

## Palmer Trip Report March, 2021

### Summary

I had a smooth trip in which my planned itinerary was realized precisely, except for one night in Transit in the Nairobi airport due to not being able to get a visa at the airport. I had a moment of concern whether Uganda would do the same to me, but visas there were obtainable upon arrival as has always been the case in the past. This trip was focused on Uganda, so I only spent one day in Kenya on my return trip.

### Covid 19

At this point restrictions by the governments of Kenya and Uganda are considerably less severe than at the height of the pandemic, but night curfews are still in place and the threat of renewed austere restrictions persists. Those restrictions make getting basic needs a challenge for citizens. Our brethren are not "out of the woods" yet. For travel, the considerable amount of new red tape does not necessarily prevent travel, but makes it more of a hassle than it used to be. On the upside, most airplanes have a little more space per passenger, and in moving around the country a quiet night's sleep is more possible with bars and disco's closed. Covid 19 PCR tests are readily available and results can be acquired within 6 to 12 hour at the right clinics, with cost ranging from \$78 to \$136. I learned experientially that Kenya now requires an e-visa obtained in advance—no visa can be obtained at the airport!



**Loading WBS Bibles and Courses from the Mission Printing container in Kigumba, Uganda**

### Pre-positioned Courses and Bibles

To me we have reached an important mile-marker with the first shipment of pre-positioned courses and Bibles in Uganda. My primary goal of this trip was to see those materials delivered to the Jinja Service Center with clear instructions and training for the worker there, Goeffrey Oguttu, to see that guidelines for the use of the materials is understood and followed. I feel confident that we met that goal, though some "loss" of inventory had already occurred before I arrived because the Director of the school that received the container helped himself to some of the courses without consulting us.

### Bweyale WBS Office

As Tim Brumfield transitions out of being the primary WBS contact for South Sudanese brethren in Uganda, I met with the sponsored worker, Stephen Obalim, who serves those brethren out of Bweyale, near the Kiryandongo refugee camp. The 3<sup>rd</sup> & Kilgore congregation in Portales, NM, adopted this group as a targeted WBS field in 2018. Two shipments of WBS courses were sent by them to Bweyale, in 2018 and 2019. The plan was for brethren in the 10 or more congregations in the camps to send WBS student answer sheets to Bweyale for scanning to Portales where the study helpers would grade and then scan back the answer sheets. Distribution of subsequent courses would be quick and inexpensive, using the brethren's usual means of contact with each other.



**Uganda Service Center director Goeffrey Oguttu gives Stephen pointers on scanning and dropbox**

My visit with Stephen was to evaluate how the refugee WBS program has gone and its current status. I found the main obstacle to successful scanning has been internet connection, erratic electricity, and problems with the equipment, such as printer and computers. Stephen has been supportive all along of the 2-way scanning plan, but when equipment wouldn't work, resorted to grading lessons himself. The courses were distributed in block quantities to the various congregations in different refugee camps to be ready for use when student lessons were graded. Stephen has been the only one doing the grading in Uganda.

I plan to meet with and give the leaders of 3<sup>rd</sup> & Kilgore a report on March 21<sup>st</sup>, recommending upgrades to the Bweyale office. I already purchased a new printer, and a new router for better internet connectivity.



**South Sudanese preachers from Refugee Camps in Uganda—a WBS work supported by 3<sup>rd</sup> & Kilgore Church of Christ in Portales, NM**

Gulu Workshop for South Sudanese in the Refugee Camps

Bro. Obalim contacted key representatives of the South Sudanese brethren in various refugee camps to attend a WBS training workshop. The local preacher in Gulu, Uganda, Richard Kumakech, did a fabulous job getting us lodging and a venue for the workshop. Including Bro. Obalim, 10

preachers attended from 10 congregations in 6 different refugee camps. Almost all had previously been using the WBS materials supplied by 3<sup>rd</sup> & Kilgore, and some had been at the WBS workshop I did in the Adjumani camp in 2017. Though their supply of WBS courses is getting low, they are poised to engage their congregations and area preachers in more recruiting and to re-invigorate the 3<sup>rd</sup> & Kilgore 2-way scanning program.

Parombo Workshop

West Nile is an area where virtually all congregations owe their beginning to WBS outreach, especially by Lloyd Deal, his trainees, and subsequently their "Timothy's." The solid, fired-up evangelist and WBS Coordinator there is Charles Oyungrwoth. He selected representatives to attend our WBS training workshop from around the area. 20 attended from 13 congregations. Three of those came from across the border in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Another WBS coordinator from Kiryandongo, Benard Ecret, also went with us to the workshop.



