayers and support. Fred Kabugo has joined our staff now in a more full time capacity. This is in an effort to support some other role revisions that will happen amongst our Head Office staff in the next few months. Steven Ongodia has also decided to move on from Ekitangaala S.S. to take up another challenge closer to his home, Soroti - Charles Katagira will take his place as Headmaster. Our Rwanda office has



Group photo of our Head Office staff in Kampala, Uganda.

also recently received a major boost with the presence of Wendy and Phil Plager who have joined the staff and will be with us for several years.

We have had several visitors already this year, most notably, our friend Ted Piker who continues to challenge and inspire us all with his presence and life. We are also blessed to have Liz and Ben with us for the month, they are the visionaries behind the Sseko sandal making businesses which employs CLA girls who have finished High School and are waiting to join the University. Recently they gifted each of the ladies around the office with a pair of their unique sandals. Aaron Appleton, our music maestro, has also been with us and his kind spirit encourages us all. *God bless you all! -By Hellen Nasuna*

## Where is he now?

### BENNON KAYEMBA

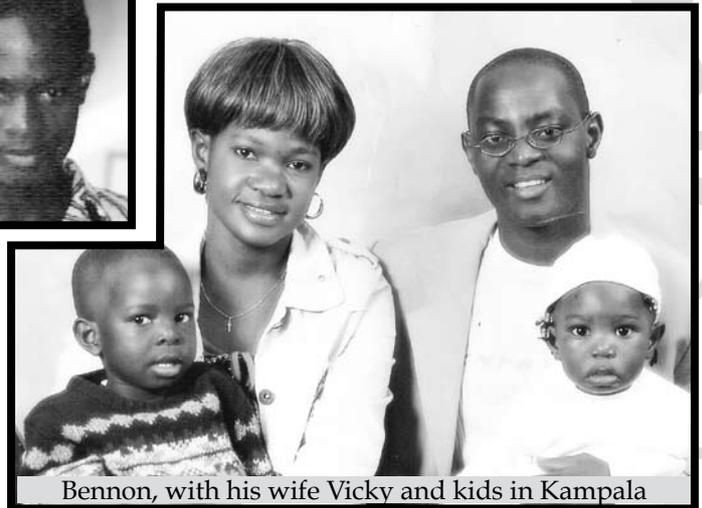
Benon heard about Cornerstone Leadership Academy through his cousin Richard Busulwa in 1997 who also ended up being admitted to the program. While in school, he was a very hard working student, and developed a good academic track record. For reasons beyond his control, he was actually not able to sit his final exams at CLA, but the relationships he formed with his classmates, teachers and mentors has kept him a very prominent member of the COSA alumni movement of Old Boys.

At University, Bennon stayed connected to the Cornerstone community through the regular fellowship groups, and in 2000, graduated with a Bachelors of Tourism degree. He began his professional life working for the Kampala Sheraton for a while before joining the Uganda Foreign Office Service where he choose to take up a senior post in the African Regional Office in Addis Ababa. After several Years in serving Uganda in Ethiopia, he has climbed the ranks to the position of Second Secretary. Once his 5 year contract ended, Bennon decided to return to Kampala, Uganda where he is now posted to the office

THEN: 1997



...AND NOW: 2010



Bennon, with his wife Vicky and kids in Kampala

of Permanent Secretary in the ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On the academic grounds he has since completed a PGD in Diplomacy; and Masters in Public Administration. In addition to his work with Uganda Foreign Affairs he has also recently started up a tourism business in vehicle services. Benon is now a family man with two children. One character quality that stands out in him is a committment to excellence in what ever he does. We are proud of him and the exemplary life he has led so far.

# What is your resolution for this year?!



**Fred Kabugo** (Head Office)

To prioritize the various commitments in my life and become more effective in my work.



**Chris Mulisa** (COSA Rwanda)

Listening to God more. Building stronger relationships amongst COSA Rwanda. And also to concentrate on my academics - it will be my first year at University I'm super excited about that.

**Joyce Karawachi** (Widows)

Being prayerful and meditative, more time with God learning His will.



**Counsellor Mwau**

(Youth Corps)

More in-reach and personal reflection to focus on my life's purpose.



**Modern Tayebwa** (CLA Girls)

Doing to others, what I would have wanted them to do unto me. Helping the girls I work with to realize their visions and purpose in life in all aspects while at the same time fostering continuous academic excellence.



**Kenneth Tumwine**

(CLA Boys)

Spend more time with the boys, and really mentor them... not just focusing on academics, but I want to see holistic growth in my students: mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually.

**Eric Kreutter** (Head Office)

Spend more time with people, less time with papers. Eat more fruits and vegetables. Pray and meditate more often.



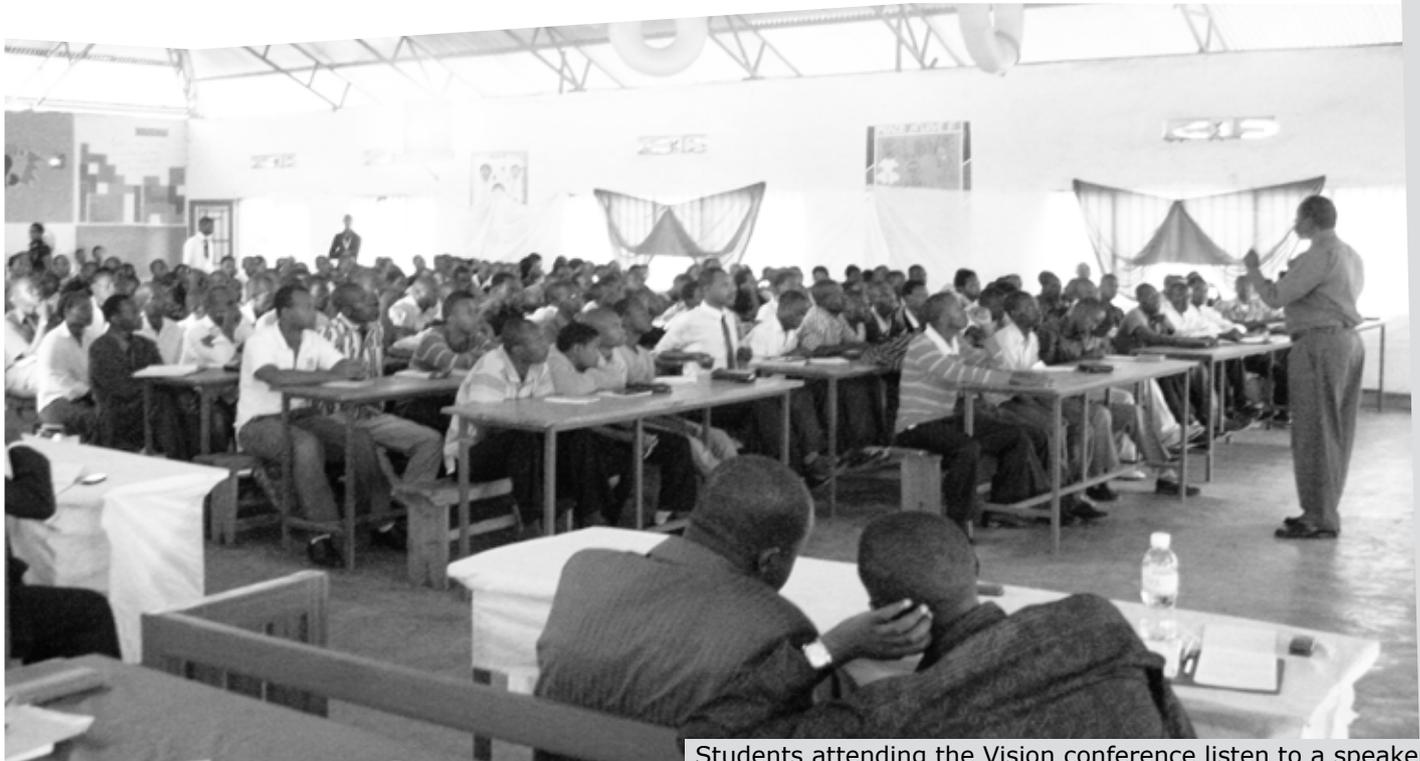
**Javis Mugagga** (EKOSA / Office)

Have more personal retreats. Share the vision of Cornerstone with my fellow Catholics. Empower and create more time for people in the alumni program I coordinate. Pay more attention to details.



**Paul Michi** (Head Office)

Working above and beyond what is expected of me in my work.



