

Cornerstone

Newsletter & Magazine July 2013

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



THAT THEY MIGHT BE ONE

An eleven-year study carried out by researchers at Harvard University analyzed 650 different ethnic groups across 190 countries and found East Africa to be one of the most ethnically diverse regions on earth. Possibly more shocking, their research found Uganda in particular as the MOST ethnically diverse nation in the entire world due to its population concentration, plethora of tribes and accommodation of international refugees.

The history of the world is a story of population migrations and cultural evolution. As nomads transitioned into agriculturalists, people groups settled down and organized themselves to develop civilizations and a shared identity with their tribe mates.

This identity, reinforced with cultural traditions, religious beliefs and unique physical adaptations of coloring or body shape, became reference points to create groups of 'us' against 'them.' And, since the dawn of time, these lines that we draw between ourselves have been used to justify all manner of injustices and atrocities against those people different than "us."

In modern times, urban migration, globalization, natural disasters and war have all continued to displace societies to a degree where humans are now forced to interact with others who are different from them on a much greater scale than ever before. But at the same time, in this current information age, we have access to more knowledge about these different peoples, their cultures and religions, than ever before.

This information can serve to reinforce our prejudices of 'us' vs. 'them', or we can use it to become more understanding, compassionate, and unconditional in our love for those who are different from us. Jesus spoke about this constantly: "Love your neighbors. Why do you greet only your own people? Love your enemies... etc."

And, in His final prayer to his Father, his heart cry was: "...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." (John 17:21). In truth, when we follow his way, there is no 'us' and 'them' - there is only 'us'. We are all in this together, a family of brothers and sisters, children of God.

This newsletter is about the 'Unity & Reconciliation' aspect of our work: Finding peace where others seek division and persecution for their differences. Despite our differences, we as a community, seek to find our shared values in Jesus. This creates a place where the fruits of the spirit flourish (love, joy, peace, tolerance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control... etc), and where we play our small part in bringing the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

Inside



Updates on Cornerstone schools



Overview of COSA activities around the region



Pictorial of various events



Letters from friends: Noelle Gornik

and...

- Updates on Cornerstone schools, Youth Corps, the Alumni Programs, & others
- Thoughts from Tim on "Loving Our Neighbors"



Cornerstone Development Africa

We are 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 social transformation of their communities, nation and region.*

** Compassion for the poor with a focus on young people.*

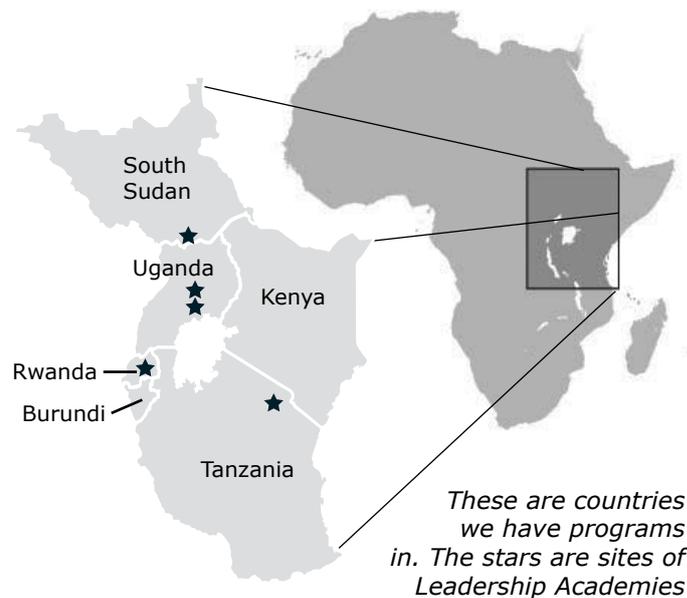
** Working across the lines of culture and faith differences.*

** Maintaining a long-term partnership with each other*

** Loving God and neighbor.*

Cornerstone Development was established in Uganda in 1988 to help in the rebuilding and development of the nation as it was emerging from a turbulent past. In recent years we have expanded to Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi and Southern Sudan. All our programs are directed towards helping under-privileged children, with a special emphasis on youth leadership development. Since its inception the work has steadily expanded to include over 2,000 young people today- in a variety of programs including five schools, ten homes for homeless kids, 4 homes for university youth and sports programs - all designed for providing love, education and character formation.

Our core focus is on “Developing the Cornerstones of Africa’s Next Generation”. That is, to raise up future leaders with a shared vision of positively transforming their communities and nations, as an outgrowth of their own personal transformation. Our approach involves creating loving, family-like environments in our schools and other programs for under-privileged young people, while empowering them with education and character formation in order for them to become leaders. Furthermore, the young people coming through our programs are forming a movement that seeks to make a contribution to the betterment of society while promoting reconciliation



across all that is dividing humanity. We as a community are a living model of this kind of unity in diversity, in that we are composed of all the different tribes, nationalities, cultures and religious backgrounds found in this part of the world.

In our character development curriculum we teach the timeless, universal principles of forgiveness, honesty, integrity, compassion, kindness, hard work, humility, and service to the less fortunate, as exemplified in the teachings Jesus and the perennial wisdom of all traditions, but without affiliation to any one institutional religious group.

See more online:

www.CornerstoneDevelopment.org

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Our core focus is 'youth leadership development' - so in addition to the schools, all the various programs we run serve this focus by providing a practical "training ground" where the graduates of our schools can learn to serve and pass on to others what they have received. Each year we put out two magazine's like this one. At the end of last year we highlighted some of the People in our work, and this magazine will highlight Cornerstone's Programs.

CORNERSTONE SCHOOLS

In our schools, we seek to create a life transforming learning environment that will mold young men and women into future leaders whose lives fully reflect the character qualities and leadership principles embodied in the life of Jesus. We mold young people coming from humble backgrounds, but with high potential, into responsible leaders in all fields and disciplines who will be able to serve society beyond their own self interest. It is a program that brings in youth from various religious and tribal backgrounds, to learn to live together and love one other, as a foundation for a movement of integrity and virtue.

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ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

These programs aim at creating a long- term relationship with the students who have graduated from our schools and have joined post secondary institutions of higher learning. This is done through holding regular fellowships, maintaining intentional relationships, providing appropriate skills development workshops, and continual mentoring. We believe that the real impact of all the schools will be measured by where all these graduates end up in life as they stay together to make a difference in their nations.

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YOUTH MENTORING

The vision of this program is to empower the young men and women whom we have invested in at the schools, to reach out to the next generation and pass on what has been given to them. It is a practical training ground where they can begin exercising their leadership potential, and cause real meaningful change in communities of at-risk youth. These consist of more than a dozen homes in various locations that provide homeless children with a sense of family while meeting their basic needs of love, food, shelter and guidance.

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AFRICA YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

At the heart of AYLF is the dream that African leaders will know how to reconcile relationships, speak the truth without being religiously divisive, see people without labels or stereotypes, and ultimately love each other and those whom they lead. We work in most of the major universities in East Africa with student leaders who represent a total student population of over 250,000 young people.

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CORNERSTONE SCHOOLS

CORNERSTONE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Tanzania

One of the unique aspects of our work in Tanzania lies in our desire to find reconciliation and unity across the Christian / Muslim divide in the spirit of love - through finding our common ground in principles, precepts, and person of Jesus. From our staff members to our students, we all come from widely different backgrounds. In Tanzania nearly half of the population is from Muslim backgrounds, much more than in other countries where Cornerstone works.

Although academics are the primary focus in a school setting, our deeper purpose is in the invisible life-transforming work that happens within our students. And, when we focus on what unites us, rather than divides us - when we create a community of love, joy, peace, and forgiveness - we more fully realize the unique divine purpose and potential in all of us. When we 'lift up' or exalt our differences we tend to get more divided among ourselves. But, we have found the secret in Jesus' words. "When I am lifted up, I will draw ALL men". For He is respected by both Muslims and Christians alike.

Now entering our third year, CLA Tanzania is really starting to reach maturity as a school. After completing the finishing touches on our final phase of construction at the beginning of the year, our campus is now a real sight to see! We have come a long way, and it is really great to have witnessed the whole process of creating something where there was once nothing. We would like to make a special comment of appreciation to our building manager and engineer, Julius Mashe, and his team, for the tireless work they put into the project over the few years and the care with which they executed their duties.

Not long after winding up the chapter of construction, we also crossed another significant milestone: Our first graduation! We graduated our first class of students in March, and ushered them into the first of CLA Alumni in Tanzania. This really was a memorable event

that may never be erased from the minds of our pioneer students for it was the culmination of our investment in them at the school, and a final validation that our community really lives up to its reputation of excellence. Our VIP guests were: Uncle Tim Kreutter and Hon. Member of Parliament Lazaro Nyalandu, Deputy Minister for Lands and Tourism. They both inspired our students with great words of wisdom and filled them with encouragement for their next chapter of life.

This being our first year of sitting the national exams in Tanzania, everyone was eagerly awaiting the results to see how we performed. We are proud to announce that we did VERY well, and were ranked 6th in the region - not an easy feat for a new school! All of the students are proud of their achievement and the fact that they are now applying to attend University.

As it is when one class leaves, another must take its place, so in May we carried out our recruitment for the incoming class of Senior 5 students, traveling as far East, West and South, as Rukwa, Mbeya and the coastal island of Zanzibar. Tanzania is three times as big as Uganda so the recruitment process is much more logistically challenging - there are some regions which you have to travel for two days on bus to reach! However, we are blessed with staff that are really ambitious in reaching out to the various recruitment sites, and diligent in taking time to really get to know and interview each candidate with care.

In other news, we had a wonderful and long visit from Mr. David Ojok Oyite a graduate of CLA Uganda (1998), who is the new Headmaster for the Leadership Academy in South Sudan. His involvement in the school was primarily to become more familiar with the inner workings of the school as he attempts to transplant the culture into the new country. His presence for the month he was with us left a permanent mark on the students, as witnessed by the letters of appreciation he was given when leaving.

By Julius Ejalam

CLA GIRLS

Warm greetings from CLA Girls. God has been so gracious to us and we've witnessed his hand of protection and provision over the years; we do appreciate our friends for your continued love and support to us. Our school has been performing well consistently over the last few years – and this year is no exception. We are all proud of the achievements our girls reach both on campus, and after they graduate.

