

**Palmer Trip October – November 2022
Uganda & South Sudan**

Summary

The logistics of travel and health went very smoothly on this trip. I feel like I met my objectives with regard to WBS training workshops and the campaign in Uganda.

Jinja WBS Workshop

12 WBS Coordinators came to the Jinja workshop from around Uganda (Ft. Portal, Mbarara, Kiryandongo, West Nile, Kampala, Entebbe, Jinja, and 3 places in Busoga (Eastern Uganda). The workshop was hosted at the Gospel Chariot Missions facility. Our Service Center is operating from there, paying a modest rent to use their nice office and to store materials in their container.



Jinja WBS Coordinators Workshop participants

The coordinators, who typically work with two to ten co-recruiters in their areas, were challenged to set a faith-goal of new recruitments to reach by the end of this year. They all still name the slowness of getting the next lessons as a challenge to their on-going recruiting. Nonetheless, the 10 areas represented set goals totaling over 11,000 new students. A number of approaches and activities are planned to help reach those goals. Included are improving the Service Center efficiency, 2-way scanning turn-around time, and streamlining delivery of student courses across Uganda.

Kaliro Church Plant



28 Baptisms during Kaliro Campaign

One of the young evangelists in Kaliro District, Eastern Uganda, has been quite dedicated over the last couple of years. His name is Ronald Ameri. Some 5 km from his village home is a village called 'Kitambogo A' that has no church of any kind (and, as the local political representative emphasized, also no school and no medical facility). Three WBS students there were baptized recently and Ronald organized for my time in Uganda a 2-day program of WBS enrollment and teaching sessions. I was advised to emphasize 'Who Jesus is' and 'What baptism is about,' since the residents there only know of Protestant (Anglican) practices and have little knowledge of the gospel. I was pleased with the careful attention and questions as we taught in a concentrated way on Jesus and what it means to be a disciple of his. On the second day (Sunday), 28 were baptized, with some others expected to join them soon. A week after I left, Ronald reports that the congregation has reached a membership of over 50! It is a great thing to see God working in this way, and underscores the importance of our praying for these new babes in Christ.

South Sudan



WBS Training Workshop, Block 1 Church of Christ, Bor, South Sudan

Two Recruiters Workshops were held, one in Juba (attendance:20) and one in Bor (attendance:22). The Faith Village congregation in Wichita Falls and subsequently a Christian non-profit named Starfish Foundation have built a Christian vocational school in Bor, sent 12 or more men for training at Bible schools in Zimbabwe and Tanzania, and there are now 4 congregations in Bor.

My original plan for this trip was to get our scanning system working from Juba and to set up Bor as a “sub-station” which would funnel student answer sheets to Juba for scanning

lessons for US study helpers to grade. The WBS management decision to just let South Sudanese brethren grade the lessons themselves for now made me adjust the training to use that approach. It was important that we set up procedures since the first ever significant shipment of WBS Bibles and courses will soon reach South Sudan, likely in December or January. Juba will have an inventory office, as well Bor. The recruiters those offices serve will get appropriate quantities of courses which can be re-supplied when they show effective use and student progress. Recruiters are essentially serving the vicinities of the congregations where they are already serving as evangelists.

New areas: Guolyar and Aweil

In 2020 large areas near the Nile River were flooded, displacing populations of several thousands, even up to the present. Many were relocated to Guolyar, an expansive town a 40-minute speedboat trip up and across the Nile from Bor. In 2021 John Lam Dau, a Mutari School of Preaching graduate, went to Guolyar and established the church, primarily from WBS student contacts. It has since been one of the premier WBS student areas in South Sudan. 12 students have graduated. One who was recently baptized has nine more students in his village, a good distance farther west, which may become the next church plant.



Up the Nile to Guolyar by speedboat



Malualkon Church of Christ, Aweil, S.Sudan. Bartholomayo on right

In 2019 a WBS and WEI online student named Bartholomayo Akol Lang wanted to be baptized. Two evangelists were sent the long way to his home of Aweil, Northern Bahl el-Gazal State. Since then God has been working powerfully in that predominantly Muslim part of South Sudan, with WBS being the primary evangelistic tool. There have been over 200 baptisms and there are now 4 congregations, though somewhat distant

from each other. One congregation has 100 members. Bartholomayo was at both the Juba and Bor workshops. His enthusiasm and unusual maturity (he is unmarried and in his twenties), not to mention zeal and commitment, added much to our workshops. Aweil can only be reached from Juba by plane, and increasing the number of courses and Bibles for their WBS program requires flying the materials there from Juba. It will nonetheless be one area we give priority to in the distribution of the inventory.

The Future

Two-way scanning has been operating consistently in Uganda for a year and 3 months now, but only two US congregations have been involved, Hillcrest in Abilene and Jim Ned Valley in Tuscola. Since Hillcrest is taking most or all scanning from Kenya also, it has taxed her workers and caused a slower turnaround for students waiting on their next course (but nothing like the delay/uncertainty of posting from the US). More 2-way scanning congregations are needed for both Uganda and Kenya.

The main recruiters in Uganda have not been terribly productive this year. However, 1500 new students were enrolled at the WBS Booth set up for 10 days in October at the National Trade Fair in Kampala. One reason cited as a cause of low recruitment is how long students are still waiting to get their 2nd and 3rd lessons. Inflation and taxation in Uganda have seriously impacted life and limited people's activities. Hunger and even starvation is known in some areas.



Uganda National Trade Fair WBS Booth – Oct 2022

Across the board, I intend in 2023 to emphasize follow-up/follow-through more than mass enrollments. Recruiters will be urged to stay with fewer, reachable students to get them through the whole Master Series more than scattering Introduction lessons where they are unable to collect or deliver subsequent lessons. Two-way scanning will be used for the effective recruiters, while enrollments received through less personal means can still try and rely on the undependable mail systems.

South Sudan can be ready for 2-way scanning when the decision is made to do that, especially when the full-time preacher. Patrick Lazarus, gets back to Juba from his Bible Schooling in Ghana. At the moment, grading by the recruiters themselves makes some sense. They can efficiently serve the relatively small number of students with the somewhat limited inventory currently available to them. Such an approach has proven to have a high yield in South Sudan so far in terms of completed Master Series courses and baptism percentages.

Much thanks to Hillcrest for sponsorship, support and oversight. In person audio-visual available upon request!