Students attending the Vision conference listen to a speaker

# Vision Conference

Kigali, Rwanda - 2010

In November 2010, more than 300 young high school student leaders attended the annual 3 day Vision Conference in Kigali, Rwanda. This is a project organized and coordinated by the Cornerstone Rwanda team as a way of engaging the broader youth community in Rwanda who do not have the chance to attend the Leadership Academy and to reach out to young leaders with the message of reconciliation and having a common ground in the person of Jesus. Many of the same discipleship, character development and leadership materials are translated from the CLA curriculum in a way that would be more relevant to a broader audience.

Throughout the conference, we concentrated on leadership and character development topics like: Servant Leadership, Having Vision and Purpose in Life, Integrity, Synergy, Hard Work, Reconciliation, First Things First,

and others. The main speakers we had sharing with us included Johnson Karamuzi, William Kinunu, Samuel Birondwa, Phillip Ojok, Wendy and Phillip, Mzee Kalisa Rugano, Pr. Charles Mugisha and Eng. Innocent Baguma. As a reward for attendance, we presented certificates of participation at the end which indicated the topics covered during the conference - this added a degree of legitimacy to the whole event.

Due to the success of the conference the previous year, our reputation was more established and we were able to draw in a very good representation of student leaders from all ethnic/tribal, political, and religious backgrounds in Rwanda. This was because we focused less on inviting large numbers, and more on getting people who really fell in line with our vision- those who have shown leadership ability within their respective capacities. In an effort to improve the sense of "ownership" that attendants had, we required them to contribute financially and do a community service project that we carried out called muganda, an activity where the participants may plant trees or do clean up in the area that has hosted us depending on the need.

Our new friends, Phillip and Wendy Plager, helped out a lot with the workshops this year. They helped the student leaders make sense of what they had learned, especially about how to develop a personal vision, and servant leadership. This was unique because the students were able to have practical steps to reach their goals, as exemplified by a few who shared their work. We really appreciate the support we have gotten for this project from our wider family of friends in East Africa and around the world - without you we would not be able to do what we do! - By Samuel Birondwa



Students learning character development



CLA Rwanda with Chuck Becker and Michael Timmis

# CORNERSTONE SCHOOLS

## CLA Rwanda

Greetings to you all. We closed the academic year with a great graduation ceremony that saw 47 students exit CLA. The event was graced by the Education Minister, Dr Charles Murigande as our Guest of Honor, as well as a large delegation of friends from the Cornerstone head office in Kampala. The Minister was so impressed by the speeches given by the student representatives that he said that he would like to rename CLA as "Cornerstone Leadership and Oratory Academy". To him, the school seems to be producing orators and great public speakers. We attribute this to the program we initiated every Friday after discipleship from 2pm-4:30pm where the students can publicly discuss how the discipleship material relates to

everyday leadership issues and challenges. This gives students more time to practice public speaking, debates, and developing their confidence in front of people.

After graduation, most of our students attended the Vision Conference that gathered over 300 student leaders from High Schools and Universities across the country. Our graduates have been very instrumental in this conference, which also gives them an opportunity to practice organizational and leadership skills.

In the next year, we intend to focus more on science subjects as recommended by the ministry of education. Because of this, there is need for a laboratory facility that is well equipped. We would also like to construct a front wall fence and a gate as our compound is very open to letting people wander in and out, which has at times posed a security threat. We hope it will be a great year, and look forward to all that is in store for us!

- By Johnson Karamuzi

## Ekitangaala Primary School

We ended the year on a very good note with a graduation ceremony, which was the first of its kind with 56 students receiving certificates. Our success in other categories over the year in academics, sports and discipleship is due to the hard work of our very dedicated team of teachers.

6 They help coordinate all the ac-

tivities at school and we cannot thank them enough for their work. I must also thank God, who has given us His favor throughout the year. Also, thank you to Uncle Tim, Kidogo, Carlos, Phillip, the Old Boys and Old Girls, the COSA friends, and Uncle Michael and Nancy Timmis for the love and care they have shown us here.

Next year we are planning to involve the parents and the district officials much more in the school activities. We hope that it will help improve the school. We have, as always, met a few challenges along the way in 2010, but we know that all will be well. May God bless you all and Happy New Year.

- By Jovia Ayo

# CLA Uganda

## CLA GIRLS CAMPUS

Greetings! We thank God for 2010 and for the provision that has enabled us to carry on this work; it has really been a fruitful year of blessings. We wish the best to all our friends behind this work. The year started with excitement as we received the results from the great performance of the outgoing 2009 class, which was the best class of all recent years! We ended the year with 25 girls successfully completing the national exams and participating in a colorful graduation ceremony

We have had many great changes this year at our school: A guest house has been constructed and is in its completion stage, which is of course very good for us and our visitors. However, we still need to build two more staff houses. Two members of our staff were married this year and five babies were born to our staff members! We have made a great effort to participate in the lives of our staff members by being involved in their weddings, walking with them through their sicknesses and losses of loved ones, and rejoicing with them in good times. The staff fellowship always provides a great way to keep up the spirit and therefore enhance the performance of the whole school.

We have many things to look forward to this year: we first hope to get some computers to start a computer lab, God willing, and we will start a savings credit scheme among the staff. We welcome many ideas as well as financial support in all of this.

It's amazing how much we can positively influence others when we get closer to them and can relate with what they are going through. We hope to keep building on these relationships in the next year. All of our prayers are that you will be blessed in 2011.

- By Sarah Mtwesigwa

## CLA BOYS CAMPUS

Looking back, from the beginning of 2010 to this moment as 2011 is just beginning, I am simply in amazement for how far the Lord has brought us. The team spirit among the teachers has never been stronger than this year, which is perhaps the pinnacle of our achievements. The team spirit has been fostered by a zealous commitment to a weekly staff fellowship where we seek God's guidance for the tasks ahead and take time to reflect on what has gone by and what is to come so that appropriate strategies are designed to avoid pitfalls.



Academically, the results of the previous S6 class, which were released mid-March, left us all mesmerized – they were the best results ever for CLA boys. With the good results, the morale of the boys was significantly boosted, spilling over into all areas of school life. Discipleship and discipline have never been taken more seriously, which we owe to the students' and staffs' hard work and our curriculum. A serene, peaceful, and welcoming atmosphere has also been created from this spill-over effect, which envelopes all visitors of the school. Not a single visitor failed to notice and commend our atmosphere.

Both staff and student welfare are critical to good performance. A contented staff will devote more time to students and healthy, well-looked-after students will find no reason for disorderly behavior. At CLA boys, we pay a lot of attention to both student and staff welfare. This has yielded marvelous interpersonal relationships between students and staff, leading to even better discipleship at the school. This last year had been our best in this regard and we are grateful for the wisdom and grace to work together to impact young lives. We are very grateful to the head office, especially Tim and Phillip, and Mzee Lukwiya who have been great encouragers to us. - By Charles Ayo

## Ekitangaala Secondary School

Last year was a difficult year for our school and we had many trials that tested the limits of our leadership. Therefore at the end of last year The Board of Governors was dissatisfied with how some things were going. It became apparent that many of these challenges pointed toward the need for a change in the headship of the school. In addition to trying to juggle all the tasks required of him as Headmaster of the school, Stephen Ong-

dia has been facing a variety of family pressures and struggling to keep up with other personal commitments in his life.

As we attempted to end the year gracefully, it became clear that Steven also felt it was best to move on to another opportunity in his career – one perhaps that would be closer to his home region where he could spend more time with his family. Stephen is still a loved member of our

community and we wish him the best as he enters the next phase of his life. On that note, we want to welcome Katagira Charles, who is also a CLA alumni, as the new Headmaster of Ekitangaala S.S. Katagira is an experienced professional who has years of experience heading a school in Bundabugio, which is in western Uganda. We hope that 2011 will be a year of renewal and growth on all fronts!

The monthly COSA gathering at the head office in Kampala, with Timmis



## *COSA Uganda*

The more I learn about this movement we are creating, the more I realize how unique it really is. Despite the fact that we come from different tribes, religious backgrounds, and may not have similar political ideologies, Jesus has united us as a family of friends with common values. These values are the principles, precepts, and person found in Jesus of Nazareth. We are all building blocks of something that is much bigger than each of our individual lives, and the absence of even one of us makes the wall less solid.

What does this imply? It means that we all have a part to play and need to work together to see that our vision is achieved in Uganda, East Africa and beyond. As a single block that has a specific purpose in the larger group, each of us should be active in looking for how we fit in to make the wall stronger and more stable for a greater impact.