Although we do place a great deal of energy on academics, as most schools should, our school is one that is also rich with extra curricular activities. One of these is the source of the Nile Award - a prestigious international youth award program hosted by the Duke of Eidenburg that enables students to develop special skills, a heart of service and the physical well being of participants. Through this, students are involved in making crafts, writing, teaching character development in schools in our neighborhood, as well as going on long hikes and camping expeditions. Recently, a group did a 48 kilometer hike in 3 days! Activities like these really do improve their self-esteem and enrich their leadership potentials. Additionally, such shared adventures also enhances the unity and reconciliation dimensions that we are fostering among our students.

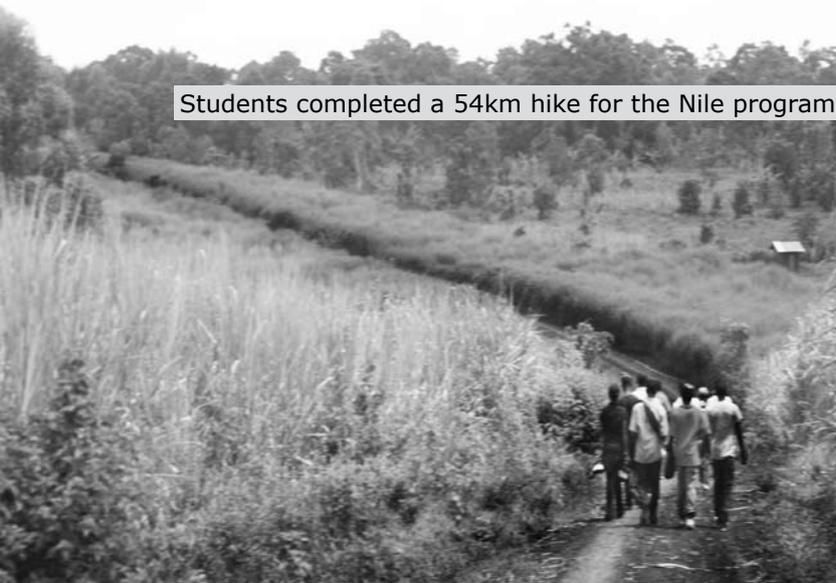
We also pay special attention to work on teaching entrepreneurial skills to our students. Students are organized in groups called the Contemporary Arts and Crafts where they learn basic entrepreneurial skills like accounting, marketing, book and record keeping among others. They make crafts like necklaces, earrings, bags, decoration materials and also do baking projects such as simple snacks which they sell off and earn income. This enables them to learn different skills which are crucial for today's world.

The sports and games program which is now part of the school weekly schedule has helped our girls get physically fit and active in class. They're grouped into what we call houses which are Joy, Patience, Peace and Faith. We do inter-house competition and it is exciting to see how hard each house works and trains to win.

Finally, one of the CLA old girls, Evelyn Kiconco, joined the team this year and she has been of great support and help to the girls. We're indeed glad to have her. You are all welcome to visit CLA Girls and we wish you God's blessings as you continue to be apart of the great work God is doing in Cornerstone. SHALOM!!

By Sarah N. Mwesigwa

Students completed a 54km hike for the Nile program

**CLA BOYS**

We start off each year with the recruitment of a new Senior 5 class, and it is always a time of anticipation and excitement as the recruits are sifted through and brought in from all the different corners of Uganda. It is a challenging process, but a time of coming to terms with apparent differences and learning that we have more in common than not. The "unity in diversity" principle that has been created here presents a powerful culture of reconciliation in the spirit of Jesus amongst the students. Some students come from tribes that often hold deep prejudices and wicked suspicions about other tribes, and now they enter a dorm room where they have to share a double-decker bed together! Students have said that they sleep in fear the first few nights, until they slowly begin to learn that these other people are all really just like them inside – some even end up becoming best friends with someone from a group that they were once told were worst enemies. All this is done in the spirit of Jesus, who prayed that all those who believe in Him 'may be one.'

Irrespective of the different faith backgrounds, the different tribes, and the different cultures found in our staff and student body, our community only seems to grow stronger as the years pass. I believe that this "one-ness" in Jesus is achieved day-by-day through constant fellowship with one another in a variety of different platforms. Our regular fellowships include staff fellowships, care group fellowship, morning devotions, and Sunday fellowships. However, there are many other ways that we fellowship, that are not scheduled, but are found in the mentoring and intentional relationships that occur by just living together and spending time with each other.

This year we also saw some new changes in the teaching staff as we attempted to turn a new chapter in the history of our school. We have now: Aine Joan, Mulinda Richard, Simon Ebamu Edakasi, and Besigye Simon as some of these new faces. In this spirit we have also made a renewed effort to involve ourselves more in community outreach both around the ranch, at Ekitangaala Transformation High School, and in the surrounding villages. The students also went on a mission to Kyenjojo district which has been very successful. Thanks to all of you for your great support may the good Lord reward you abundantly.

This year has been a big privilege for me to serve God in the capacity as headmaster. It is an opportunity to influence the next generation to become people who are first and foremost God fearing and also people who can positively influence society for the good of mankind, fulfilling their true purpose on earth.

By Kenneth Tumwine



CORNERSTONE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Rwanda

‘Let your light shine’ is the figurative motto of our school, and I can say that right now we literally ARE shining! With the recent completion of our school electrification project, CLA Rwanda is now fully connected to electricity and we are a radiant community on the hill. We believe this will directly feed into the productivity of our students and help support their academic aspirations by giving them a more conducive studying environment. I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciations to everyone who made this possible.

In early May, we received our newest class, joining Senior Four at the academy. It’s a group of enthusiastic young people, all of whom are very happy to be a part of our family and for the opportunity to acquire such a holistic education. These young people come from all different regions of the country – each with their own unique backgrounds. Seeing them integrate into our culture of unity and reconciliation truly is awesome. One of the ways that they really bridge these divides is through the Care Group element of our community. This is where small cell groups commit to each other, to spend time in prayer and fellowship with each other through-out the week; they also eat meals together among other activities, and form intentional relationships of accountability with one another. This sense of belonging, and focusing on the common ground in Jesus is very unique to our learning environment as a school compared to others in the region.

Academically, we have continued to exhibit an upward trend in excellence. The 2012 S.6 class scored very well on the national exams, and although there was no official ranking of the best schools countrywide by the examination council, as in previous years, we believe our candidates were the best. The Eastern Province government did however rank the best performing schools and CLA was on top and received a certificate of recognition from the governor.

This year we also made a big step forward with the completion of a new Science Laboratory that now effectively meets the needs of our science students. It contains two sections, one for the Physics and another for the Chemistry/Biology departments with their respective stores for materials and apparatus.

In an exciting field trip, CLA also recently visited the Rwandan Parliament in Kigali. It was a great time for the students to meet and sit with honorable members of parliament, and we were the first school in the nation to ever do something like this. The students asked questions about how the Parliament operates and many of them affirmed, in faith, that one day those seats will be theirs - it was so inspirational for them. We were joined on this trip by Uncle Tim Kreutter, our brothers Cohen and William and also members of the CLA staff. The following day CLA was in the news on local radios and the national television.

In our sports department, we are organizing a special Inter-class Sports Tournament this year. We are having Football, Basketball and Volleyball competitions with our student body with the various classes teaming up to compete. The winners will get awarded and prized during the annual visit of Mzee Timmis. It is in such activities that the students put away their differences and stand united as cohort units. In other competitions, we also participated in the National School Sports Tournaments: The biggest news with this, is that our basketball team was the best at the Sector level and second best at the District level.

Thank you all for your prayers and support. CLA Rwanda will continue to shine and be the light in the land of a thousand hills. It is an honor to share with you great work we are a part of in this country where our school has established itself as a center of excellence and character transformation, and one of the national academic icons here in Rwanda.

By Samuel K. Birondwa

Ekitangaala Transformation High School

This year we have enrolled 350 students in our high school, which is about a normal capacity for us. Each year, as our reputation grows, the diversity of our student body grows as well – so, we now have students from all over Uganda in our boarding facilities, we have Sudanese, Rwandese, and we even have a large contingent of students from Tanzania. The spirit amongst our staff is high, and we have accomplished several key projects that have given the school a boost. To name a few, our electricity challenges have been met by the recent acquisition of a power generator, some of our class room floors have been re-finished, we finished work on a playground for the students, and have done some landscaping that has beautified our campus. I can say we are doing good!

One of our pervading challenges is in maintaining orderly conduct in the student population. Being that we are a school that is open to the public with a very large student population, we have more disciplinary issues than other Cornerstone schools. With so many students, it is a real challenge for us to achieve a common spirit of unity on campus, and for us to spend one-on-one time mentoring every student till they get it. Even still, there is much is we can do through our care group system and the leadership empowerment and character development curriculum, based on the Principles of Jesus, that we teach.

We know that when people live in unity, it does not necessarily mean that they have done away with their differences. Instead when they live in unity, it means that they adopt a new way of life, and new culture which accommodates their differences. Thus, unity nevertheless should not be mistaken for uniformity. In most cases uniformity is external, on the surface, where as unity is internal or inside-out.

Unity exists where a group of people come together in one accord despite their differences in culture, sex, race, color, tribe, opinion, personality, or geographical background. Unity is characterized by sincerity, respect for one another, proper communication and listening, patience, love and care for one another. Unity is worked upon and requires a lot of effort for it to be attained and maintained. Maintaining unity is a continuous process, it needs to be watered all the time for it to be real and bear fruit.

This is something that I believe we can achieve in a student population such as we have. As a leader of the school, unity as a spiritual and social value has helped me to manage the affairs of the school. I apply the principle and values that I have learned from Cornerstone such as love, patience, respect for self and others, proper communication among others.

Reconciliation on the other hand is a social tool used in conflict resolution and uses a peaceful approach. In other words, it's a situation where conflicting parties resolve their conflict, forgive each other and restore the lost relationship. When you reconcile with one another you stop bringing back the hurting history. Instead you concentrate on issues that foster unity, love and peaceful living with each other. Promoting these values of unity and reconciliation in our school really does make it unique in Uganda, and it is our dream that it will unleash the hidden potential of the young people we work with.

By Charles Katagira

Ekitangaala Primary School

The population at the school continues to grow year by year and we are always trying to keep up with class-room and dorm space to meet these demands. We had a new building built for the teachers and our solar system has been boosted up with two new solar panels and also new batteries put in place. We have also been recently given two new big cooking pots to supplement the few we had been using and replace damaged ones - which has helped boost our school lunch feeding capacity – we are continually grateful to the Head office and support that they provide for us through our supporters.

