

CORNERSTONE NEWS

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Dear Friends,

Greetings from Kitgum, where it continues to be VERY HOT, with temperatures between 35 and 40 degrees most days and approx 46 degrees in Bev's kitchen set up in the "Matson" container. It is no longer dry, with 15 - 25mm of rain falling every 3 or 4 days. Accordingly, the task of slashing the land with the tractor is pretty constant.

The grass here grows about 6 inches in a week, so the tractor is needed every 2 weeks or so just to maintain the property. Once the slashing is completed and our 3 workmen have hand slashed those areas not able to be done with the tractor and slasher, the land looks really great. Even though it takes about 3 days to finish everything, it is very important to keep the property clean since it enables us to spot any unwelcome guests paying a visit. (eg. Cobras, Black Mambas etc.)

For quite a few months now we have been really blessed by daily visits to the land by a pair of African Blue Heron birds. They are absolutely beautiful creatures who just happen to love eating frogs and snakes. They are most welcome here!!



Blue
Heron



Property after slashing has been completed

God's protection:

As recently as last week we were again assured of God's protection over us when one of our workmen discovered a small cobra snake among the harvested bean pods that were stored under the toucal for protection from the rain, only about a metre from where we had been sitting the day before. Yes, God does hear and answer prayer when we ask for His protection!!! PTL!!

Christine's Story:

Life in this part of the world can be pretty tough, but every now and then something comes along that really “knocks the wind out of our sails”.

In mid August we learned that Christine, the wife of one of our workmen, Patrick, had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. She presented at St Joseph's Hospital in Kitgum with severe bleeding. At first it seemed she may have had a miscarriage, but upon examination, the Italian woman doctor found a large mass and sent a biopsy to Mulago Hospital in Kampala for testing.

The prognosis for “Christine” is not good. She has advanced cancer of the cervix (stage three).

Christine is 24 years old and has possibly 6 – 12 months left to live.

When asked if a hysterectomy could be done to remove the growth, the doctor assured us that surgical intervention was not really an option, since the cancer was too far advanced. She advised strongly against such an operation, believing that Christine would in all probability not survive the surgery.

Her advice was to provide basic “palliative care” for Christine, using medication and pain killers so that she could continue to care for their four young children at home, at least for the immediate future.

We were devastated!!

We assured Patrick and Christine that we will do whatever we can to help them both through the coming months, agreeing to pay for all medical bills, medication and any future transport costs to the hospital to see the doctor.

After returning recently from a quick business trip to Kampala we were greeted with the news that Christine's mother had arranged for her to be taken to Gulu (about 3 hours away from Kitgum on an appalling road) and has had an operation in the hospital there!!!! Words fail us!

How a mother can completely ignore sound medical advice from the doctor in Kitgum (based on years of experience in the field of obstetrics) and go ahead with an operation, is beyond our thinking!

The only news we have heard from Patrick in recent days is that the doctors in Gulu could not stop the bleeding after the operation. There are things about the Acholi culture that continue to astound us!

Patrick cannot go to Gulu to visit his wife, with 4 young children to care for here in Kitgum.

We have enjoyed having “Angel” (his 2 year old daughter) come to work here at the land with Patrick.

Bev gave her an “Eeyore” cuddly toy and it has not been out of her sight since!

All we can do is to continue to pray for Christine and Patrick, lifting them up to our Heavenly Father and trust in His unfailing love.



Patrick and Christine earlier this year with children Felic (left) and Angel

Land Survey completed:

The official GPS survey was completed on September 11th and “mark stones” (photo) placed at the boundary corners of our land. Our lawyer has since lodged all of the documents with the appropriate Government department in Entebbe. After paying yet another fee the bureaucracy will now process the surveyor’ report and then pass it on to another department in Kampala, this time to hopefully complete the process in the next month or so, (with some more fees payable no doubt). Ultimately, we trust that we will have the final “Land Lease Title Deed” and “Land Lease Title Plan” before we return to Australia in December. T.I.A (This Is Africa) Please continue to pray for our lawyer “Sam” as he “walks the corridors of power” on our behalf. Please pray that the end result will be achieved soon and that all necessary documents will be in order, with no costly mistakes to be corrected, as can easily happen in such a complicated and tedious system.



“Toucal” concrete floor nearly complete:

Since our last newsletter the concrete floor in the main “Toucal” is nearly complete. It has been quite a task and a learning experience for both Wayne and the workmen. The men are now quite competent using the concrete mixer and so we decided to pour half of the floor area in one pour. This was not such a good idea as we soon found out. With gravel (aggregate) more like mini boulders rather than nice uniform sized gravel, the task of “screeding” with a 4 metre length of rectangular steel tubing proved very difficult. Most men reading this will appreciate that trying to drag big lumps of rock through wet concrete, leaving drag marks constantly and with the concrete setting quickly in 35 degree heat is not a great way to spend the day.

We began mixing concrete at 8 am and Wayne finally finished “trowelling- off” at 9 pm!! Quite a day.

We decided to pour the remainder of the floor in smaller segments which has proved far more manageable. The problem of large aggregate has also been solved. The workmen have spent quite a few days making big rocks into small rocks: with hammers!!