I would like to call our attention to the analogy that our brother Josephats wrote in one of our newsletters in 2009. He said, 'we are a movement, and like a group of red ants, one that leaves the group becomes a black ant and turns out to be very dangerous'. If we don't value our interdependence, we will stray off and self-destruct. In an effort to stay united as those red ants, we constantly work on our coming together in fellowships, staying together while at University, and social events such as the COSA annual dinners, beach bashes, retreat, etc. It is important to see how we can plug into these various forums to see that they empower our greater vision.

Our numbers have continued to burgeon with graduates from the academies and spouses through marriages. In the last couple of months we have had a number of weddings including Sarah Biraakwate, Sarah Kayiza, Sanya

Samuel, Ejalam Julius and many others who have found life partners. In the next few weeks we also will have graduates (including myself) from Makerere University. As we grow, being intentional in supporting one another is the best way we can maintain the quality of our community – otherwise it will be diluted. Let us commit ourselves to regular attendance of our gatherings, since it is the ways we can maintain relationship and achieve our vision – if we don't our relationships will be diluted. Supporting one another should also be our priority since its one way of extending our love and care for one another.

We are forever grateful to the friends that have invested much in us to see that we achieve this great vision for our lives, and we know that to whom much is given much is expected.

*-By Mary Nabuma*

# THE TRANSFORMERS

Equipping lives... transforming generations



Vice chancellor & director of studies with Michael launching the event

The Transformers is an association founded by COSA members at Uganda Christian University - Mukono (UCU). It began when we saw the need to provide our community at school with a fun, healthy and entertaining way to spend their Saturday evenings instead of the usual troubled behaviors that idle youth get themselves into. Our desire was to really cause a grassroots transformative environment, while embodying the values of love, unity, relationships and integrity.

The transformers mission is to "Mentor a generation that will influence other generations towards humanitarian values of reconciliation and unity; breaking drug and alcohol addictions; abstaining from harmful sexual behaviors - all while promoting a character based leadership model as exhibited in Jesus' teachings and example."

We had our first event in October 2010, graced by the presence of the Vice Chancellor of the University. About 400 people gathered at the

UCU basketball court between the hours of 7 to 10pm and we had a variety night of good music, drama, poems, and movies. We have continued in the same manner on Saturday nights since then with guest speakers such as John and Amanda Bull, and Stone Kyambadde with attendance reaching 500+ people. It is a great avenue that we have to share our COSA vision with a wider audience and introduce these precepts of better living to others who were not able to attend one of the Cornerstone schools.

We are seeing that it is also a fruitful platform for the COSA Creative and Performing Arts forum to demonstrate their talents and gifts before this growing audience. Our biggest challenge is always resources- most especially the Public Addressing System. However, we have found a few sympathetic partners who have contributed to our cause and we have managed to get by with what we have. Big thanks to uncle Tim, Madam Nalinya Beatrice, and the entire Cornerstone family. We are just beginning...

- By Kiirya Micheal



Anita Kobusingye and Amanda Weir - Anita recently traveled to the U.S. for a university scholarship she received

## COSA Rwanda

This last year, 2010, was a big year for COSA Rwanda. We saw our first graduating class from CLA Rwanda come onboard and we began the meetings that have launched our vision: "To create a life-long brotherhood and sisterhood of friends in the spirit of Jesus that will support each other in a movement of men of integrity and women of virtue, within Rwanda and beyond..."

To this end, throughout the year we held regular gatherings on the last Sunday of each month which were attended enthusiastically by most members. Most of the time we were encouraging one another and trying to move forward in the process of getting them ready for university which they will start early this year. Let us continue praying with

them so that they all successfully join the programs they have in mind. This is a great time in their lives when they are in pursuit of their dreams and as they advance this great vision of the Cornerstone family.

As always, we are grateful for the support and leadership we receive from our mentors within Cornerstone. It is a great honor to work alongside such dedicated men and women. We are also very thankful for the new partnership we have with Wendy and Philip Plager who came out from the U.S. to work with us for the next few years. Their contribution is much appreciated and they have added a great deal of focus and energy to our team in Rwanda.

- By William Kinunu

## BUSINESS FORUM

Two years down the road, the business forum has had several highlights as well as several challenges. Through it all we are learning that even in business, the backbone of our success relies on the quality of our community and making sure that the fellowship groups are spiritually nourishing and relevant to the work engaged in. Also, in addition to improving the quality of the existing projects, we have decided not to take on any new projects until later in the year. However, proposals are still welcome for review. We hope for a great year ahead!



## INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



Wilson Asiimwe - internship at the Ministry of Finance

The internship program started in June 2007 as a way of improving the competitiveness of the Cornerstone graduates as they build a movement of lifelong brotherhood and sisterhood committed to changing this country. To date 46 of our young people have benefited from this program, doing internships in everything from government agencies, and private companies to nongovernmental organizations.

In addition to supporting them during internships, we have also organized several workshops and seminars mainly in the areas of equipping our graduates with basic computer skills, CV writing, application writing, preparations for interviews and general job search and maintenance skills. Out of the 46 graduates so far, 40 have been employed within the first 1-6 months after completing the internship, many being retained by the organization with which they were interning and the others in other placements.

The process of identifying placements has involved both the graduates and the internship coordinator. Many of the interns have found places of their own choice while others have been connected to these companies by the internship coordinator. For either of the two, our

criteria has been to look for a company with good credibility and in the area of the graduate's interest or qualification. The intention is to get a company which will provide relevant experience to the graduate or even with the possibility of recruiting them if they found them deserving at the end of their internship period (Six months).

The application criteria for the facilitation includes: an application letter, acceptance letter from the company, detailed CV and a template showing why the intern has chosen that company, his roles while at the company, his long term vision, and his objectives for taking that internship. During the internship period, we ask the intern to give us a monthly report, as well as another report at the end of his placement showing how he/she is moving towards achieving the prior stated objectives. At the same time, we also ask their supervisor to send us two reports, one in the middle and another at the end of the internship period. On top of that, the internship coordinator visits the intern at their place of work once every two months and he talks with the intern and their supervisor to get feedback on how they are fairing.

Also, we get in an agreement with the company that we will financially support our graduate to intern in their organization but in return we ask them to commit to give him/her all the necessary/ relevant training and at the end of their internship we expect the company to recruit them (if they have a place and the intern was impressive), recommend them, or give us an explanation if neither of the above two happens.

Our success rate in meeting our primary objective of enabling young people quickly find jobs has been 85%. 40 out of 46 have found jobs within their first 6 months of finishing the internship, because of the training they get, work experience, opportunity to showcase their potential, encouragement from brothers, and connections they make while on the program. We are committed to continuously improve and we hope that despite the job scarcity in our nation, our young people shall continue to be successful in finding work because of what this program has invested in them. - By: Josephats Mbaziira

# AFRICA YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM



AYLF participants gather for a photo with Principal Judge James Ogoola

During October 2010, we hosted 150 University students and youth leaders from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Southern Sudan, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and Eritrea in Kampala, Uganda. This is always a time for fellowship, reviving and building new relationships and learning new things around the Person of Jesus. At the gathering, we spent two days discussing challenges, opportunities and the joys of working together as young leaders for the next generation in this region. During this period, we also exposed them to conversations with experienced senior leaders on topical issues that affect our communities. In trying to understand these issues, our quest is to apply the principles, values and leadership qualities of Jesus to find tangible solutions.

Mr. Chris Rwakasisi, a former minister in two governments in the '70s & '80s shared his testimony of how he rose to become a minister and how one day he was arrested and sentenced to death. He spent 23 years on death row for crimes he didn't commit. He received a presidential pardon from the same president who had signed his death warrant. In his testimony, he shared how he met Jesus in prison and Jesus told him that he wouldn't be hung. He is now a free man serving the Lord Jesus.

Hon. Nuwe Amanyu Mushega, former secretary general of the East African Community, led the group in exploring ways in which the youth can engage in the leadership process of the community. He challenged the younger leaders to prepare themselves with marketable skills for business leadership, participate in the political processes in their countries by advocating for political, tribal, religious tolerance, human rights and social justice.

Additionally, Justice James Ogoola the Principal Judge, High Court of Uganda challenged the younger leaders on

issues of creating systems of transparency and accountability. Jesus calls us to a higher level of integrity and He gives us "A Ministry of Reconciliation." These are values and virtues cherished in the philosophy of this movement. The Judge cautioned the younger leader to rise above tribalism, corruption and religious indifferences.