Along with our size, we also grow stronger academically with each year that passes – a trend that we hope to continue, as all of our teachers are very serious at work in their classes. This year, we received a Certificate of Good

Performance from the District under Kakooge Sub-County for our work, indicating our leading role in academic excellence in the District. This has really let us build stronger relationships with the District officials, and establish our good reputation.

We have been blessed this year with several visitors who have visited the school and had various activities with the children which include reading, drawing, and sport activities. A group also repaired the playground equipment which has improved our children's sport activities. We are grateful to all who have invested so much in us, and we know that it is our job to pass on this blessing in our work with the young people we are bringing up.

By Jovia Ayo



COSA Uganda

Recent Couples Retreat

Our success as a community, and ultimately as a movement of integrity and virtue, lies in the strength of our relationships: in small groups, that meet around a common unifying interest. In our circles of alumni we are blessed with a variety of talents, religious orientations, ethnic backgrounds and professional affiliations. The natural path for groups or societies in Uganda, has been to use these differences as factors of division – reasons to set one group apart from another. Interestingly, it is these same differences that we know hold the potential of our greatest strength, if we can remain together - finding unity in the spirit of Jesus. Through this process, we have gradually learned over the years, one by one, to appreciate diversity rather than resent it. We meet in various platforms for fellowship: In our intentional covenant relationships, in our class care-groups, in our professional small groups, in our class reunions, in our special interest forums, and other similar 'together spaces'. Here are some updates from a selection of these forums:

Couples Fellowship: This is an effort to bring together couples, for meaningful fellowship and relationship building. Attendance of our monthly gatherings has been steadily growing over the years as more and more of our alumni find their life partners. To meet this increasing demand, we recently had our first, annual Couples Retreat where around 25 couples spent a weekend together with special program facilitators: Asa and Shar Curry. It was a wonderful getaway from the weekly routine of 'work life' and it served to help us gain a deeper understanding on issues that affect our marriages (i.e. conflict management, finances, relationships with in laws, mutual respect, etc...). Our next focus is on encouraging such regular gatherings amongst our alumni who live up-country.

Business Forum: One of our strongest professional fellowships is the Business Forum. This is a platform where our alumni entrepreneurs can share with each other pertinent issues, network and pool resources, as well as seek mentor-

ing and guidance from older practitioners. One very dynamic aspect of the group is the COSA Venture Fund, created to support and encourage members of COSA in entrepreneurship and business. The objective of the Fund is to support and encourage more prolific entrepreneurial projects by offering an alternative source of financing, coupled with one-to-one mentoring to start or expand businesses owned and managed by members of COSA. The fund is currently reorganizing themselves in line with the new COSA executive leadership of Richard Kirabira.

Internship Program: This is an in-depth practical way in which Cornerstone is equipping recent university graduates with skills and experience needed to enter the job market. We provide participants with a small stipend that allows them to do internships with strategic organizations in their fields of interest, and also carry out skills-training workshops to make them more competitive applicants. One such course done recently with about 50 members was on Professional Skills Development with topics that included CV/Resume writing, Career Counseling, Job Search Skills, Job Interview Conduct, Managing Personal Affairs vs. Career Goals, and Effective Professional Communication Habits.

All these forums focus on fellowship and strengthening relationships that exist among us. Even amidst divergent views, we are able to celebrate our oneness in Jesus - it is this commitment to unity that deepens our relationships and gives us the relational capital to get through conflicts and other distractions from our real vision.

Mr. Ejoy speaks at the Professional Skills Development workshop



COSA Rwanda

There is an African proverb that says: "If you want to walk fast, go alone but if you want to reach far, go with others." It is always easier to do things quickly when you are alone, and initially you may think you are more effective because of it. But the truth is, that eventually you will come to a place where you need others to help you, and if they are not around you may fall further behind than where you started. Taking a journey with others may seem slow and tedious at the beginning, but the fruits of this commitment come out when times get tough and the synergy of the group provides the strength needed to keep moving forward.



This is the journey that we are on in Rwanda with our Old Students (alumni) Association. Although it has been tough at times to keep people coming back together and putting a priority on our mutual relationships, we can look back now and measure the great progress we have made in just the last couple of years alone. Our impact in Rwanda is beyond anything that any other similar group has achieved in such a short time - and it is all because of the unity that we have focused on, and the reconciliation that has taken place in the spirit of Jesus.

The Rwanda chapter COSA is now comprised of four generations (classes of graduates from CLA) and our total number is around 160 members. These friends are all enrolled in different universities and institutions of higher

learning, with the oldest being in their final years. The borders of our community are not limited to the geography of Rwanda alone, for we have members enrolled in universities in Uganda and Tanzania, as well as the United States and Costa Rica.

In these various institutions, we have had many taking up leadership positions, and organizing chapters of AYLF that spread the vision beyond only those who graduated from CLA. To mention a few, Mutijima Phillip has been the Guild (Student Body) President of Kicukiro College of Technology in (Kigali), Ntambara Issa was elected as the Guild President of the School of Finance and Banking (Kigali), and Mbabazi Jacky was elected and sworn as the General Secretary of the same institution. (Uncle Tim was on hand to witness this last event.) Others are holding various other positions in different universities and institutions of higher learning.

These successes are fruits of the continuous efforts we make to bring people together, in the spirit of Jesus, in a variety of programs. We are constantly finding new and more relevant ways to do this, one of which has been starting a community housing program. In Butare, we helped a group of our girls get together and pool their resources to rent a house together, and then did the same for guys. Having this shared living environment, where the guys and girls live nearby each other, has greatly increased the spirit of fellowship. In Kigali, Jenninah has helped to mobilize our young ladies better and has been successfully gathering them for fellowships every second month to shared with each other and support one another in a variety of ways. She has also begun renting a house with a few of them, which has really boosted the spirit of togetherness. Finally, toward end of last year we were finally able buy a property in Kigali that has become a office facility and gathering space for all our activities. It has really added a sense of legitimacy to our work and has been a very strategic investment for us.

We are guided by our mission statement which is, "To be a lifelong brotherhood and sisterhood of friends united in the spirit of Jesus who will love and support one another while advancing a movement of men of integrity and women of virtue within Rwanda and beyond." It is this constant reminder that keeps us focused on the big picture when we sometimes get sidetracked into politics that affect our unity in Jesus. If we get distracted by our differences, we will eventually breakdown and find ourselves walking alone (as the parable says), but with patience and reconciliation, we have the tools to go on a journey with others that will take us farther than we ever imagined. In Rwanda, we have a lot that can divide us, but we are constantly working to be a part of the bigger family of friends who are following Jesus, to bring unity and reconciliation in our own society and adding value to all of humanity in the process.



COSA Tanzania

A group shot at the first COSA gathering in Tanzania

The Tanzanian chapter of the Cornerstone Old Students Association (COSA) officially started in February 2013 when the Cornerstone Leadership Academy (CLA) in Tanzania graduated its pioneer class of students! To kick it off, we held an inaugural dinner party where the vision was laid out for us, and the great responsibility of achieving it was entrusted with us. Our special guests for this event was Vasco Musunguzi, the COSA Stage 2 coordinator in Uganda and other representatives from COSA Uganda, who gave us a special word of encouragement on the matter. It was a great and memorable time for all of us as we went our separate ways in Tanzania.

One month later, we all journeyed back to CLA from our respective locations, and held the first real COSA gathering in April 2013. We had almost 30 members show up from different parts of the country, some traveling even 2 days just to be there! Some of those who were not able to make it had already gotten jobs where they were unable to take off time to be with us and they sent their regrets. It was really a two-day event because the first day was just arrivals and the second day was the actual fellowship and then we had departures.

The event itself was a great time for us all. Our three main guests were brother Eric Kreutter, Peter Nyalandu, and Dr. Athanasia (from Nelson Mandela University). Peter shared about AYLIF and some of the leadership opportunities we can anticipate being a part of once we join university. Eric shared about the spirit of COSA, and the unique aspects that this movement has compared to other alumni associations; he shared about his own experiences with small groups and insisted that if we are to live fulfilling and successful lives, we need to have vibrant

and intentional relationships around us. Dr Athanasia was our main speaker, she talked to us about the power of the small choices we make day to day, and how these have the ability to shape our future. Her sharing took a more practical tone as she highlighted the different avenues we can take when applying to different universities, and what courses we should be considering depending on what careers we would like to work towards entering. The passion that she used to describe her own life story in overcoming challenges, making wise choices and working hard was an inspiration to us all. Afterwards she invited us all to ask questions and we all got her feedback on our interests.

Aside from the messages of the guest speakers, the most rewarding part of the gathering was in the time we had to share our personal life experiences since we left school. People shared about challenges, but also achievements, and we were able to both encourage each other and celebrate with one another. Many confessed that they were reaping the fruits of the mentoring that was poured into them at CLA – and many expressed gratitude towards their teachers.

Despite having just graduated, many of our members are getting jobs now as we wait until university. Some are working in schools, others are working small jobs like filling station attendant, bus agent, music production, or internships with organizations. By the end of June we hope to have all our university applications completed, and will wait for placements / acceptances. We are very grateful to the CLA administration for all their guidance and support as we start this great vision in Tanzania, we also would like to thank Uncle Tim Kreutter and all the friends who make this possible.

Vision Conference



Benard Batagatifu is an alumni of the Cornerstone Leadership Academy in Rwanda. Since then he has joined university and has also spent a lot of time working with our Vision Conference, a high school out-reach program where we use our students to pass on the concepts that have learned at CLA, to a broader audience of emerging teenage student leaders. The following is his story that he has shared on stages all around Rwanda:

***“What unites us,
is far bigger than what divides us”***

I was born in Rwanda, the son of a soldier in Habyarimana’s regime (the former president). Because my father traveled a lot, I spent much of my childhood with my mother. Whenever I did see my Dad I always asked him; “Why don’t you spend time at home like other fathers?” To this he would respond, “I will be with you sometime to come.” But, I never understood what he meant since I was just a child.

Eventually I found out that he was fighting on the frontline in the Eastern Province of Rwanda at a place called Umutara. I kept growing, I slowly learned more about my fathers work, and heard that he was fighting the “Inkotanyi” (Cockroaches). I thought that inkotanyi were small insects that had long tails, but contrary to what my father had told me “Inkotanyi”, he said, “were people, not insects, with long tails”. This was a derogatory word used to refer to the Tutsi people, used by the extremist leaders who ultimately were behind the Rwanda genocide. At times they also called them ‘snakes.’