This is our only option here, since there aren’t too many quarry crushing plants in Kitgum district.



Bean Crop Harvested:

Our 3 workmen have worked hard over recent weeks to harvest, dry, thresh and winnow the bean crop. The techniques used by the men date back to the time of Christ and reflect how so little has changed in this part of the world over thousands of years. After “thrashing the living daylights” out of the dried pods with lengths of timber to separate the beans from the pods it was quite a sight to watch them slowly tip the beans from a shallow bowl held at head height into another bowl on the ground to allow the rubbish or “chaff” to blow away in the wind.

Unfortunately, the cost of the men’s wages and the time spent on this whole process has resulted in the venture not being profitable at all. In fact we will make a loss overall after the beans are sold, but it has been a learning experience for us.

While our intentions were good, with the idea that we would raise some funds toward the project from here in Kitgum, rather than always depending on funds from Australia, the end result has quite clearly demonstrated that God is the one who will bring all that is needed. It is His project and our role is to persevere and “hang in there” to see the project progress, despite the endless frustrations of bureaucracy. Some lessons are hard to learn. Ultimately, He knows best!!



Health Issues:

Bev has had an on-going problem since April this year with terrible nausea during the middle of the night, at first about once every month, but lately it has occurred once or more every week. After visiting the doctor in Kampala recently she had some tests done and the diagnosis was some form of amoeba. She has just completed a double dose of medication and a follow-up course of antibiotics. We trust that the problem will not occur any more.

Two weeks ago Wayne injured his back simply putting some items into the Land Rover.

He wasn’t lifting anything heavy at the time, but felt it “crack” and then painful spasms followed.

The concrete work needed to complete the toucal has been “on-hold” for the last week or so until his back is better. Please keep praying for good health for us both.

Internet problem solved:

After a recent visit to MTN head office in Kampala the problem we have had with internet access has at last been solved we trust. The modem used to connect to the MTN network was faulty. The technician who sorted it all out informed us that they have known about the problem for about 12 months, but no-one actually got around to letting people know about it. Meanwhile, we have had virtually no internet access for just over 7 months. T.I.A !!

Quiz Night:

It was great to be able to speak to everyone at the annual Quiz Night held on 15th August at Modbury Church of Christ, direct from Kitgum by mobile phone. Thank-you Ian Turvey for arranging the technology to enable this to happen.

The evening raised in excess of \$1680 toward the project in Kitgum.

Thank-you to those who attended the Quiz Night and a special thank-you to the sponsors who donated many valuable items that contributed toward the success of the evening.

Our Return to Australia in December:

We are returning to Australia in December, arriving at Adelaide airport on Thursday 10th December at 5.45 pm, Qantas Flight QF 592 from Perth. We are planning to return to Uganda on 14th February 2010. It will be great to catch up with as many of you as we can during this time.

Speaking Engagements:

If you would like us to speak at your Church, home fellowship group, or at some other function during our time in Australia, please contact Marlene Shepherdson, who is co-ordinating our speaking engagements.

Marlene can be contacted by Phone: (08) 8280 7616

or E-mail: rmshepherdson@harboursat.com.au

We look forward to meeting with as many of our supporters as we can during our time back in South Australia. Until then

Lubanga Omedi Gum (*God Bless You*)

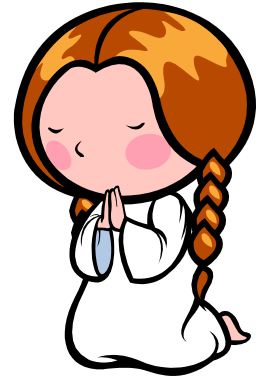
With our love, *Wayne and Bev*



Patrick (who has lost both father and mother) hard at work using the “wipper snipper” (brush cutter) around the compound.

*“But you, O God, do see trouble and grief;
you consider it to take it in hand.
The victim commits himself to you;
you are the helper of the fatherless.”
(Psalm 10 v 14) NIV*

Prayer Points:



Praise God: For His protection over us and our workmen
 For friendships being made with Christians working for other NGO's based in Kitgum
 For supporters who faithfully pray for us
 For completion of the Land Survey
 For continued financial support received in recent months

Please pray: That the "Land Lease Title Deed" and "Land Title Deed Plan" will be completed before our return to Australia
 For Sam, our lawyer, as he continues working on our behalf in Kampala
 For continued financial support for the project
 For us both as we try to cope with the incessant heat
 For protection when travelling from Kitgum to Kampala in December on the very "special" roads
 For safety in travel when we return to Australia in December
 For the management committee as they provide vital support for the project
 For soldiers in the UPDF as they continue to pursue Joseph Kony and his rebels in DRC

Donation Reply Slip:

(A receipt and thank-you note will be issued for all donations)

I / We would like to Support the ministry of Cornerstone Foundation (Australia) Inc. in Kitgum
 Donate toward Wayne & Bev's personal support Monthly Quarterly

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Enclosed is my donation of: \$ _____ Phone: () _____

Method of Payment: Cheque Postal Order

Please post to: Mr D McKenzie
 Cornerstone Foundation (Australia) Inc.
 PO Box 26
 PINNAROO SA 5304