The participants from Eastern DRC, Burundi and South Sudan felt it was a great opportunity to be part of the gathering. They are excited about the vision. They see it as an answer to problems that have kept their countries in wars. They see hope by interacting with other younger leaders from other countries as they exchange ideas. They feel the East African community provides many open opportunities for them, and at AYLF we feel it is an opportunity to develop the relationships as a platform for the future by going into Eastern DRC, Burundi and South Sudan.

The National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfasts are very important events for us. This is because AYLF is under the auspice of the national leaders who are part of this NPB movement. Therefore this relationship creates opportunities for younger leaders to attend and interact with these leaders who would otherwise be difficult to approach.

In this spirit, immediately after the Uganda NPB, we headed straight for a luncheon that provided the younger leaders to have a closer interaction with Members of Parliament, diplomats, businessmen and other senior opinion leaders in the country. It is difficult to get access to such people, but once they understand what we are after they usually open up more. The younger leaders sit at the same lunch tables with the national and diplomatic leaders. This is an opportunity to bridge the gap between senior and younger leaders. It also shows our young leaders that there are existing leaders who are seeking to use their positions to serve God.

- By Alan Shepard

# Cornerstone

## Newsletter Pictorial



Boy's playing soccer in the Wolves mentoring program



CLA students review their notes



Mentors helping kids with school work



Art therapy with youth



Jimmy Kijjambu's traditional wedding in Ekitangaala



nerstone crew represent at the MTN Kampala 10km run



Phil and Wendy Plager's second wedding reception at Cstone



Chuck Becker and Michael Timmis celebrating with CLA Rwanda



Lydia Byogero and Mary Nabuma graduate university

*A Family of Friends!*



A sports and activity day with the kids

# Youth Corps Homes

*The life together*

## *Kibuli Home*



We are very grateful for the opportunity of mentoring in the Kibuli home. Because Kibuli is an entry point, most of our boys are fresh from the street. Because of this, only three are currently in school and we are hoping that the rest will begin school next year. We had one boy, Idd Anguyo, take his primary leaving exam while another boy, Olum Benson, took his exams at

Lugogo Technical Institute. We also had the opportunity to reunite one boy with his parents and he will be attending school again next year. We will continue mentoring him from home.

The home is also a stepping stone for the mentors. In October, Uncle Denis Okurmu took up another assignment in Mombasa, Kenya working with street boys while Uncle Babu is planning to work at CLA Tanzania in Arusha and Uncle Mugenyi Rogers has moved to the ranch. This year we welcomed Uncle Simon and

Uncle Ibrahim in the home, who are studying at Makerere University, to replace those who have moved on.

Our boys do a number of activities at the home to keep them busy; they play soccer, volleyball, and many other games as well as participate in debates. We see them improving daily and responding to the activities and lessons that we have for them. Please continue praying for and encouraging us. Every time we have a visitor, we are motivated in our work. Much love from the Kibuli home.

*-Simon Edube & Andrew Wanzonele*

## *Bukesa Home*



We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all of you for the support you have tirelessly offered our home. There have been tremendous changes in our home this past year. Two of our beloved uncles (Counselor and Denis) left us in October and we pray that God blesses them in the new positions they have taken. We also welcomed a new uncle, Geoffrey Ongia, who has made us a team of three

mentors and who has become a valuable part in transforming the lives of these children.

Love and togetherness has been the home slogan this year because we believe that there is no power that is greater than love. Love is the most basic human need; it is a stress-reliever, and the best therapy to deal with post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression. To feel a sense of worth and value is extremely powerful. We try to demonstrate the power of love in our community outreach work with the kids. We encourage the creation

of a clean environment and supporting the vulnerable groups in our society. The kids in the home have found community work enjoyable because they see it as a way to appreciate God for his grace, love, and care.

We had a hard time with many cases of chicken pox in our home, and we thank the health department for their support, which enabled us to get through that time. We stand firm together as the Bukesa home and encourage you to offer love as the best gift to the children close to you.

*- By Peter Segawa*

## Mengo Home



Greetings from the girls at the Mengo home! As we look ahead to the New Year we thank

God so much for the past year and the blessings that He has given us. There are four mentors in our home looking after eighteen young ladies. We were able to send some of our girls to be with relatives for the holidays which helps continue the process of reconciliation. By spending time with their families during breaks from school, they are able to repair broken relationships and to build on them.

Recently, we also recruited a new girl into our home – Aracan Kevin. She has been with us for a few weeks now and is enjoying the atmosphere in our home. She joins the other girls, who are all leaders in the home

with different responsibilities such as sports, entertainment, and fellowship coordinators. We are trying to involve them in the sharing of the precepts more and more, which they have taken a lot of ownership of.

There has been a great academic improvement among our girls, which has made us the best academically performing home. Our cleanliness has also improved, so our health care coordinator, Wil-

ter, gave us gifts of appreciation. The improvement in hygiene has reduced the cases of sickness and has noticeably kept us healthier. Our prayer is that next year God helps us shift into a new house.

Mengo home was honored to be the host of Mzee Timmis and Chuck Becker this year - it was a great moment to see our girls present a good drama to them and to be their hosts. We thank you all for your support and we encourage you to come share with our girls what God lays on your heart so that we can stir them up with love to become women of great influence.

-Mugena Brenda

## Lungujja Home



We are so grateful to God for all that he has done in our home. The girls have clearly grown in courage to face the reality of life by understanding the value that lies within each of them. The girls are outstanding in their own areas of influence. Nine out of 16 of them hold leadership positions in their schools and many others participate regularly in the worship choir at church.

Character development lessons are being well-conducted in our home. During those weekly meetings the girls are sharing openly with the mentors about their experiences of transformation. We also do some personal evaluations to check what they are learning through these lessons.

The art projects have really expanded. Eight girls are working hard in jewelry making while eight others have poured themselves into singing and dancing. The dance group is very successful. Also, one of our girls, Viola, has been invited to Kenya to present among 10 other girls who represent the Youth Art Development Entrepreneurship Network (YADEN) at a conference in Nairobi in November. We are proud that they are making proper use of their talents.

Two of our girls are meeting with Amanda, a counselor, every Thursday, which has enabled them to open up about their struggles and find ways to move on from their pasts. We also have a new mentor, Maureen, who has come to replace Florence. She is getting along very well in our home and with the girls. We are happy that you are a part of this work of God's Kingdom. Pray with us for the Spirit of God to take control. - By Miriam Enyaga

## Ntinda Home



As the New Year begins, we are so grateful to God for all the provisions, protection, and transformation that have come to the Ntinda family. We would like to appreciate the coordination office for working hand-in-hand with us to understand and strengthen the vision. We continue to have fellowship and study the precepts, principles, and person of Jesus with the girls. We have engaged the girls in sharing the precepts and what they have learned from their own experiences with us and their friends. One way of making the sharing more relevant is to divide the girls according to their age groups and class levels, since they all have different challenges and capabilities. This has helped them understand and accept who they are in the different aspects of life – spiritual, mental, physical, and social. We also continue community service as a way of giving back to the community where we live and promoting hygiene in our society.

We are in an exciting process of recruiting new girls so that we can fill up our empty spaces and benefit other children of Uganda while strengthening our larger vision. We are very grateful for the opportunity to have an impact on the future generations of Uganda and Africa. The home has served as a ground for our personal growth as responsible future mothers, which hopefully will fulfill Mzee Lukwiya's saying that: "People have to grow, go, and show." Thank you all for your support and be blessed. Happy New Year. -Kayage Maureen



*Gulu homes*

Gulu Youth Corps Girls and Purse of Hope Girls

**GIRLS HOME**

**P**raise God and greetings from the Gulu girls home! The year 2010 ended fine for us. The home was honored to host a big fellowship in October, which involved members from COSA, university students from Gulu, Purse of Hope girls and their mentors, Restore International staff, Eric and Dani, and many other well-wishers. It was a joint fellowship with many purposes and it was a great time for all.



We also had the chance to host a team from the head office in November. Their presence in the home excited the girls since they had not seen those visitors in a long time. They fellowshipped, ate, and interacted in addition to holding a health awareness and sports clinic. At the end of it all, the girls got a volleyball to use during their free time.