When the fighting erupted in 1994 into full-out genocide, I was shocked to witness some of my friends families being massacred, and I didn’t understand why these people were being targeted. As the fighting escalated, family crossed the boarder into Congo as refugees and we stayed there until 1997. It was then that I grew mature enough to understand more about the conflict and what had happened, but I kept only hearing one perspective... that the Tutsi were not human beings.

When we finally returned to Rwanda, I began to make some Tutsi friends and realized that they were people just like us! To my surprise, I saw the so called ‘snakes’ being real human beings, and as I interacted with them at school, I started to see beyond the myths I had believed. I then got accepted into the Cornerstone Leadership Academy Rwanda and began school there. All of the students in the school came from different back-

grounds and there was no group that was above the other – we were all equal. It was through the mentoring of the teachers and the discipleship lessons that I came to embrace and learn how to appreciate our differences as humans.

One time, we had a picnic in the Easter Province at a place I had never been before called Kabare, and I remembered how my Dad used to tell me that he was on the front line there. I was with some friends, and some Tutsi, who I once thought were ‘snakes’ took us in and cared for us in a way that I did not expect. Their compassion challenged me and convicted me to begin to spread the gospel of unity and reconciliation everywhere I go.

These days, through the Vision Conference, I have started sharing with young people in different high schools that have segregations or ‘clicks’ among themselves the message: “What unites us is far bigger than what divides us”. I do this from my heart, to be source of unity and reconciliation in Rwanda, in Africa, and the whole world – for I know without it, we may not have hope for a brighter future. It is hard and it does take time to get through to people, but it is possible when someone has a change of heart – and that comes by loving them first. I have learned that I can only do the best with what I have been given, and the rest is up to God.

There is a saying in Latin that goes, “SI VIS PACEM PARA BELLUM”. It means, “If you want peace prepare war” – it is a statement that has actually added to the war and conflict in the world and I do not agree with it. Evil does not bring goodness... only goodness can bring more goodness. If we want peace, then we need to learn from our history and become peacemakers. It is something we can realize in our generation if we all want to - I believe that if we work together, we have what it takes to make unity and reconciliation a reality.

By Benard Batagatifu

AFRICA YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

Program Update

The challenges of corruption, and conflict across ethnic or religious lines have continued to plague good governance in Africa. It is a crisis that impedes development and cripples a dream of peace and prosperity for all. This trend will only continue unless a shift takes place in the emerging generation where a degree of moral authority is achieved, and leaders begin to serve society beyond their own self-interest. We believe this can be done if young people take up the revolutionary perspective of Jesus in their emerging leadership responsibilities.

Africa Youth leadership Forum is a catalyst for transformation among students' leaders that hopes bring about a sustainable future for Africa. There are currently over 250,000 students in over 27 Universities in East Africa, Eastern DRC and South Sudan that we have the capacity to influence through our work. This emerging generation of leaders needs servant leadership skills, mentoring by mature followers of Jesus, and more exposure to capacity building opportunities. We have begun addressing these needs by building little communities of love in the form of small groups of young people meeting regularly (weekly, monthly, annually) to learn the values and principles of Jesus of Nazareth. We hope that by engaging with these young people in mentoring relationships, along with leadership and life skills development, we can create communities that work together to spark a movement of young people across Africa.

Small Groups:

We are currently active in 27 major East African Universities, Eastern DRC and South Sudan. Students' leaders of these universities are meeting in small groups, of about 25 students each, 2 to 4 times a month. These groups follow a curriculum that prompts discussion and development of their leadership abilities. We are currently using one based on the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey and shall soon be adding on based on the 21 Laws of Leadership & Their Underlying Character Qualities by John Maxwell. We have contextualized these programs to help young people in this region take more ownership over the concepts.

Through our small groups, we are directly equipping about 250 student leaders with leadership skills and the principles of Jesus. We are also encouraging them to be a community of friends supporting each other in their career development. These small groups are occasionally able to mobilize workshops or trainings for their broader circles on campus. For example, in April, we conducted a three-day conference in Beni Eastern DRC, training a cross section of youth leaders from Universities, Colleges, Secondary schools, NGOs, political parties and Churches. We have also done mini-seminars for our campus coordinators in Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda. Our chapter in Burundi has been reaching out to Universities there also training students' leader in small group on campuses.

Core Group:

The foundation of our work is in "the core group" - a small leadership group firmly committed to following up each of the small groups on the campuses and encouraging their fellowship. We have continued to equip the core groups in the seven countries we work in, with the capacity of reaching out to the students at their Universities with leadership skills based on the principles of Jesus. Many of those in the core group are alumni of AYLF who now work professionally in other areas such as in business, government, or NGOs. This also presents us with challenges, as members grow in their responsibilities, their availability reduces. Still we encourage these members to find creative ways of meeting such as over lunch, or evenings out with a few friends. We have also found that by doing projects together, people have more of a reason to come together, and therefore attract more participation, so this is another avenue we are pursuing.

Junior Prayer Breakfasts

We are creating more avenues to reach out to more students' and youth leaders through what we call "Junior Prayer Breakfasts." These are intended to give opportunity for those country chapters whose Parliaments do not host an annual National Prayer Breakfast. These events create a platform for interaction with emerging leaders - but also serve to mentor our young people for future involvement in the larger Prayer Breakfast movement.

Regional Gatherings:

This year 2013, we are adding the Francophone gathering to our list of annual events alongside the Nairobi and Kampala AYLF gatherings. The Francophone gathering is our new outreach program to the students' and youth leaders from DRC, Rwanda and Burundi taking place in late July. Our hope is that this gathering will create an opportunity for young people from these countries to share their leadership experiences, interact with mentors, dialogue about pertinent issues, start a process of relationships and network to develop further ideas.

Community Outreach

This program has become a strong component of our activities. It has been very successful in Uganda. The campus chapters organize these events on a rotational basis. At least each University chapter has had the opportunity to organize and invite other University chapters to participate. Recently, this activity has attracted local council leaders and also the police to participate directly.

We continue to experience the potential of AYLF in bringing about transformation among student leaders in this regional. Because our work is spreading like wildfire, we struggle with the challenges of growth and limited resources. As I have always said, you can be part of this vision. Contact us. Let's find ways in which you can participate. Be part of this change process. Nurture a new breed of African Leaders!

By Allan Byarugaba



The Junior Prayer Breakfast

In Rwanda

The 23rd of March marked a new chapter in the AYLIF movement in Rwanda. The drizzling morning brought us a blessing as the young leaders gathered at Nobleza Hotel for the first Junior Prayer Breakfast - an event that brought together 150 young men and women from around East Africa, and several invited guests and prominent speakers.

Allan Sheperd kicked things off by opening with an overview of what the gathering was all about:

"AYLIF is a collaborative initiative by a group of friends in Africa. We recognize that the principles and leadership example of Jesus provide a model that aspiring leaders from all nations and creeds can emulate, central to whose message is reconciliation and personal integrity through transformed minds and hearts - issues of critical importance in Africa today". Allan continued by explaining the vision, mission, philosophy and activities of AYLIF before he concluded with our core values and thereafter the kind of leadership AYLIF is promoting. Central to his message was that we are a group of:

- Youth who are taking up leadership and influencing others.
- Youth who are demonstrating the highest standards of integrity with the resources and the responsibilities entrusted to them.
- Youth who are advancing a message of Unity and Reconciliation that cuts across all the divisions in society that have been creating conflict and hatred in this region.

The next key message was from Tim Kreutter, who we found out grew up in neighboring DR Congo, spent part of his childhood in northern Rwanda and has lived in Africa for more than 40 years - probably longer than 95% of the participants! He went on to illustrate why there is a need for the junior prayer breakfast. He said that "all over the developing world right now the youth are waking up and rising up. It's called "The Youth Bulge". The youth represent over 65% of the population of Rwanda. They are now the majority. Their representation in politics is going to increasingly be felt. If we ignore them and don't teach them how to love, someone will teach them how to hate." He went on to explain why visionary and revolutionary

minded leaders always mobilize the young people. He also explained that for peaceful change and harmony, we need a "cross-generational" approach based on cooperation not competition as is common in Africa.

Tim continued, saying, "Everything rises and falls on leadership. The history of humankind's triumphs and tragedies - is largely the story of its leaders. That is the kings, prophets, pharaohs, generals, judges, chiefs, statesmen and women, presidents, prime-ministers, religious leaders, cultural leaders, business leaders, community leaders - who either led people in ways that allowed society to experience greater harmony and progress or led people into ways that brought conflict, destruction and suffering. As the leaders go - so goes the nation. The decision of a few leaders can affect the well-being of millions or even billions of people, positively or negatively".

Hon. Connie Bwiza, who was meant to be our Guest speaker, though in the house at such a time apologized for not being able to continue any longer with us due to other national commitments. She therefore just conveyed her greetings to the participants and went to answer other national calls. Prof. Shyaka Anastase who is also the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) added flavor to the event as he shared his inspirational life experience and life lessons with the youths at the gathering. "Leading requires reading" he said as he urged the youth to be better readers. The RGB chief challenged East African youth to aspire to leave a legacy that we will be proud of up to eternity as he encouraged us to emulate the good leaders across the region and the globe. "What unites us is by far bigger than what divides us" he added as he urged the youth to be ambassadors of unity and reconciliation before he answered questions from the congregation.

Having been the first of its kind, we can boldly say that the event was a great success. It was amazing to see the commitment of people through their attendance - this shows how receptive people are to the message of togetherness and predicts how bright the future of our nation stands. With this becoming a yearly event, there is no doubt that the Rwanda of tomorrow will be better than that of today.

Cornerstone

Newsletter Pictorial

Geoffrey, Jos
in Cairo, on t



A gathering of friends at the ladies retreat held at CLA Uganda - Girls



Youth Corps Community Service



Tim speaks with the ranch team



A community elders speaks to Youth Corps

Hellen Nasuna weds Martin Kutesa



Johnson receives recognition on behalf of CLA Rwanda for its academic performance

hua, and Mussana
their way to Albania



Friends around a camp fire at a recent Couples Retreat

Hon. Lazaro Nyalanu cuts the cake at
CLA Tanzania's first graduation



Tim meets alumni of CLA Rwanda,
Uganda, and Tanzania in Dar Es Salam



Prof. Shyaka speaks to the Kigali Jr.
Prayer Breakfast



LA Uganda Boys on a
trip outing in Fort Portal



Alumni of CLA Tanzania at their class gathering

CLA Rwanda students enjoy the outdoors



A Family of Friends!



