



# Youthworx East Africa News Letter

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I am seated at my desk being deafened by the rain hitting the tin roof. Wonderful to hear after 3 months of drought. As the mains water is still not running I took time out when the storm started to get all our indoor tanks filled so we now have a supply for the next few days. Is this the start of the rainy season or will it stop and go back to heat again? Guess I'll be answering that question this time in April.

The topic I want to tackle this month is an uncomfortable one. Bearing Fruit.

I was reading John Chapter 15. Please work through this chapter with me.

Verses 1 to 4 show us that Jesus, as the Vine, is the one being pruned. For some reason I have always put myself in that place. But of course what is happening here is God the Father, as the gardener, is ensuring that Jesus is a fully pure a fruitful vine for us to grow in and from. Our role is to remain in Him. If we do not remain in Him we are dead branches, not connected in any way to the Vine, therefore we have no way of receiving the goodness flowing from the main stem.

If we do remain in Him we will bear fruit (vv7/8) which is true discipleship. Which is what we are trying to do. So far so good!

I would have expected this next paragraph to be all about how many young people we see coming into faith and growing and multiplying and and and..... But I must remain true to the scripture.

Learn to love. Learn to love each other in the way that we have experienced love in our lives from Jesus. Imitate Him in our relationships, being the kind of friends who are prepared to lay down our lives? Not comfortable. In our friendship with Christ show the same level of sacrifice He has shown to us. Ouch!

Radical Christianity is not about planning evangelistic campaigns (though useful) or writing amazing discipleship programmes (though essential). "This is my command: Love each other."

So we need to teach this radical, authentic, uncomfortable lifestyle to generations of young people who have been poisoned by corruption, bad teaching and negative role models. Who have grown up in a world of poverty, spiritual and material, where each day is a struggle to put food on the table.

Am I laying this on too thick? Sadly no I am not.

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We live where the vine is growing in unfertile soil, where poison is being poured around the roots. As a team we are also affected by the challenges and struggles of everyday life in East Africa. It is not always easy to love. But we must.

The end result of this is to be hated for what we do, to expect persecution. And each young person we successfully encourage into this radical lifestyle can expect the same. No wonder it takes time. No wonder many give up. If you don't buy this idea read verses 18 to 25.

Don't get too depressed. I'm simply encouraging you to pray more. So let me end with a story:

Nathan grew up in Hoima under the youth ministry of Godfrey Buro, our very first strong link for developing our work in East Africa. He was on Godfreys' youth team and continued through school with subsequent youth workers. Along the way he was trained by us, then he went to Uganda Christian University in Mukono. During his breaks from UCU he worked with us running village youth conferences around Hoima district and helped us with several training workshops. He has now graduated from UCU and has just been appointed to take the role of Diocesan youth worker (the role Godfrey Buro had all those years ago) and will be partnering with us in developing further the youth ministry across Hoima district. He is a friend who has stuck by us through the years and shown great support for what we are doing. He is a young guy who demonstrates love in all the work he does.

This is fruit. I could go on but I wont.....

Until next month, God bless you and thanks for all your support and prayers. The road is not easy but it is worth it.

Ian.



Mr Ian Wardle, c/o P.O. Box 26430, Kampala, Uganda, East Africa. Tel: +256 772 437990 Skype: Ugandamukiwa  
email: [youthworx.ea@gmail.com](mailto:youthworx.ea@gmail.com), [www.youthworx-ea.org.uk](http://www.youthworx-ea.org.uk), [www.youthworxea.wordpress.com](http://www.youthworxea.wordpress.com)