The girls have showed improvement in making art pieces such as table cloths, placemats, and sponges. Two of them took the primary leaving exam in November, and we are hoping for the best results since they were good students. God bless you all! *-Kolo Harriet*

**BOYS HOME**

**M**any greetings from our boys! It really is a great pleasure to reflect back and realize where we are in the spirit of brotherhood. The boys home is pushing on smoothly, although not as fully as we would like due to inadequate accommodation. This year I moved to work with the Gulu boys home after mentoring at the Kibuli home, which first enabled me to do this work and begin building my leadership skills. We are graduating two of our older teenage boys who were in a vocational course for motorcycle mechanics. We were able to get them some mechanical equipment in order to help them start a new life. Next year, we hope to recruit more boys in order to fill up a possible new home. Please pray for us for the task that God has given us. We warmly welcome visitors in Gulu. We wish a Happy New Year to our brothers and sisters all over the world. Be blessed. *-Anthony Oyat*

*Lira homes*

**W**hen I look at our life here together with the other mentors and the kids, and I look at how my leadership abilities have grown, I recognize how interesting and challenging it is to "love the un-loveable" unconditionally. Our mentees come from many different backgrounds, and as they grow up we see them learn many lessons. Many have faced domestic violence, which drives these children to the streets and they often come into the home with very tough attitudes. To love someone through their acts of violence due to their pasts is very hard, but it is incredible to see them transformed into someone who can contribute positively to their community. Jesus echoes this virtue - to love unconditionally - which gives us strength and courage to do all that it takes for the mentees. In the little that we have done, we have seen our children help their community in service, taking up leadership positions, and forming the hearts and mind of "servant leaders."

The Lira homes will be closing this year; we will try and resettle as many kids as possible and continue to support them in school throughout the year so that their transitions back to whatever community and family they have can be easier. We extend a great thanks to those who have supported these kids!  
*By Ambrose and Jacob, Alice and Kulsum*

## Makerere Home



The year 2010 was not always easy, but we came through it with determination and endurance. We have learned that mentoring is a life-long process. We take this opportunity to thank God and Cornerstone for investing in each of us and believing that we have the potential and ability to impact our mentees with meaningful relationships, life skills, and the teachings of Jesus. We may not realize it all now, but we know that we also benefit through mentoring these children, that the impact on our lives and our communities is long-term. Our own paradigms continue to change simply due to the mentoring process and teaching the principles of Jesus.

One of the mentees, Ojambo Ronald, who graduated in 2008 is very looked up to by the other kids in the home; he and many others are now influential and key models to both our kids and to the community because of how their lives changed while implementing the teachings of Jesus. While Ronald was in the home, we were able to develop his mental capabilities and vocational skills in plumbing, which opened a door for him with a company called Eco-Nation. He now is earning a living for himself and is making a positive contribution to his community. He always honors our invitations to speak to the boys. He reminds them that all of us seek to live lives that count – not only in the eyes of men, but also in the eyes of God, and that we all desire to make a difference and find the true meaning of life. We are blessed to have such people that the kids can look to as role models while we train them in a better way to live. We are all bound to each other as we continue forward into the New Year. –Charles Labal Ping



The mombasa crew taking the street kids they work with to the beach

## Mombasa Youth Outreach

My time in Mombasa has been the most recent beautiful event that God has blessed my life with. When I left Kampala in the middle of last year, I had little idea how much this next opportunity would change my life. As Daniel Bennon, Rotich Esau, and I work with these street kids in Mombasa I am learning more and more each day about God – the way he loves us all, and my personal relationship with Him. I have seen His mighty saving hand reaching out to save many least, last and lost children who were once forgotten, abandoned, uncared for, and above

all unprotected. Everyday, the troubled faces of the kids we work with here are filled with smiles because they are always waking up to God's wonderful blessings for their lives in such powerful ways. Seeing them smile, laugh and filled with joy inspires me more, strengthens me more, motivates me more and inspires me more to extend the love of Jesus to the rest of those who are still lost and hurting.

We are now living in a house just north of Mombasa off Malindi road. We have 8 boys in the home and are in the process of moving our num-

bers up to 15. These boys we live with are more like our disciples; we share our lives with them and help them undergo deep rehabilitation. The larger impact of our work is in our street outreach programs, where we interact with around 50 youth currently living on the street. We share porridge or bread with them and talk about life- their struggles, their backgrounds and Jesus. The work we are doing here has pushed me to really grow up and be more responsible with my life. Thank you all for your love and support, I hope you come visit soon!

- By Denis Okurmu

## Burundi- Bujumbura Home

AMAHORO! Peace be with you... we are truly blessed to be part of this family of friends and appreciate all the love and support we receive through our relationships with one another in this community.

Mid-way through last year most of our old guys had graduated from the home, and we began the process of selecting new guys to enter. After a period of getting to know them and assessing their compatibility with our idealistic program, Chris and I chose 6 young men from among the applicants who we welcomed into the home. These are all young guys in University with great leadership potential and the spirit in the home has never been better! It has been several months now that we have been living together and



Phil speaks at the Burundi home graduation

we are all learning through relationships and teaching about Jesus.

We were grateful for the opportunity for some of us to attend the Africa Youth Leadership Forum that was held in conjunction with the Prayer Breakfast in Uganda in October. Through our work with young leaders here in Burundi we were able to assemble one of the largest self-

funded teams to attend these Uganda events which were inspiring to us all. Our work among these university students continues to be our mission. As the political climate calms down after our mid-year presidential elections, we are looking forward to all that we have planned both personally and organizationally for the New Year. - By Godfrey Nzrimu

## Rwanda- Kigali Home

Our family is ushering in the New Year in good shape and health. Last year we saw a renewed spirit in the home as we tried to bring our community back to the core values on which we are based. In the process of doing this, we brought in a new batch of guys in the home and brought more intention to our discipleship training and community service work. As we enter the New Year we want to build on our success from last year and really grow in the opportunities presented to us. The kind of growth we are seeking does not come easy. By living together we are constantly being shown our weaknesses and challenged to strive for excellence by our peers. The guys in the home hold each other accountable to the ideals of the teachings we present them with, and inspire one another to practically apply them in their lives. You could say that living together is the "litmus" test for our true character to come out, and this has constantly exposed areas for growth as we build one another up to be men of integrity, influence and leaders in society. Through this process the guys in home are developing a clear focus for their future, destiny and vision for their lives. - By William Kinunu



## Sudan- Juba Home

Greetings from Juba. We celebrated the holiday season very well and we are grateful to God for this New Year, as it is a year of history making for the people of Southern Sudan. Mid-January 2011 marks the end of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (C.P.A) that was signed in 2005 between the National Congress Party (N.C.P) and Sudan People's Liberation Army (S.P.L.A). During this time we are also voting for succession from the north and there is a great spirit of optimism in the air. We hope that the referendum process goes smoothly and violence free as it will quicken the process of our independence as a county from northern Sudan.

We were blessed to have our visitor Tyler Cacek, a photo journalist and friend of the Cornerstone family who came to witness the referendum process here. His presence and kind heart in the home is highly appreciated by the members of our community. Keep praying for us as we look forward for the new Southern Sudan.

Our home continues to have 8 members and we are committed to building them up through sharing the precepts and principles of Jesus both in our lives and in our teaching sessions. Because of the distinguished character of our members, we have developed a very positive reputation in our community- through this we are also able to spread our sphere of influence even farther. This year, we are hoping to find a new residence for the home- ideally we would like to purchase a plot so that we avoid renting issues which seem to keep on increasing every year here! - By Emanuel Gita





Letters from friends and partners

## Sseko sandals



If you've noticed some new designs on the feet of Cornerstone women, you might have Sseko to thank. Sseko Designs is a company founded by Cornerstone visitor Liz Forkin Bohannon (and her now husband and business partner, Ben Bohannon) as an employment opportunity for young Ugandan women to work and save money for their University tuition. It all started when Liz came to Uganda

in 2008 and became friends with the girls at CLA Matuga. She was consistently challenged by the fact that these women saw this incredible education they were receiving through the CLA as such a gift. And these women were not only committed to learning their subjects, but also committed to learning how to love well, to love each other, to reconcile their lives, and to lead their countries.