YOUTH CORPS HOMES

The life together

We provide loving homes for homeless kids, and empower them to achieve greatness in their own capacities thru character development and discipleship training. These homes also serve as a training ground for the young people who have graduated from Cornerstones Leadership Academies who are involved in the running/mentoring of the homes. The 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.

Working with young people has given me an opportunity to realize the power and the joy behind reconciliation. The Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 that we are agents of reconciliation, so we take this ministry seriously. In the Youth Corps program we highly value the principle of reconciliation, especially since the world we are in has suffered from alienation caused by differences in tribes, religion, color, class, and politics.

I can't forget a time when I took one of our boys back to see his home and re-form a relationship with his family. This boy had told us that his grandmother used to mistreat his mother, who eventually decided to run away and leave him with the grandmother. This woman then sent the young boy away from her home as a way of punishing his mother, who had disappeared. The young boy, only seven years old, had no other relative and nowhere to turn. He was born and had lived his whole life in his grandmother's house and was now cast away without remorse. As this young age, the boy wandered from one town to another until he arrived in Kampala city, about 40 kilometers away. He moved for three full days without eating anything until he landed in the hands of a police officer who took pity on him and called us, as he knew of our Bukesa home for young boys. A year later, we traced the way back to his village, looking for his grandmother and seeking reunification. Our first attempt at reconciliation was in vain. The woman refused to listen to anything concerning her grandson and didn't even care if he was alive. We could not deny the hatred in this woman

and her determination to turn her back on her grandson, so we lost hope, consoled the boy, and returned to Kampala. I even returned to the woman again on my own to plead with her to accept and love the boy. She insisted that she had no accountability to him, as children traditionally belong to the father's family and are not the responsibility of the mother's.

During the next couple of years, we put this boy through school and he did well, although from time to time he would break down with the emotional difficulty of his abandonment. After a couple of years, the boy had grown tall and had matured. We again took him to his home village and this time was a great success. When the grandmother recognized this young man as the boy she turned away, she was astonished. She was very happy to see him and even hugged him and, thanked us for being persistent in trying to unite her to him. We were able to share with her the boy's feelings, his sincere love for his family, and that he wants to make peace with her. Someone from the village was even able to give us the phone number of the boy's mother and he was later able to reconnect with her. It was an amazing moment. We could see the tears of love and joy and the power of reconciliation.

We thank all those who are praying for us and support us in our work. Sometimes it's not easy and sometimes the transformation of our children is a slow process, but we have patience and know that reconciliation, even on such a small scale, is worth all the work.

By Muwawu Counsellor.

The Girls Homes

Mentoring is a great opportunity for us to serve, and to learn. In the process of humbling ourselves, and practicing empathy towards those we work with, we learn the true meaning of servant leadership. It is a daily lifestyle that encompasses not only all that we say and do, but also HOW we say and do it. We therefore are challenged to live exemplary lives, “practice what we preach”, since it is the only way that we can achieve our ultimate goal of personal transformation.

We currently have 5 girls’ homes in Uganda with an average of 3 aunties (mentors) and 17 mentees per home between ages 8-18 years. These homes in Kampala are Ntinda, Mengo, Bukoto, Lungujja and also the Gulu girls’ home in Northern Uganda. We take in and care for girls from different backgrounds including those formerly living on the street, the destitute and girls formerly exposed to sexual exploitation (or prostitution); and we are more than glad to be a part of their transformation journey.

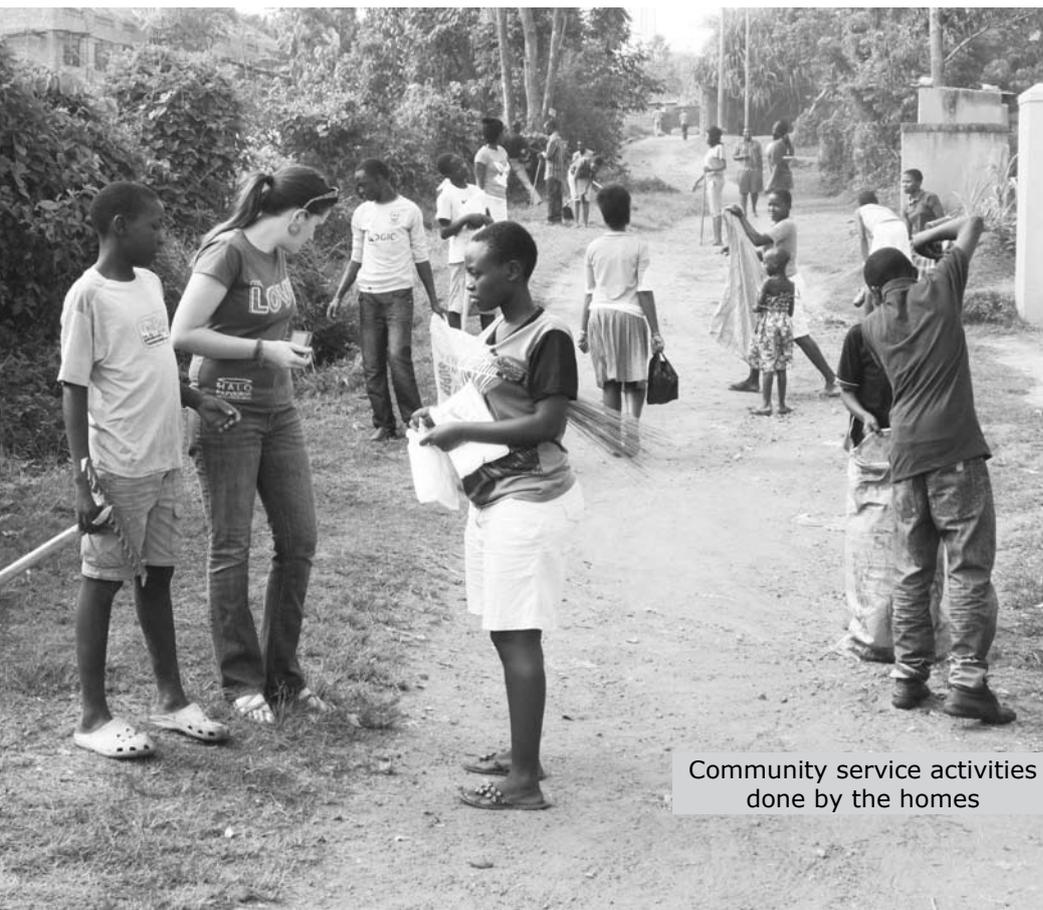
Most of the girls in our homes go to school, and we have members ranging from primary to tertiary institutions and they constantly appreciate us for this opportunity that has revived their hopes for a brighter future. On top of this, the girls get counseling sessions from Aunt Jane and Julie whose role we cannot ignore in the process of rehabilitation. This in depth help has helped them to re-focus and begin a new life. We also have Art and Music therapy programs at the various homes and we are grateful to Mary Pryse for her tremendous contribution in this field. These activities have further taught them to learn

to live together, love and support one another and edify each other in a spirit of love, which has created a spirit of unity amongst them.

Recently we have introduced a new program of ‘care groups’ in the homes and are happy to inform you that they are steadily showing their worth. We have seen more interpersonal reconciliation and an improved spirit of team unity because of this in everything from the way the girls do the house chores, pray and care for one another.

As we mentor, we are constantly emphasizing the aspect of forgiveness and reconciliation since most of our mentees come from broken backgrounds. We know that at the end of their time in the home they have to reconnect back to their families, so we are proud to say we are making progress in this area. We have been able to initiate and witness reconciliation between several girls and their relatives so far this year which revitalizes our energies since its one of our core responsibilities. It gives us great joy to know that our former mentees have love and care as well as a sense of belonging in their families. However this hasn’t come without challenges as many parents are initially resentful of their children’s past behavior, and of their past mistakes, but with time they learn to see the kids as assets, and no longer liabilities.

Finally, we would like to say that teamwork keeps us strong as mentors and together we do more with our synergy, so let’s keep up the spirit of togetherness and mutual helpfulness. Thank you to all our fellow mentors for making this possible.



Community service activities done by the homes



The Boys Homes

The Youth Corps program is a place where University aged mentors are living with troubled teens in a mentoring context of love, care, and nurturing patience. We guide these young people through various stages of their development, as we ultimately attempt to reconcile them back to their family so that they can resume right relationships and live productive lives in society. Many kids end up in our homes because of broken relationships, either a disagreement with a mother in-law, an abusive father, or something similar ... and so, usually the greatest challenge we face with them is in the area of reconciliation to restore love and unity in their families. When these relationships are strong enough, it is always our hope that the kids will graduate from our program and return to live with their families.



Mentors engaged in a small group discussions at the recent Mentors Retreat in June 2013



This year so far we have been able to resettle seven boys from Bukesa, Makerere and Kibuli homes, though such a process is not easy but we bless God for his grace and the example of Jesus that inspires us. Sometimes, they may be too old to actually live with their parents or relatives, but the key to their graduation from our homes is that they are reconciled with their families.

This process of reconciliation takes a long time, even years of preparation in some cases. It always starts with getting the child to a place where they forgive their parents and are willing to make a visit. Then we attempt to make an initial visit to their village or home and connect with whatever existing relatives they may have. We then help to facilitate dialogue between those involved as much as possible. The kids will then come back and live with us, while periodically going back on holiday's to visit their relatives. It is usually only after several visits that they feel comfortable and normal around each other like things used to be.

In the course of this year, I am happy to say that we have been in position to make several home visits of our children to their family members, notable examples of such would be Okura Michael from Makerere home, and Emma of Bukesa home, among others.

This year, as always, has seen some of our older mentors like Kimuda Samuel, Segawa Peter and Labaal Charles from Bukesa and Makerere respectively move on to take up other responsibilities in the world. We appreciate their tireless efforts to make our work better and our family more unified. These were replaced by new mentors, Uncle Tony and Uncle John in Bukesa and Uncle Oico Bosco and Edube Simon who was transferred from Lugala to offer support.

One of the new developments in our program is a two to three hour monthly fellowship where one of the homes hosts two or three other homes. In these deeper impact fellowships we have inspirational interaction between kids and successful people who have gone through various hardships, and are able to ask open questions about real life issues they have gone through to get where they are now. These fellowships usually end with a bread breaking in an effort to promote the family aspect of our work

Finally we want to appreciate all those who are supporting us financially, spiritually and emotionally. Keep praying for us, because it is our longing to see these little children settled back and reunited with their families.