**Geoffrey and Benard give Bro. Anthony his WBS recruiting supplies**



### Jinja Workshop

Uganda Service Center worker Geoffrey Oguttu organized this workshop for key representatives from "all Uganda." (A couple who were at the Parombo workshop were excluded). Besides Geoffrey there were 10 men present, two from Western Uganda, one from Kampala, one from Entebbe, one from Lira, one from Mbale, and 4 from Busoga (the Jinja region). The venue was interesting. Gospel Chariot Ministries has almost completed a very nice training facility about 8 miles outside of Jinja. It was complete enough to host our group, with bunk-beds, out-door kitchen, and by



**Training facility near Jinja built by Gospel Chariot Mission**



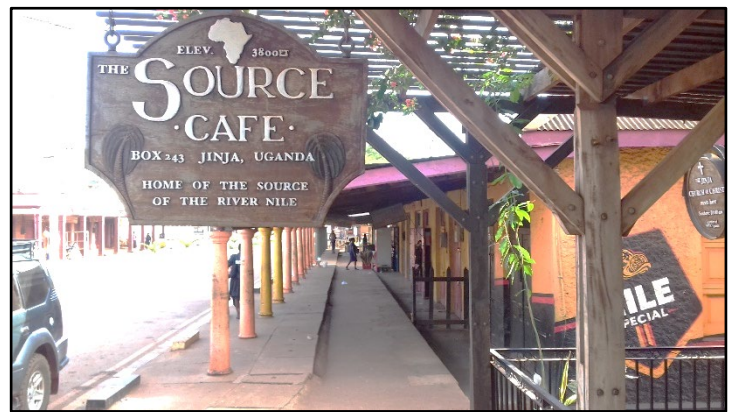
**WBS Coordinators discuss aspects of the work**

night-time the first night, even electricity. There was no running water, but a large water tank was full for our use. I got the VIP (?) quarters with my own bathroom!

The same emphases were made here as in the other workshops. Each leader was challenged to hold at least one training workshop for other preachers in their area between now and December. As with the Kenya Conference last November, workers were urged to use our own post boxes for student registrations, not those of schools or other unproven boxes.

### Jinja Service Center

The Jinja Church of Christ, at a multi-faceted facility in downtown Jinja called 'The Source Café,' has since 2014 hosted the WBS office which constitutes the Service Center for Uganda. Actually, the preacher has shared his office, a room about 10' x 10', with our worker, the scanner, computer, printer, etc. Demand for the facilities has made it important to start looking for another option for where the WBS office can be located. I am asking Geoffrey and Duncan to give me some realistic options, for renting our own place or for purchasing property. WBS is not a recognized/registered organization in Uganda, so our office will be in the name of Jinja Church of Christ.



**The Jinja Church of Christ, Busoga Bible School and other programs work from this location on main street**

### Kenya

Despite a November national WBS Conference and the easing of Covid restrictions, recruitment by GBEA volunteers does not seem to have picked up much in Kenya so far this year. The main coordinators are gradually holding new recruiter training workshops and recruiting campaigns around the country. The Service Center

director, Richard Karima, is going out to do recruiting campaigns about once a month, basically from one end of Kenya to the other, as he gets invitations. The 20 or so preachers-in-training at IPCM (where Richard is an administrator) will use *God Has Spoken* through *Born of Water and the Spirit* in their curriculum this year. The new sub-office at Koma Rock Church of Christ is operating well as Joyce receives scanned or photo'd lessons, processes them, and sends them on to Sherri.

### Tanzania

In an attempt to transfer primary responsibility for the Service Center from Tizo to Kishumwui, I proposed and am now implementing upgrades to the Monduli Town WBS office. A locking cabinet to hold the electronic equipment and adding a security guard to the budget will enable "Kish" to do the WBS work anytime he needs rather than depending on Tizo to be available. Tizo has always kept the electronics at his house.

Since Covid restrictions were lowered, Kish and Tizo have been following a program of visiting high schools to recruit, then going back to collect lessons, then taking the next lessons back there when ready. This has been in Monduli District. Now they are reaching schools in other districts also.

### South Sudan

It seems I narrowly missed the chance to meet with the Juba WBS worker, Robert Ginyi, while I was in Uganda. He was also there, but at different places. In January Juba received an 80 lb. box of WBS courses sent airfreight by the West Side church in Searcy. I will be checking how they are being used. I hope to go there for a seminar in July, Lord willing. Our original WBS worker, Patrick Lazarus, is now slated for another 1½ years Bible college in Ghana. There is increasing interest among WEI teachers to connect their students in S.Sudan with WBS. They have been consistently getting baptism requests the last couple of years in different corners of S.Sudan. We have not finished exploring how to make WBS available around the country and not just in Juba, except of course by internet/Lite app studies.