When she came to learn that many of these incredible young women were struggling to find work to finance their university education, Sseko was born. Liz designed a beautiful leather sandal that ties with fabric straps



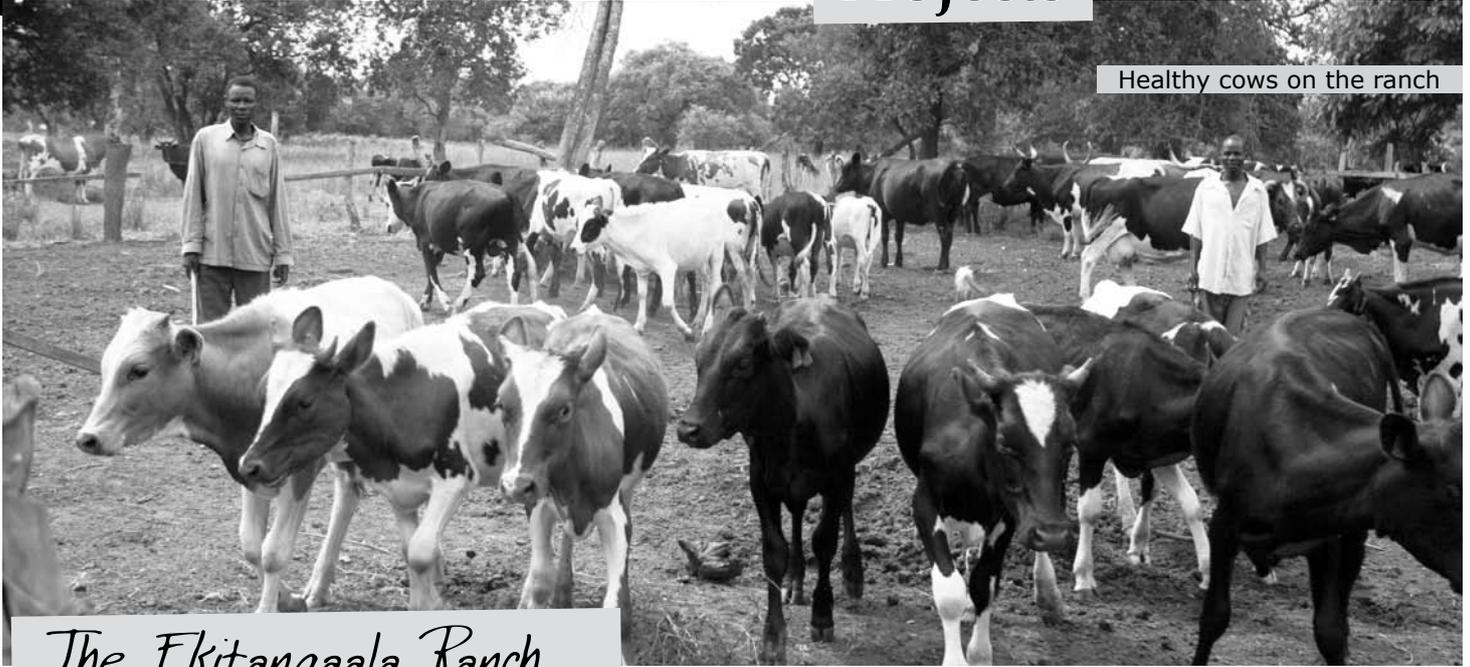
and began selling them in the US. Sseko began with three CLA graduates- Mercy, Mary, and Rebecca. They worked for the 9-month period between high school graduation and University beginning. Through their employment, they were able to pay for their education.

"I had entered into a community in a world of brokenness and despair, where there was so much hope and success. I was just a small part of a simple solution. Some of these young women are from villages that have never seen one of their own women continue on to University. And here they were, two years later - they had received an incredible education and were qualified academically to continue. All they needed was an opportunity - an opportunity to work, an opportunity to succeed and earn and save, to work in a place that was dignified and honoring, to work in an environment and with people who see beyond the now and have a vision for what they will become." -Liz Bohannon

Sseko now employs 17 women, 10 of whom are CLA graduates. Liz operates Sseko from the States with Ben. Julie Beckstrom began working as the Uganda Country Director last January and was joined in May by Cameron Crake, the International Development Coordinator. They enjoy being part of the Cornerstone community and have felt very supported as the Sseko programs have grown and developed. When coming to a new place and developing a new project, it's amazing to have such good friends and supporters.

Sseko used to consist of three girls sitting under a mango tree in at CLA girls in Matuga. Sseko now has its own compound with a workshop and machinery, and it continues to grow. Sseko sandals are being sold all over the world now, primarily in the US in retail stores and through on-line sales. For 2011, Sseko is looking to expand their retail network. If you know of a store that would be interested in selling Ssekos, please contact [Liz@SsekoDesigns.com](mailto:Liz@SsekoDesigns.com). If you'd like a pair for yourself or want to learn more about the story, visit [www.ssekodesigns.com](http://www.ssekodesigns.com).

- By Julie Beckstrom



Healthy cows on the ranch

## The Ekitangaala Ranch



Everything here is beautiful as always... except the tractor tires and our gum boots that never seem to be clean of mud! We always love visitors, so if you are a lover of the environment, the whistling of birds in the background, and the wind

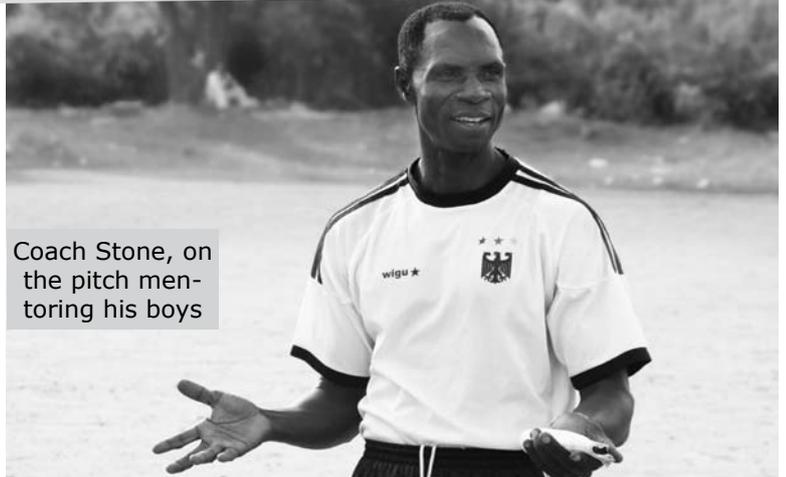
blowing through the trees and bushes - you are most welcome to Ekitangaala ranch.

The new ranch management team is finally really settling into place, as of mid 2010 we had a reshuffling of responsibilities when Richard Kirabira left to pursue his Master's Degree in the U.S. Every Thursday we meet together and discuss the various sub-departments around the ranch, finding ways that we can work in harmony, and interdependence adding to the synergy of our collective work. Our current management approach is much more of a team strategy than it has been in the past. There is no one person who has total authority, so it really requires all of us in our various capacities to support, communicate with, and encourage one another.

Last year, our biggest focus was on animal health, so we made all efforts we could to improve our vaccinations, improve the water quality in the troughs, and improve our calf care procedures. In addition, we have begun a partnership with Makerere University, who have recognized our spirit and professionalism and regularly send students to us for practical portions of their education - in turn providing us with more inspiration and innovative techniques. Because of these efforts we start the New Year with an unprecedented amount of successful births and rapidly growing herds!

- By Rogers Mugenyi

## The Wolves Soccer Club



Coach Stone, on the pitch mentoring his boys

We always enjoy the rest of the holiday season as it affords us time to look back over all our successes and failures last year and find the deeper meaning in it all that we use to start the new year ahead. Indeed 2010 was a year of victory. Our teams won many matches and we received many praises and honors - yet, what I always tell the boys is that the real match we are playing is against our selves, and our lives are the real platform to display our talents: are we scoring goals? Or, are we missing the mark?