Mombasa Youth Outreach

Mombasa, Kenya



Wana Wa Mola

Many people today have a tendency to do things on their own; to work out their own personal vision and direction. Our world is full of ambition, and everybody is trying to be the best with what they've got. Nowhere can this be seen better than in our social networks on the internet where people spend hours improving their profile with evidence of how brilliant, talented, passionate, beautiful or handsome they are. It seems we have lost ourselves to a competition of covetousness, jealousy and resentment - one has got to wonder how this world ever experiences even a single day of total peace and harmony!

Dionne Stratton in his writings stated clearly that any group of people is as "effective and powerful" as it is "committed and unified." Attaining such a large degree of oneness is however often very challenging because of the dynamic nature of individuals that make up the community. Each person in a community has a variety of

needs they are trying to satisfy and many individuals therefore seek to draw out as much as they can from a community, rather than investing in strengthening the community. It is therefore one of the greatest challenges for a leader, to help individuals to realize, that by working towards the goals of the whole group - they can also enhance the achievement of their own individual goals - especially when the vision of the group - seeks to empower the individuals, rather than exploit them.

With this thought in mind, you can imagine that the challenges are multiplied when the individuals you are working with are street boys in Mombasa! We are seeking to build a spirit of unity, abolishment of old bad habits and build new habits with the hope that they will realize that whatever benefits they gained from living on the street - are far less than the opportunity of living together with others in a safe home setting.

The aspect of unity has been hard to achieve because these street children generally lack the basic social and cultural skills required in a normal home environment. They have lower levels of concentration, they have problems adjusting to inter-dependence after living in the street, they have more difficulties with relationships and some of them often have a misplaced sense of entitlement without a parallel sense of responsibility.

To meet this complicated nature of our work, we use the lifestyle of Jesus as a model for dealing with such difficult young people. Imagine how Jesus walked in this difficult world, how he continuously wished the best to all around him - even opponents who wished him harm. He successfully left this world without holding a grudge towards anyone, even in the final moment, he publicly forgave those who scolded and bruised his

body. This is a perfect example of a revolutionary who was never understood by the very people he came to rescue yet he showed an unconditional commitment to his mission. In the same way, no matter how stubborn or disrespectful the street kids in Mombasa may be, we have the example of Jesus - to stay focused and steadfastly continue preaching and practicing peace, unity, and ultimate oneness here on earth despite our differences - bringing a small experience of heaven, to the world we live in.

By Daniel & Miriam



Bujumbura Home

Burundi

We are currently living with our third generation of guys in the Bujumbura mentoring home. With each group, we seem to build on the progress that we achieved with the previous one and settle deeper into a better understanding of the purpose of our work.

When we started bringing in the new guys at the beginning of the year, many were a bit uncomfortable about living with each other. Each came from different backgrounds, and were worried about how they could be close to someone who was different than them. They were also worried about what happened in the home, some thought, "is there a hidden agenda to this program?" Despite their concerns, they were attracted to join the program by the good recommendations of their friends, and the spirit of love that we projected to them. It didn't take long for them to settle in, and now I can say the spirit of brotherhood in the home is really high, and the boys are learning a lot from each other. Many have testified that they have really come to appreciate the idea of loving our 'neighbors' unconditionally despite all that divides us - religion, ethnicity, or politics.

We achieve this spirit though sharing the principles, precepts and person of Jesus with each other on a regular basis. Some of this is done in regular fellowships and devotionals, but most is done just by living our lives alongside each other and speaking into one another's lives. Our central message is the chief aim and purpose of a follower of Jesus: "love God with all your heart, soul, mind and

strength, and to love your neighbor as you love yourself". If this is the chief aim, then all that divides us, and separates us from our ability to love God and love neighbor is somehow falling short of the point.

Using the home as a base, we also actively support the work being done in Burundi by the Africa Youth Leadership Forum. This connects us with a much larger community of young men and women who desire to positively impact the region through better leadership, in the spirit of Jesus. In this, we have weekly campus fellowship groups at Lumiere University Mutanga, Lumiere University Kinindo, International Leadership University, and Hope Africa University. The culmination of fellowships is the annual Junior Prayer Breakfast that we had earlier this year where we brought together about 100 young people along with several mentors and senior figures in business and politics to speak to us. At the moment we are working on hosting a Francophone AYLFF Gathering that will take place on July 18 - 20th 2013, where we will bring together about 100 student leaders from Eastern DRC, Rwanda and Burundi to talk about unity and reconciliation in the spirit of Jesus.

On a personal level I know I am really blessed to be involved in this work of mentoring, and youth leadership development. I have learnt a lot, and I have been constantly challenged to stay on top of my game. I long to live an exemplary life that call's forth the highest and the best in me because I am a role model and I know guys are looking up to and counting on me. It has made me a better person, and challenged me to share this blessing with others. God Blesses you all.

By Nzirimu Godfrey.

Cornerstone Veritas

Cornerstone Veritas is going through some big changes, Noelle (our coordinator) is leaving! But we are happy to announce that we will continue to work, carrying on the vision which we began with. Edmond Elasu will be taking over the administrative work and will maintain connections with our work throughout Uganda.

Our internship program is going strong. This year we have 6 wonderful interns who are in their vacation. Our group is fully representative of all of the Cornerstone Secondary Schools. We are pleased to announce that this program, which for 2 years has been mentoring, training, and giving different opportunities to Cornerstone high school graduates on vacation - will happen again next year with a new crew of bright faces! We are proud of our young people who are working hard to learn new skills, make an impact in their communities, and serve the vision of Cornerstone Veritas to empower and equip others with Leadership Development.

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Currently, our work is going very well. The 10 Principles of Leadership Short Course continues to help people all over Uganda learn to live their lives more effectively for Jesus. We recently trained 13 new facilitators for that course! We now have 5 locations that are fully equipped to run our short course, and 3 locations (soon 2 more) that are using the 10 Principles Expanded program to help them build their own family of friends. We are hoping that some positive changes and growth will take place for us over the course of this year, as we look towards expanding our work into A levels schools. More on that as it happens!

With Noelle leaving in June, things will shift and change, but we hope that these changes bring us growth and maturity as a group. We are proud of our small family, and all the ways that we have been able to impact people throughout Eastern Africa. If you would like to read about what we are doing and who is involved with our work, feel free to visit <http://cornerstoneveritas.blogspot.com> for photos, stories, and updates!



Wolves Soccer Club



Coach Stone

The Wolves is a youth training and mentorship soccer program that takes place on the soccer pitch everyday of the week, in the spirit of Jesus. For over 20 years now we have used this avenue of sports to attract visionless young men that society has neglected, and who may be getting themselves into trouble because of their idleness.

Since its humble beginnings, the program has expanded and we have three different teams now: Two in the 2nd division league and one in the 1st division of the Uganda football league. All teams have been doing well this year and recent results have been encouraging with our 1st division team winning their most recent game by 2-1 against top rivals the Yap Stars.

Although our primary goal is in mentoring the guys on the team, participating in the city football league has also really helped expose us to opportunities where we can be the salt and light to those around us. We try to encourage our guys to embody the characteristics and values of Jesus and live by His teachings and principles, and this season round our emphasis has been so much on two important values/principles, that is; Unity and Reconciliation. The league provides us a platform to be agents of these heavenly values and daily as we meet through love and prayer we encourage each other to be agents of Unity and Reconciliation.

As earlier mentioned, many of our guys come from broken families or communities where unresolved conflicts are the main reason for their dysfunction. In our work, we constantly remind them that conflicts will always be part of our communities, but it's those who choose to forgive and reconcile their conflicts that will have the most prosperous future, otherwise, there is no future without forgiveness. We encourage them to refrain from deceptive habits because we know that when we lie we only make the problem part of our future. Furthermore, it is extremely important that we practice what we preach, for people always do what we do... and not what we say. In this way we pay attention to doing the little that we do in a big way, with a lot of love, focusing first on ourselves as a team, and then on those we play against and all around us.

One interesting aspect of finding unity on our team has been instilling in them a sense of dignity. If we can build them up, we do so in the direction of shared values that cement a spirit of togetherness in our team. We believe that honor is given on the basis of who people are, and not according to what they have. Because of our shared values we are a strong and united community, unlike other teams whose unity is based on the fact that they all get paid a certain amount of money, or they have all got certain qualifications... etc.

We honor every person we encounter because we have been honored by Jesus. Friends, we are on the pitch everyday in Nsambya, please feel free to come and visit us in our training sessions and or matches.

LETTERS FROM FRIENDS



Noelle Gornik

It's been an amazing journey. I am sad to be writing you this letter today, because it signals that it is time for me to leave Uganda. It has been 3 years in Uganda and 2 years as part of the Cornerstone Family, time has really flown! I am so grateful that I was able to have this time to learn, grow and be a part of such a fantastic organization. While it is sad to be going, I know that God is calling me onto other things.

I will be spending the summer in a variety of places, exploring how different people are building God's Kingdom throughout the world. I will arrive back in Michigan at the end of August, at which time I hope to settle in Grand Rapids, Mi. There is a community there which I am excited to be involved with, so I'll be going from one family to another! My hope is to get a job at a university, helping students have the opportunity to travel abroad, or caring for international students. I'd like to ask you to pray for me during this transition, especially that I can find the right job and living situation. After a year or two in Grand Rapids, I hope to get my graduate degree (Masters) so that I can be more effective working in Africa. My deepest hope is to return to Sub Saharan Africa within the next 3-7 years. We'll see where life takes me! No matter where I go, I hope to continue being connected to the Cornerstone Development family of friends.

My experience at Cornerstone Development is one that I will never forget. Through my time with all of you, I have learned so

much about building relationships, forming a team, communication, kingdom building, and service. Through the ups and downs, the great time and the hardest times, I have been constantly surprised and encouraged by how well we care for one another. I hope to carry with me all the things I have learned about building community and family, and work to use those principles throughout the world.

It is hard to go. I deeply love all of you, and feel very much a part of this organization. Thank you for loving, supporting, and empowering me throughout my time here at Cornerstone. Together, we've created something that I am really proud of. I will always love and be dedicated to my Cornerstone Veritas team! Be sure to read the Cornerstone Veritas update in this newsletter to get the full picture of what the future holds.

