

In the Shadow – Uganda 2

Today I will share another blog regarding the Church of the Brethren Uganda. As mentioned in the previous post, this was my first time in that country. And I certainly hope it's not the last!

Anyone that has visited in a majority-world country (aka: third-world country) recognizes the many things that Westerners (aka: minority-world countries) take for granted. One particular item is the Bible.

We can so easily purchase one. A Bible is relatively inexpensive, unless you're buying a specialty study Bible. They are available most anywhere. We can go online to Christian Book Distributors, even Amazon or Walmart, and for a few dollars buy one and have it shipped to our door. Some years ago I bought a paperback Bible at Dollar General for \$5 because it came with a nice zippered cover. I gave the Bible away and used the cover until it wore out.

Our believing brothers and sisters in Africa don't have the financial resources that we have. In many cases, depending on your heart language, Bibles aren't available to purchase locally, even if you do have money. There certainly aren't the options of versions/translations that Americans have.

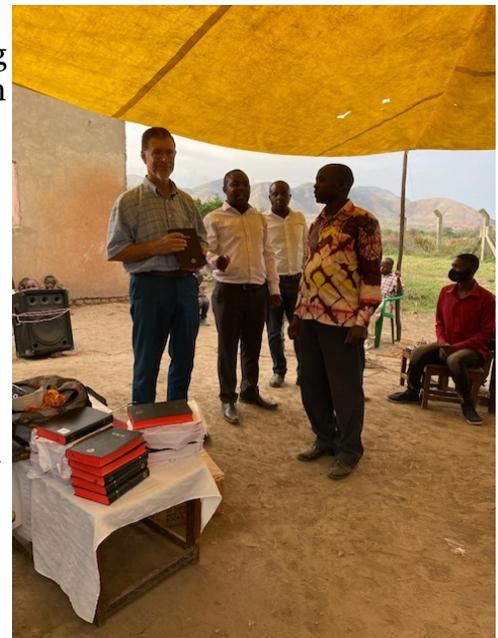
Rwanda, I think, is a little better off than some places. I can go to the local market and buy a Bible for the equivalent of 7 to 12 dollars, depending on the cover, print size, etc. There are two translations (both are Kinyarwanda) that I am aware of. The newer one isn't well regarded by some churches and pastors because of perceived issues. Sound familiar? Either way, the Bible is generally available, but for someone living on a dollar or two a day, that's rather expensive.



The big difference in Uganda is that it is a much larger country and the languages spoken vary from place to place. English is the “official” language, coming from the colonial era when Britain ruled; most people seem to know a little. Many speak at least a few words of Swahili (Kiswahili), but there are lots of tribal languages.

Distributing Bibles is a bit more challenging here!

Pastor Sedrack asked if it would be possible for us to come up with \$1,500 that could be sent ahead of our visit. That would allow him to purchase Bibles for us to share with the congregations once we arrived and traveled to each one. Thankfully, several churches from Mid-Atlantic and Southern PA districts generously contributed. He bought about 150 and had a little left over to buy some in one of the languages that wouldn't be available until next week. If I understand correctly, they needed at least four different languages. What a joy it is to share the Word of God!



Another life aspect we take for granted is schooling and care for orphans. Not that the US has it all together, but seeing/experiencing a majority world orphanage alters one's perspective. The Rising Star Orphanage and School in Uganda is a beautiful example of caring for the weak and vulnerable. Though Pastor Sedrack lives in Kampala – Uganda's

capital – he grew up in the rural mountain/farming area of Kasese. Most of the Uganda COB congregations and outreach work is in this area. The orphanage serves (I think) about 80 children. There is no electricity or running water. They grow much of their own food on an adjoining plot of land.

Most fascinating to me was the interaction between Grace and the teenage girls at Rising Star. Not surprisingly they were immediately drawn together. When it was time to go, I'm not sure if it was Grace's reluctance to leave, or the girls reluctance to let her go, but Mary was quite convinced that Grace would be left behind if we didn't drag her to the bus.

For the Master, Chris Elliott with the Church of the Brethren Uganda