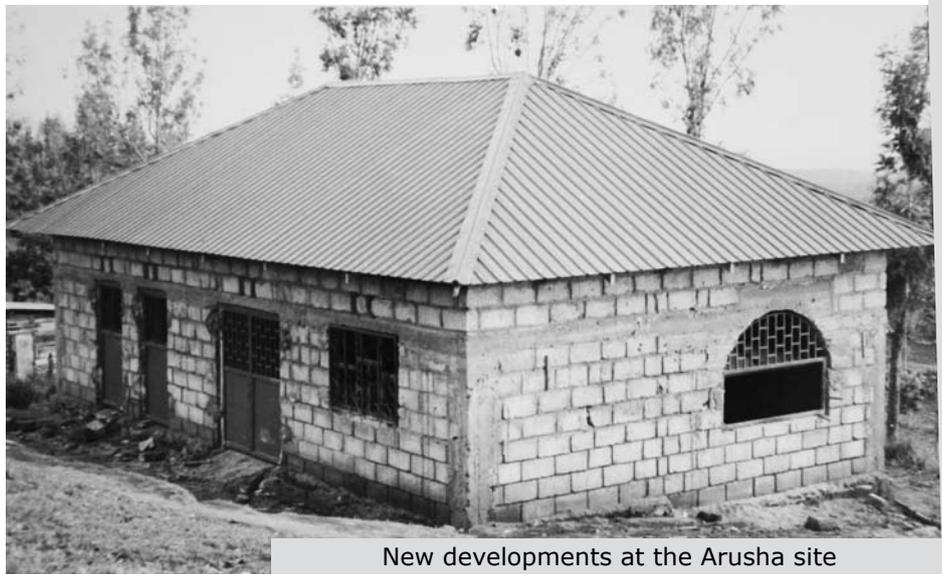
I have seen many young men who have real talent on the pitch, but that may not translate into talent in his character and personal life. Through the example of football, I am able to show them the parallel between sports and other aspects of their lives. It takes discipline to train with a team and grow your talent on the pitch. In the same way, it takes discipline to train your character so that you live a productive and healthy life. Through our discussions on this subject we have learnt how excuses steal our potential - the more excuses we present for the way things are in our lives, the harder it is to make real progress and grow in this world. We learn these lessons for the life and teachings of Jesus - despite working with more Christians and Muslims, Jesus continues to be the basis for how we live, play and approach all challenges we face in life.

- By Coach Stone

## CLA Tanzania

**H**abari! We bring you greetings from Tanzania. The work on our new Leadership Academy in Arusha, Tanzania is coming along on schedule. As the situation stands now, most of the buildings have been roofed and our team led by Julius Mashemererwa has started to put the plastering and furnishings on the buildings. An electrician from TANESCO is doing our wiring and we hope to get electricity on the site soon. The architectural work was done by Kabiru Martin, a friend of ours from Kenya. Babu and Sulah have been involved in the reviewing of the discipleship curriculum to fit in with our approach and community in Tanzania which has a large Muslim population.

We are now pursuing the registration of the school with the help of Peter and Alfred Nyalandu who are Old Boys (Alumni) of CLA Uganda. We are also in the process of carrying out staff recruitment and orientation of the Cornerstone phi-



New developments at the Arusha site

losophy and vision in Tanzania so that the new staff members will have a better grasp of unique our approach. They will be further oriented on the discipleship curriculum as this particularly different because of our unique approach with this school. In mid February, we intend to recruit students since the term begins in early March.

This school in particular will be a new challenge for all of us in that we will be pushing the boundaries of a principle that until now,

most of us have only talked about in theory. That is, Christians and Muslims living together in community, and learning to find common ground in Jesus. These groups have traditionally been in conflict with one another, but we believe that we can find a higher ideal that we share and can forge peaceful relationships with one another that will encourage and inspire us as we nurture these young men and women who will be of great influence in their nation one day. - By Julius Ejalam

## The Widows Program

**T**he virgin will be with child and will five birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel-which means, "God with us." Matthew 1:23

We started off last year feeling battered and bruised as a ministry. We had lost 3 widows to AIDS in 2009... and we were caring for other sick women and we had land that we didn't have money to develop. Not knowing what else to do, the widows and I spent some hours in prayer. We lifted our hands to God and praised him, glorified him; then we cried, quite literally, out to God asking him to be with us...in all the sickness, in all the poverty, in all the misery. More specifically, we asked Him to keep all the widows safe in 2010... that 2010 would be a year where everyone in our ministry lived to see 2011 as a testimony of God's goodness and mercy. We prayed for wisdom and financial resources to develop our land. We prayed that those who were the sickest would be made well. Humbly, we called on the name of Jesus...the name above all names...the one who is able to do more than we can ask or imagine. Then we stepped boldly into 2010.

Now, as we enter the New Year, I have looked back in retrospect on how rewarding our prayers were. I



Joyce

Kari

am pleased to say that not one woman has died last year...not one! In miraculous ways, God came down and sat with us - he reached out his healing hand and did what we cried out for him to do. All of us who started 2010 will see 2011. Agnes should have died...she has end stages of AIDS and has cancer of the stomach. I have seen her on death's doorstep so many times this year, but somehow God continues to do for her what he did for Lazarus so many years ago. Joyce Anywar was barely living in August. Every night I went to sleep expecting the phone to ring...to hear of her passing. Yet, I walked with her down to the market the other day...still HIV positive, but strong and full of life. She knows the only reason she is alive is because Jesus decided to heal her. These are just two of the many widows who were so sick this year, but death had no power over them. Immanuel was with us.

So it is with great joy and thanksgiving that we closed 2010. The Dorcas Widows stand as a testimony of God's goodness. God was with us; our dear sweet Immanuel never left our side and this year we all lived to praise him for it. It is with this optimistic stride on our step that we look forward to all that is in store for the new year.

- By Kari Miller

Having said this there are two important points that follow. **First;** *This phenomenon of intentions producing change usually does not happen overnight – it often takes quite a bit of time to shift things that have been fixed in one way.* **Secondly;** *The best intentions will never amount to anything if they are not followed up with the small daily choices that move us step by step down the path in the right direction. Faith without works is dead.*

An illustration of this would be like someone who digs a ditch in their garden through which water could run. With time it gradually grows deeper and becomes a permanent part of the landscape. The ditch represents the intention you have set and the flowing water represents the wise choices you make day after day.

**“We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year’s Day.”**  
**-Edith Lovejoy Pierce**

Each day lived with intention and with wisdom drawn from the divine source paves the way for better progress the following day. And the good news is that there is a spring of water that we can draw from that gives us the energy to keep refreshing our lives when we get weary of growing in our capacity to meet life’s challenges and making our contribution to the world around us.

That spring of water is described in the last pages of the scriptures: *“I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them...The one who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new...To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water.”* Revelation 21:1-5

This hope filled promise was recorded by John, on the Island of Patmos.

It speaks to the thirsty hearts of the entire human race and answers

“Another fresh new year is here . . .  
 Another year to live!  
 To banish worry, doubt, and fear,  
 To love and laugh and give!  
 This bright new year is given me  
 To live each day with zest . . .  
 To daily grow and try to be  
 My highest and my best!  
 I have the opportunity  
 Once more to right some wrongs,  
 To pray for peace, to plant a tree,  
 And sing more joyful songs!”  
**-William Arthur Ward**

our deepest longing for something more, something new.

In the shockingly graphic movie *“The Passion of Christ”* by Mel Gibson there is a scene where Jesus was struggling to carry the cross up the hill in the final moments before his crucifixion. After falling for the third time, in a moment of anguish his Mother rushes in to comfort her suffering son. As her hand touches his battered face. He looks at her, and with words addressed to every human being says: *“Behold, I make all things new.”*

Before this movie was released to the public there was an advanced screening where Mel Gibson invited a group of religious leaders and other dignitaries for a private viewing of the still unfinished film. One of those present was a devout Catholic, human rights lawyer called Keith Fournier. He says that immediately after the screening when those present were discussing the film with Mel Gibson one evangelical Christian leader said: *“Mel, that film was so faithful to the biblical text, except for one scene.”* *“Which one”* asked Gibson? *“When Jesus meets his mother and says “Behold, I make all things new”, he continued “that is not in the Gospel account.”*

Fournier said Gibson (who is not exactly a theologian) was momentarily taken aback. But before he could respond Fournier himself felt compelled to disagree: *“To the ...contrary,”* I said *“that scene summarizes the very meaning of the Gospel, and in fact is profoundly theological. It takes the words of Jesus from the Book of Revelation and*

*positions them right within His redemptive offering of Himself in his suffering, passion and death. It was one of the most powerful moments of the film!”* I insisted. *“Good”* said Gibson *“I wasn’t going to change it anyway!”*

**“I Make All Things New.”** That is the offer God made through Jesus to the cry of the human race - to be made new. A cry that I believe we can see reflected in all the various aspirations people have as one year ends and another begins: We want new things, we need a new beginning.

**“I Make All Things New.”** This statement really does seem to capture the entire essence of what was so significant about Jesus’ purpose for coming into human history - to make all things new. And, it leads us directly to ponder the question: What really did change in a new way with Jesus coming to earth?

I guess everyone would answer this question differently but here are nine core conclusions I have come up over the years - that constantly inspire me to set high intentions in order to keep me moving on in my personal journey with each new year.

Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each new year find you a better man.  
**-Benjamin Franklin**

## *Nine ways Jesus Makes all thing New:*

**1. He gave humanity a New sense of Family.** Jesus taught the Brotherhood of mankind. With Jesus a whole new sense of relationship and community came into being that transcended all the old ways that mankind have been dividing themselves against each other since the dawn of humanity. Mainly we have been hating and killing each other over ethnic and religious differences. 100 million humans were killed by fellow humans in the last century alone. Jesus said to the crowds (and to us) *“...you*

are all brothers." Mt. 23:8 When I finally saw that - it gave me a whole new way of relating to people who are different from me. Sure, I have my four biological brothers, and my American brothers, and my "Christian" brothers and sisters - but it has been a liberating discovery for me to be able to go anywhere in the world and relate to the people I find there as "my brothers and sisters" regardless of creed or color.

**2. He taught us a New concept of God.** Jesus taught the Fatherhood of God - we can relate to our creator as a **loving father**. In learning to call God our father, in knowing we are 'his offspring' created in His image - it naturally leads to the idea that every human being must be my brother or sister as they bear the image of my father. - "...you have one father who is in Heaven." Mt. 23:9 So, He is **our** Father not just mine.

**3. He opened a New way Home.** Jesus' death in some mysterious way that we will only fully understand on the other side of eternity was a game changer on the cosmic level - in terms of opening a Way 'to bring many sons and daughters into glory'. As the sacrificial lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world, he bore our punishment or what is called karma in the East - (a man must reap what he sows). Through Him we are the recipients of 'grace' which means 'un-merited favor'. This in no way reduces the need for us to work through our own transformation but rather in recognition that our own efforts will never be adequate - it carries us over that gulf into an eternal kind of life that can be entered into now.

**4. He re-newed our focus on the Main Thing.** Jesus taught that the main thing or "*the greatest commandment*" is to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and to love our neighbor as our self" - even when that neighbor is our 'enemy.' At the time of Jesus the Jews had multiplied the 10 Commandments given to Moses up to over 600. Jesus boiled it all back down to these two. "*Do this and you will live*" - was how he answered the question: "*What must I do to inherit*

*eternal life?*" Luke 10:25 The more complex someone's theology gets the more they seem to lose sight of these two greatest commandments that sum up all '*the law and the prophets.*'

**5. He provided a New Hope for the world.** Jesus taught that "*The Kingdom of God*" is now "*coming on earth*", with the power to transform the present chaos toward something that conforms more with what is "*in heaven.*" This gives us great hope: "*I have overcome the world,*" He said. So, regardless of what I see around me, if we fast forward to the end of it all - He is there and His Kingdom will have no end. It's a kingdom of love, peace and joy - a wedding feast where all are invited.

**6. He showed us a New path toward spiritual maturity.** The way up is down. Jesus' life and death were a road map that we must follow. It teaches us that something in us must die in order for something greater to be born anew. This is the death to the ego, the small self. "*Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains a single grain but if it dies it bears much fruit.*" Jn 12:25... "*Unless you become as a Child.*" The most repeated precept of Jesus in the scriptures is: "*Whoever humbles himself*

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are new..." **Apostle Paul**

*will be exalted but he who exalts himself will be humbled.*" To follow Jesus is an ego-stripping journey. His path toward spiritual maturity involves the process of subtraction - letting go of and dying to the self - not just acquiring the right set of facts about a belief system - sometimes seen as the formula for 'being saved.' Real salvation is freedom, liberation - and that largely includes freedom from all the self centered programming that drives much of our lives.

**7. He releases a New Power into human lives.** Jesus taught that His spirit is available and can be in us now - the Holy Spirit that guides us into all truth. "...*the Father...will give you another Counselor to be with you forever*

*- the Spirit of truth...he lives with you and will be in you.*" Jn. 14:16 We can ask and receive the divine Spirit into our lives.

**8. He revealed a New sense of our Self.** The basic human experience is one of being cut off, alienated and separated from God. Jesus operated out of a sense of oneness with God and invited us to do the same. To think like Jesus and to talk like Jesus is to say: "*I and the Father are one.*" The truth is you couldn't get away from God even if you tried to - that sense of separation is an illusion. Change your whole way of understanding where God is: -you are in Him and He is in you. "*In Him we live and move and have our being.*" Acts 17:28

**9. He modeled a New style of Leadership.** Jesus came with humility, to serve and give himself as a living sacrifice for humanity. To a world that worships the successful, the wealthy, the powerful and the famous this is an entirely new role-model. Down through our history - the all conquering mighty warrior with a raised sword leading an army has been the classic hero of the human race. Now here comes one in the 'form of servant' wielding spiritual power rather than physical force. And, He asks us to follow him in service to the least, the last and the lost -in a revolution of love not violence. **This is a whole new kind of leader.**

Well, if that kind of list is not an impulse, intention and inspiration to "make all things new" I don't know what is! The world changed for ever with the impact of these ideas breaking into the hearts and minds of humanity. And they surely contain the potential to make our own lives new day after day as we meditate on them and make the hundreds of little daily choices that can align our lives with them. Every day is a new day, a new beginning to the rest of our life if we choose to live it in alignment with the One who makes all things new.

# "I make all things new"

## Thoughts from Tim

In the late afternoon of New Year's eve - I was in the center of Kampala city running a few errands. As I was walking down the main street I came across an envelope on the side-walk with the words printed on it: **"Your invitation."**

I picked it up as it looked to have something in it. Inside I found an advertisement for an overnight prayer rally that a local church was holding that evening. At the bottom of this advert it said, "Write your prayer requests on the back of this paper." Turning it over I found a list of over twenty things handwritten in simple, broken English in a way that brought to mind one of the many poorly educated and low income laborers or security guards employed in that part of the city.

His list was for the basic necessities of life that so many of the common people struggle with in this part of the world, like; *"We need clothes, shoes. We need a mattress. We need school fees for the children. We need money in the account. We are tired of being poor. We need chairs in the house..."* and at the bottom... *"We need new things.""*

As I read it I was once again poignantly reminded of how blessed I am and how my list of concerns would probably be considered as mere luxuries to a large percentage of the world's families that are barely at the subsistence level of trying to keep body and soul together.

I felt like God had arranged for that to be on the street for me to find that afternoon. It was my invitation to step back, count my blessings and reframe my state of mind anew on that day. Life is constantly giving us such invitations if we are awake enough in the moment to see them and then to choose to take them.

As the New Year gets under way, we all are invariably drawn to some degree of reflection about what happened in the past year and what we hope for in the New Year. This takes place in regards to our career, relationships, finances, spiritual aims, etc. And naturally from this we get into the usual discussions about what New Year's resolutions we are making. Everybody seems to react differently to this tradition of the promises we make to ourselves. Some like it, some hate it, some are indifferent about it.

Regardless of how we feel about it - two facts remain: **First**, *there is a divine urge toward perfection, towards growth, towards continual renewal that keeps flowing into all of life -*

*including the human soul.*

**Secondly**, *to a large degree we are responsible through the choices we make and the intentions we set for ourselves as to how strongly and how well that flow will carry us forward during our time on earth.*

*These principles remain constant. It is just our lack of discipline or ignorance that limits their potential in bringing transformation to our lives.*

In making New Year's resolutions, people set intentions for all sorts of things - like quitting a bad habit, looking for a new job, getting in shape, etc. But, real lasting change always proves to involve hard work because old habits die hard. And change in our behaviors can never happen unless some strong new impulse, insight or inspiration breaks in to disrupt the normal pattern of things. So, on the personal level, the impulse that serves as the starting point for change is a strong desire, a decision or an intention that we make, for things to be different.

We all possess the ability to activate this power for personal transformation by clearly setting our intentions which enables the process of change to begin. This is the creative power God has given the human soul. As we reflect on, envision and resolutely set our intentions we enable the forces of life to come into alignment in a supportive way that can make even what looks impossible to become possible. God cannot do much in our lives without us initiating this process in this manner. This consistently was the teaching of Jesus on the principle of faith - one of the subjects he talked about the most.

On the other hand, when we neglect to consistently establish clear intentions for our lives, it becomes commonplace for us to stagnate or drift along without any progress or growth from year to year. To use the old adage: "If we aim at nothing, we will surely hit it." Another one says: "If we don't change the direction in which we are headed, we are liable to end up there."

Intention can be defined as: *To set our minds on a purpose, a plan or a vision - to define our highest aspirations, to aim at something."*

Everything is created twice - first in someone's mind and then in the outer world. In the same way the intentions we set for our lives create the framework on which things can take shape.