You all will be in my prayers, my thoughts and my stories. I am excited to go back to the States and share with people there about the incredible hope that there is in Africa. You are that hope, you inspire me, you are working for something greater than yourself which can transform this world! I'll be following all of your work closely, and hope that we can keep in personal communication. I value the work of Cornerstone Development so much and will watch with anticipation to see how it grows. May the grace and peace of Jesus be with each of you!

With Love,
Noelle Gornik

If you would like to keep in regular communication with me, please send me an email at noelle.gornik@gmail.com and I will add you to my regular communication list. Please be sure to tell me who is sending the email.

Also, if you would like to follow my adventures, travels and learning this summer and beyond check out either of these blogs: <http://glimpsethejourney.blogspot.com> OR <http://noelleinafrica.blogspot.com>



Cornerstone Projects

The Ekitangaala Ranch

With the various schools and other programs, there are about 1,200 people on the ranch during the day. About half of them sleep on the property as boarding students, teaching staff and others. Our actual ranch staff team is about 40 people – all coming from a number of different ethnic groups. Despite this ethnic diversity, we have been able to achieve a high degree of unity by just loving each other as Jesus taught and working together as a team to make the ranch successful. Some people think that the ranch community might be the most ethnically diverse community in Uganda!

This year, 2013, has been our best year ever, in terms of the profitability of Ekitangaala Ranch and its ability to support other Cornerstone programs. This is largely because of the high price of milk and the good rains that we've received this year that have significantly improved our milk production. The valley dam is currently full to capacity and there is plenty of grass now for the animals. We secured better market for our milk in Luwero and Wobulenzi towns which has greatly improved on our income. We decided to explore this market because of unfair prices middle men used to buy our milk. A brand new motorcycle has been purchased to facilitate transportation of milk to Luwero and Wobulenzi. We've got a team led by Mr. Hone who transports milk – We appreciate your prayers for God's hand of protection over them as they ride back and forth on a daily basis. They're doing a great job!!



A lot has been done especially to maintain and improve on the breed, such as categorization of all animals into either the Fresian Herd, the New Herd, the Boran Kraal, or the Heifers and Steers bringing the total number of animals at the ranch currently to 448. This kind of arrangement makes it easy to manage the people responsible to carry out routine work. Three medium aged hybrid bulls have been stocked with the purpose of improving the current genetic potential of the animals. They were purchased from highly recognized dairy farm called Buloba Dairy farm located 15kms along Kampala – Mityana Road. This year, our animals are also



in excellent health condition; which has been achieved through strong measures in place like maintaining the strength of the dip and carrying out regular dipping of all animals. Decentralization of the drug kit has enabled the kraal leaders to administer the right dose of drugs timely and regular follow up and care of affected animals. All calves, steers, and heifers have been de-wormed by the use of effective de-wormer called traodax injectable.

Fence maintenance has historically been a huge challenge for us, and we recently established a fence maintenance crew solely dedicated to clearing the bush both inside and outside, identifying weak areas and repairing them and planting live fence (Ruyenje). We are finally reaching a good place where the perimeter has been strengthened. Along with fence maintenance also comes pasture maintenance which is an on-going exercise in all paddocks to ensure that the Ranch attains improved pasture production free from weeds, and thorny shrubs – overgrown pasture are also leveled to ease grazing by cows.

We are in the process of developing new paddocks in the land between the dam and CLA and towards Kamuyoga which will be used as grazing paddocks but also for steers as we try to venture into beef enterprise as a way of diversifying ranch sources of revenue. We're trying to stock hybrid steers as they can survive under harsh conditions and they are not labor intensive.

Our water supply to the pastures has been improved this year through increased maintenance of machines like tractor, mobile water tank and mobile water pump. We're indeed grateful to God for the recent donation to work on our equipments. All the water troughs have been mended and one more trough has been constructed to ensure increased water accessibility by animals.

We've been able to minimize cost on animal feeds especially maize brand – the average consumption of maize brand during the months of November and December, 2012 was eight tons which has drastically reduced to 1.5 tons per month now. This has been achieved through using chopped Hay by soaking it into salt solution then feed as dry feed. A 5 acre area was gazetted for the production of improved elephant grass called Guatemala grass of this one acre has been propagated with cuttings of Guatemala. Planting exercise is still going on. Once this project has been established, it will be useful to the ranch as the grass will be chopped and be provided to productive animals with dairy supplements during milking exercise in dry seasons.

By David Mwesigwa



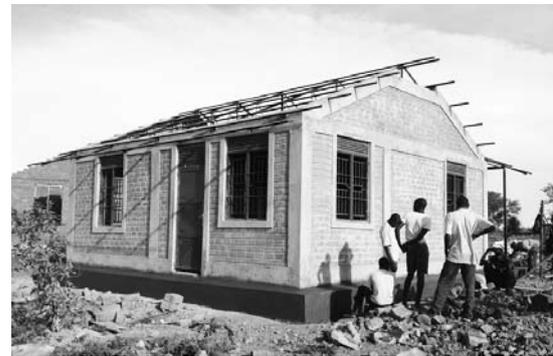
Leadership Academy South Sudan

“Knowledge inflates with pride, but love builds up.” (I Corinthians 8.) For all of us working in academia, this statement should bring about a certain measure of introspection. In our schools, classrooms, offices and personal lives, what is it that we esteem? Is our pursuit of knowledge balanced with a pursuit of love? Or is it lopsided?

I know many followers of Jesus whose knowledge of Scripture outweighs their acts of charity. I know others who are so desperate to be the victor in an intellectual debate that they will sever a relationship, or divide a church just to prove their point. However, as God’s elect, we are called to be a part of something much bigger than ourselves. God invites us to use our knowledge to build His kingdom, to strengthen other saints, and to glorify His name. If we are just collectors of knowledge, hoarding it within ourselves, we will miss out on the unity of the saints and the fullness that God intends. As we endeavor to establish the next Leadership Academy in South Sudan, our prayer is for that unity and fullness in the lives of our students and staff.

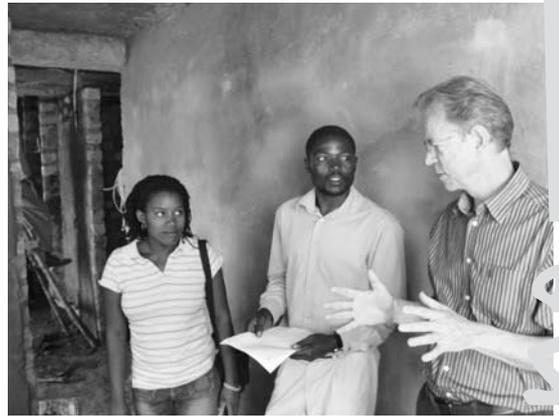
The physical side of the Leadership Academy is now quickly taking shape. The first three staff houses are nearly complete, and the Headmaster’s house is only a few days behind. The foundations for the student dormitories were finished the last week of May, and the majority of the plumbing has been installed campus wide. God has been faithful in providing honest and competent builders, and we would ask for your continued prayers as we now launch into the registration of the school. We have begun adapting the curriculum to fit the South Sudan requirements, but we still have a long way to go. We are also actively seeking qualified teachers and students.

God is starting something in South Sudan. We at East African Ministries are blessed to be a part of what God is building. However, we would not be where we are without our partners at Cornerstone. Paul warns that knowledge can puff one up with pride, but the years of experience and knowledge that Cornerstone has gained has not resulted in pride. We have been welcomed into the Cornerstone family, and are overwhelmed at the generous support that we are continually offered. We are thankful for the unity we have found with Cornerstone, and to God be the glory.



Makerere Hostel Construction

We are in the process of constructing a hostel near Makerere University to accommodate our students. The purpose is to continue to create spaces that bring the young people we work with in to more regular fellowship, and assist in our aim to keep them together in building the foundation of a life long movement of integrity and virtue in this region. The building is scheduled to be finished in time for the next class entering University in late August this year.



Head Office Expansion

In order to meet our ever expanding space needs we are building a third floor on top of the North West corner of our Office on Acacia Avenue. The planned use for this space is to move the media and communications department there, and clear up the current media space to use for another department.



store

Along with this natural tendency we have to only want to associate with people who are like us – comes an equally natural tendency to dislike and mistrust people who are not like us. We are suspicious of them and we fear them. And, they feel the same way toward us. And this has been the root cause behind all the wars, genocides, terrorist activities, government power struggles and other such self-inflicted wounds our world has experienced. In the last century, a new world record was set of an estimated 100 million people - killed by their fellow human beings. (World War I, WW II, the Soviet Union, Korea, Vietnam, China, Cambodia, Rwanda, Congo, Northern Uganda, Middle East, etc.)

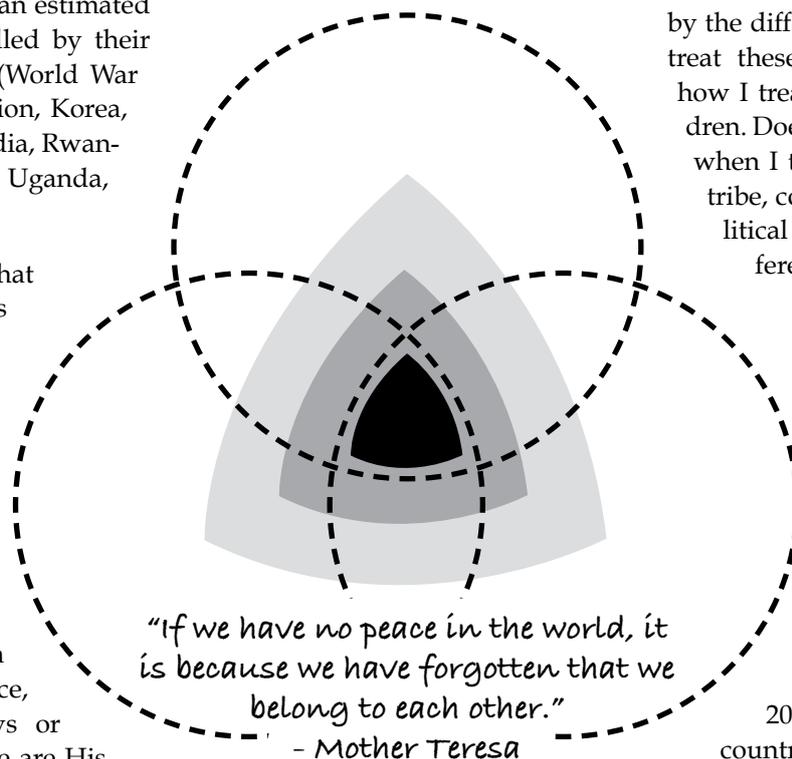
The scriptures teach that every human being is created 'in the image of God.' And the Master taught us to call God "Our Father." For, me this means that whenever I meet a man or a woman, regardless of nationality, race or creed – I need to see 'a brother', 'a sister' – regardless of race, ethnicity, political views or religious affiliation. "We are His Offspring." (Acts 17:28) A lost son is still a son.

