

YOUTHWORX EAST AFRICA PRAYER UPDATE AND NEWS

I remember some years back when I was still living in UK a hurricane passed through the neighbourhood. During the actual storm we could do nothing of value but wait and ride it out. In the immediate aftermath there was a sense of numbness coupled with relief that it was over. Then the clean up began. First a survey of the damage then a gradual return to normal function but with the storms legacy of destruction and exhaustion still to deal with.

This newsletter and prayer update comes to you after a storm. We have lost a valuable vehicle, made the decision to move out of the premises where AMIGOS was running, and had various team challenges. I am sure you will have already heard about these things.

In our regular team times on Monday morning two words have been brought recently worth mentioning here:

Psalm 40: 1 – 5. This psalm of trust, rescue and promise spoke to us. Our feet are on solid ground (promise) We will sing a new song of praise (response) We will trust at times when we cannot see the way forward (difficult but....) He has plans for us too many to calculate (promise) . Not many weeks ago Eugene and I were quite literally stuck in the mud and mire up country in Uganda. The fact that God got us out of that mess helped me to see that for sure He would be faithful when in the subsequent weeks so many other things went wrong.

I was in the city earlier today and was harangued by a few manic street preachers. They are a common sight in Kampala, yelling hell and damnation to any who don't repent. I'll make no value statement about how effective they are, but it did set me to think again about the verses in Philippians 2: 12 -18. What should our response be as we live out our lives and try to do ministry in a “crooked and depraved generation”? To live lives of integrity, of purity, blameless, without fault. To “hold out the word of life”, not by yelling at unsuspecting passers by, but by setting an example, by being different. It is not easy, no one said it would be, but if we are to do anything that can pass through the refining process, it is necessary. All our good works and programmes are nothing if we are not transformed people.

Please stand with us as we pick up the pieces and move forward after our storm and give thanks as we accept His plans for us.

So whats been going on?

- Our Ugandan board is finding its position to guide and support us in the work here. We met last week. Please pray for Hannington, Anne Grace, Lazarus, Mike and Silver as they look for their role within our work and juggle this with busy lives and families.
- We have begun a Strategic Planning process for YEA. We anticipate this taking some time, but feel it is most important as we grow and become an indigenous African organisation.
- New training material is being developed for our ongoing work up country plus Collin and Ron (new part time volunteer) are working on a revised concept for schools ministry.
- We are about to enter into a partnership with Kampala International Church to oversee and develop their youth ministry on a part time basis. We are excited about the potential for this, especially for the interest KIC has shown in our work and the willingness for their youth to get involved in our campsite and some of our up country work.
- There is plenty of on going work. Collin will be in Kinoni near Masaka next week where he will be working in schools connected to the Baptist Union churches in that area.

- Sam (volunteer from UK) has been working in Bbaale and Njeru, all part of Mukono diocese the past few weeks. Please pray for these and all our many up country partners who try and be 'church' in economically challenged and difficult areas. Many of the places we work in rural East Africa get little if any input or training from outside. There is huge value in this work that goes on almost un-noticed. Thank you for being part of it with us.
- Prosper is currently working with township kids in South Africa running programmes on behalf of Viva Network to help those who are most vulnerable. Please pray for him as he gets this exciting but challenging opportunity in the South African winter. The plus side is that he has a couple of World Cup tickets !!!!! He is hoping to travel back through Zimbabwe to follow up the people I trained down there earlier in the year and see what the next step should be.
- I hope to make a very brief trip to Kenya early July. Edgar, who has helped with YEA work in Kenya for many years, is to be introduced to his future wife's family and he wants me to be present. I will also meet up with the Parklands youth team and aim to travel back through Turi, Molo to visit the KIC youth who are students at St Andrews boarding school there. Please pray for safe travel and for Edgar as he begins wedding preparations. They hope to wed in December.
- We hope to be sending VOW (choir) to Burundi in mid August to be involved in a youth retreat. They will be teaching, giving testimony and leading worship during the retreat then will be part of a concert in Bujumbura at the end of the week. This is being organised by Giscard who is one of our partners in Burundi.
- All our team would value your prayers. Eugene, Celestine, Baala and Richard are all in school. Ray and Carol are working. Nico is looking into the options to move forward with Amigos. All of them work with us when they are able and do a fantastic job, even with their many responsibilities outside of YEA. Pray for each of them that they live Philippians 2: 12 – 18 every day. Pray also for their food, rent and school expenses at a time when the economy here is struggling and the cost of living keeps increasing.
- There will be Presidential elections in Burundi and Rwanda this year and Uganda next year. Already the political battle lines are being drawn in the 3 countries and we are all praying for none of the turmoil that so often breaks out in our region at times like this. In Europe elections tend to be greeted with a war of words. Here tear gas, grenades and corruption tend to be the weapons of choice. Please pray with us for peace, honesty and for God to be in the centre of the decision making in all 3 countries.

What is the way forward in a challenging time like this?

We need to stand firm with our focus on the vision that God has given us and ensure that the work in hand is done with excellence. We need to pray in faith that at a time when we have so many financial concerns and little money that God will provide abundantly to do His work.

I want to leave you with Matthew 26: 6 – 13. This woman's response to Jesus was an extravagant and misunderstood act of worship. My prayer is that our response to Jesus is equally extravagant and maybe equally misunderstood as we seek to minister to His children.....The youth of East Africa.