



February 2009

"...I've become convinced of the enormous contribution that Christian evangelism makes in Africa; sharply distinct from the work of secular NGOs, government projects and international aid efforts. These alone will not do. Education and training alone will not do. **In Africa, Christianity changes people's hearts. It brings a spiritual transformation. The rebirth is real. The change is good.**"

Matthew Parris, author and confirmed atheist

Hello my friends!

Kathy and I are back from Uganda filled with joy and passion for what the Lord is doing in Africa! Lives *are* being transformed and there is an evident hunger to know God's Word and to worship and serve Him more. What a privilege to be a part of the work God is doing to build Christian leaders in Uganda!

The Lord assembled an amazing team for this year's conference. Each one of us had a unique God given role.

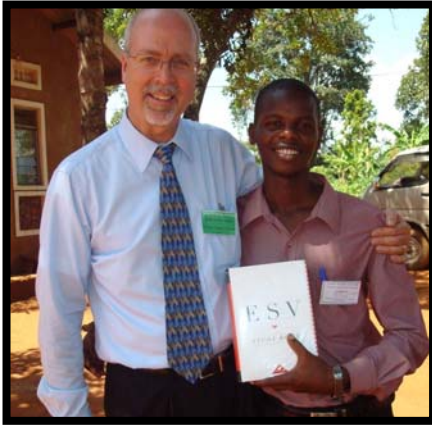
Arlene Meeds was the only woman who attended last year's conference. She told the attendees this year that she brought reinforcements and they all cheered! **Close to a thousand people attended the conference with separate venues for pastors, women, youth and children. We had three to four simultaneous sessions**



**throughout our six days of meetings, which meant we were able to provide over fifty teaching sessions.** Pictured from left to right are Debbie and Dan Smythe, Cyndi Dillen, Nate Meeds, Sarah McElfresh, Arlene and Wilf Meeds, Callie and Carol Denny, Theresa and Dale Crull, and Kathy and I.

There are so many stories we would love to share with you. **You were the prayer power behind all that we did and for that we are so grateful!** We were deeply moved by the African people and their love and commitment to the Lord. **They would gather early every morning to pray before the conference and many of them would sit for hours saving the front row seats eager to learn.** They are very relational and expressive which explains why they are so passionate in worship. **All of us were told over and over again, "Thank you for loving Uganda!" and pastors would say, "I will take this teaching to my church!"** One of our interpreters said, "You have given us so much and without expecting anything in return," but as Kathy put it, "We came home with far more than we ever hoped to give."

## Pastors and Leaders



The pastors and church leaders received strong Biblical training with four sessions per day. **One of the highlights for the pastors was receiving their brand new ESV study Bibles.** Prior to the conference, Dan Smythe (GTN staff, pictured to the left with Pastor Herman who works in the prisons), had a divine meeting with a couple in Washington State who funded all 150 Bibles! **Watching the faces of these leaders receive this gift was electrifying!** They now have a powerful tool for teaching God's Word to their churches!

## Youth

The youth were our largest group and almost every member of our team taught their sessions. Joel is pictured with them to the right. **The youth know they are being groomed to be the future leaders of the Ugandan church and they are eager to learn God's Word.** Theresa Crull, the nurse practitioner on our team, gave them a straight forward sex and STD talk as well. God will use this next generation to bring about strong leadership both in the church and in their nation.



## Women



The women on our team did an incredible job! Along with solid Biblical teaching sessions, they also provided the Ugandan women with information on practical women's issues. **It was an exciting day when they received their clean birthing kits from Carol Denny (pictured to the left), who has a ministry called "Helping Mothers and Babies, Inc." and the brooches with hand written verses that were donated by women in America.** They celebrated loudly by singing, clapping and dancing!

## Children

The day we arrived at the Nkumba Church and school, the site where the conference was held, we were met by many children. **Pastor John Mugabi's ministry feeds over 100 children per day at this site and some of them**

are orphans or stay at Nkumba because their parents can't care for them. If you would like to support a child through this ministry please contact us. We saw firsthand the incredible impact they are having in the lives of so many. Kathy instantly fell in love with one particular little boy named Mike. **We told him that in America people want to "be like Mike."** A few minutes later he looked up at Kathy very seriously and said, **"I want to be like Jesus."** Cyndi Dillen, who is an associate pastor at a church in Canada, led our ministry to these children every day. She also brought teaching materials to leave for the children's workers. It's an amazing thing when children rejoice over receiving crayons to share!



### Other Ministry Opportunities

Our time in Uganda was rich! We also had a beautiful baptism service in Lake Victoria. **Wilf, Dan, Dale, Nate and I baptized 84 people as hundreds worshipped and looked on. It was definitely a highlight for all of us! Our team was also given the privilege to minister at a men's prison where 23 made decisions for Christ, at a University and in many churches.** Five of the women on our team spent a full day ministering to women and children in a remote village. I wish I had room to share with you all that God did through the power of prayer. We saw him move in powerful ways!

### Testimony of the Power of Prayer

**Dale Crull is a mighty prayer warrior and God directed him months before our trip to teach the pastors from Daniel 10 on spiritual warfare because of the heavy influence of witchcraft and spiritual oppression in Uganda.** It was a powerfully anointed message! Soon after he spoke he began to feel abdominal pain and as the evening approached it became very intense. We knew what was happening and gathered in his room twice for prayer. Our prayer leader at home encouraged us to sing praises around him. It was an incredibly awesome time worshipping and believing God together for his healing! **I looked down at one point and saw Dale in all of his pain lifting his hands to the Lord! By the next morning we were thrilled to see Dale dressed and ready for the day.** He said the pain continued until about 3:30am when he took a deep breath and realized the pain was gone! **Later we learned that Pastor John Mugabi had been encouraged by two**



**Ugandan pastor's wives to pray for our team, so at 3:00am he woke everyone up at the conference grounds to pray!** He said hundreds of people were praying all over the field. **It was the power of God through the answer to the prayers of the saints that broke the enemies attack and brought relief!** What a testimony of the power of God and that we battle not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces of evil! Praise the Lord!



On the final day of the conference a woman named Harriett asked Kathy and I to pray for her. **She told us that her husband had taken on three additional wives and that he would no longer support her and their children because she refused to go to the witch doctor.** It broke our hearts to hear her story. I do have to say though that it was a joy to be able to minister with Kathy. We were able to pray for people and to teach as a team.

### Future Ministry

**This week Kathy and I will be hosting Pastor Iswar Dutta Suna, from Orissa, India.** We hope to introduce him to many of you. He will be sharing with us firsthand the persecution that Indian Christians have had to face. We anticipate a rich and fruitful time with him. **In March I will be returning to India to teach at two conferences and to be at the graduation for a group of church planters. It will be followed by a trip to Indonesia for three days of training with 150 Bible college students.** Pray for me as I make preparations for this trip.

During one of the church services where I preached, I told the people how deeply I loved them. **Afterwards a brother came up to me and said, "Your heart is becoming brown." I was so moved by his words! Yes, my heart has become brown and every color that represents the nations of the world.** Thank you for standing with us in this vital ministry to train and equip pastors and leaders around the world! God is working mightily and we stand in awe of Him!

Because He first loved us!

Joel Madson  
Vice President  
Global Training Network