In my travels in various parts of the world, one thing has become very clear to me, the mothers in Kathmandu, Dubai, Kampala or Dallas... really want the same thing for their children. Despite our surface differences of color and culture - inside on the level of our hearts we are remarkably similar. The common people just want a peaceful world to live in, to raise their kids, to earn a decent living.

Today, most of us are rightly concerned about the breakdown of the traditional family structure which has been the basic unit of society for thousands of years. Certainly, every child deserves

to grow up in a loving, stable family. Jesus would have no quarrel with that. The family is a creation of Life itself and should never be sacrificed to the 'larger' community. It should be a stronghold, a shelter where the young can feel safe and be nurtured.

But so far, the family unit has never managed to prevent war, racism, injustice, denominational hatred, extreme nationalism, genocide, tribalism, divisiveness and the like. For those issues to be healed we need to develop something a lot more expan-



sive than the narrow, selfish outlook that most people possess in this regard. Something broader and more inclusive that encompasses the whole of humanity. Otherwise the world will continue to see nothing more than the various tribes, sub-cultures, religions and nation states divided against each other.

There are only two places in the gospels where the words of Jesus appeared to be quite "militant" – it's where he stated: "I did not come to bring peace but a sword." (Mt. 10:34 & Luke 10:51) But in both of these contexts he goes on to reference this statement to some kind of total paradigm shift in regards to the typical family-based, blood-kinship kind of loyalties that have characterized human societies for millennia.

"Who are my brothers and my mother?" – He asks, when his followers told him his family members were waiting outside to see him. And is it not interesting that his last words on the cross, as he was dying, was to tell his mother Mary that his disciple John was now her son and that she was his mother – even though it seems that Jesus had his own siblings who could have looked after her.

Throughout my entire adult life I have constantly been asked by Life to be a father to kids who have had no father. And I am always challenged by the difference in the ways I might treat these kids – as compared to how I treat my own biological children. Does not the same thing apply when I treat those of our my own tribe, country, economic class, political party or church – so differently from others? Well we all have a long way to go in this regard – but I really think this is a central part of what Jesus' message was all about: "A new, larger sense of family."

In our small community of Cornerstone, that now comprises around 2000 people in half a dozen countries, for the past 20 years, we have been trying an experiment. We have intentionally sought to include members from all the various ethnic, political and religious groups that exist in this part of this world and see if we can learn to live together and love each other in the way that Jesus taught. To do this you need some kind of shared value base and for this we have simply used as our 'common ground' the principles, precepts and the spirit He left us.

But still it is not easy. Almost weekly, someone complains to me about being slighted or that some of our members are being marginalized along lines of ethnic, religious, or gender prejudice. Often, there is an element of truth to it - as we are all, to some degree, blind as to how much we favor 'our kind of people' and alienate people who are different than us.

My mentor taught: "Alienation is the number one problem in the world." Alienation, is the feeling that we don't belong to others and they do not belong to us. Mother Teresa said, "If we have no peace in the world, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."

Right from the origins of our human race, the ancient scriptures tell the story of how brother number two turned against and killed brother number one. And, we have kept at it ever since. This story is almost the central metaphor of human history.

If it is true that the number one problem in the world is Alienation.... then, it must be equally true that the number one solution and work to be done is Reconciliation. But to do the work of reconciliation you have to be willing to be a 'bridge.' A bridge connects two sides and so one thing you should realize in being a bridge is that: You must be ready to be walked on by both sides. In other words, some of your own people will misunderstand you and even some of the other people will also misunderstand you. This is something I have repeatedly experienced.

Reconciliation also only happens where there is forgiveness. A friend who is working with the on-going conflict between the Palestinians and Israel says, "One of the main problems is that both of these groups in their religions and cultures - lack an emphasis on forgiveness."

Before Jesus, the world practiced: 'An eye for an eye...and a tooth for a tooth.' But as Gandhi said: "If the whole world continued to practice that pretty soon the whole world will be toothless and blind." It is only forgiveness that breaks the madness. It is only through forgiveness that misunderstanding, hatred and animosity is neutralized. Forgiveness was one of the main messages of Jesus. When he was asked, "But how many times should we forgive...he said, "Seventy times seven."

It is costly or it seems like a sacrifice to forgive because it feels like you

are losing power when you do it. It seems like you are making yourself small in the eyes of another. But in truth, the opposite is true. You actually become bigger spiritually, you grow stronger. All sacrifices that we make for God are only "apparent" sacrifices. For in the end we gain much more than what we have given up. "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he can never lose," wrote Jim Elliot.

But whenever I begin to reflect on the meanings of words like reconciliation and unity - my thoughts tend to stretch between two poles: First, there is the big picture the lofty ideal of furthering unity across all the divides. And then secondly, there is the more mundane challenge of maintaining kind, loving relationships with the people I live with, the town in live in - those I have to interact with on a daily basis. (And Jesus also had plenty to say about that as well.)

So, while it's important to talk about furthering reconciliation and unity in the world - equally so I have to ask myself: How am I doing with loving my wife? And, with the people who live down the street from me.

My conclusion is that we need both of these emphasis' not just focusing on one or the other. If we just do one without the other we are missing something. It's like individually we are each cells in one giant human body. And if the cells right next to each other are not getting along well with each other - there is definitely going to be some kind of disease. But, likewise if a smaller group of cells - for example a particular organ - gets divided away from the rest of the body - it's going to create problems for itself and the larger body.

In our world today, it's also becoming ever more apparent that we are all increasingly connected despite our apparent separateness. We are in the same boat and were going to need a lot more 'fellowship' in order to learn to get along. As, one definition of fellowship puts it: it's about "a bunch of fellows in the same ship."

In any case, whether furthering a bet-

ter sense of community locally or globally - it always comes down to what Jesus considered to be part of the main thing: "love your neighbor as you self."

To me this has meant that even while I work on the big picture issues of unity and reconciliation - I also need to try and see myself reflected in the eyes of everyone I will meet as I go about my life this day, this week. To recognize while looking at them that I have shared the same struggles and aspirations they carry. That, the love, joy and peace that I long for - is also what they want. That, the hopes and dreams I have for my family are nearly identical to what they hold. That very similar fears and stresses that I sometimes feel - also plague them and make them behave the way they do.

True peace is not just the absence of conflict...it is more than that, it is the presence of goodwill, brotherly love and cooperation. But to get to that level of understanding it takes a paradigm shift, a personal transformation, a new way of seeing everything, an awakening of sorts...and it seems to take the Spirit to bring that realization to the blind.

This generation has to transcend hatred, has to reject violence, has to learn to love...has to learn to forgive... has to learn to care for the last and the least in society...otherwise we will be re-visited by the madness of 'brother killing brother' in the future.

A modest proposal for reconciliation and unity: "Each person should make one really good friend, from that group of which, when you were growing up, you were told: they are the wrong kind of people."

This is one of the reasons we work so hard to make Cornerstone a "Family of Friends" that brings together everyone in the way of Jesus....and there is a price for all of us to pay to make this dream a reality. We have to go the extra mile, we have to be the bridges.



Loving Our Neighbors

Thoughts from *Tim*

Recently, the country of Rwanda spent an entire week of remembrance and mourning for the 1994 genocide in which an estimated 1 million were killed by their fellow countrymen over a hundred day period. During this annual event, all schools are closed and many businesses. Some families stock up on groceries and hardly leave the home for the whole week. It has been nearly 20 years since that dark chapter in the nation's history but sometimes it still feels like it happened yesterday.

On my frequent trips to Rwanda, to visit our people and programs there, I often see encouraging signs that the younger generations are slowly transcending the ethnic biases which gave birth to the genocide. But, at other times I get discouraged, seeing the continuation of familiar patterns of prejudice that we are all blind to within ourselves.

In Congo where I grew up, there are some 200 tribes still learning to coexist peacefully and violent conflicts continue today, usually along ethnic lines. An estimated 5 million people have been killed in the last 20 years and there are a variety of rebel groups. In Kenya, where I went to High School, the recently concluded elections were fairly peaceful this time around, unlike the last elections where over 1,000 died and tens of thousands of families were displaced from their homes. But still, the voting was clearly almost entirely along ethnic lines.

Similar divisions have governed the politics of Uganda, as in the past, even the two main political parties here were divided along on Protestant and Catholic lines. Meanwhile, in my 'home' country of the U.S. we have two major 'tribes' called Democrat and Republican, with little love shared between them and often, a fair amount of out-right hatred.

Through-out human history, it's always a story of "Us" against "Them." Yet, increasingly, I have come to believe that the revolutionary new message of Jesus was simply, "There is no Them, it's just Us." People, it's just us.

The sum total of Jesus' way of living is found in what

he called 'the Greatest Commandments': Learn to love God with all your heart, mind and soul and learn to love your neighbor as yourself. And, he asks us to go even further: "You have heard it said, "love your neighbor but hate your enemy" - but I'm saying to you, 'Love your enemy' ... Why do you only associate with your own kind of people? - that's no big deal...even the pagans do that! Don't you realize that, you are all brothers...because one is your father who is in heaven?"

There are only 3 places in the gospels where Jesus himself, in his own words, gave the criteria of what one must do to be deserving of the title: a "Child of God."

1. Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God."
2. Matthew 5:45 "Love your enemies...that you may be called sons of your Father in heaven."
3. Luke 6: 27-35 "Love your enemies, do good to those that hate you...and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked."

In the Gospel of Matthew in Chapter 23, the first verse, we find Jesus speaking to the crowds and his disciples. In verse 8 he tells them: "You are all brothers" and then adds in verse 9 "...because you have one Father who is in heaven." I think this describes a concept that could be called: "The Brotherhood of humankind under the Fatherhood of God." (Not very gender sensitive, but you get the point.)

Pretty much up until recent centuries - people everywhere through-out the world lived exclusively within separate, homogeneous communities such as: families, clans, tribes - ethnic groups that shared the same language, traditions, cultures and belief systems with each other. Even when modern cities emerged, as in America, the first residents segregated themselves into very distinct neighborhoods based on race, ethnicity or religion.

