Plumtree Uganda Trip 2023

By Ryan Bridego
Avery County

On January 1st we announced to our church that we would be taking a trip to Uganda in February. A team of 12 quickly came together and started preparing by raising funds, collecting clothing, toys, and candy for the orphan children, and gathering Bibles for Pastors and new believers. By the grace of God, we received more than we could bring. Loaded down with 24 fifty-pound bags, plus carry-ons and backpacks, we left Sunday, February 19th on the adventure of a lifetime.

We traveled through the night into Belgium, onto Rwanda, and finally arrived in Entebbe, Uganda, Tuesday after midnight. We made it to our lodging location around 3 am, with morning services beginning at 9 am. To our surprise, around 3:15 am we heard a sound coming from outside. The people had gathered together for a time of prayer, worship, and intercession for the conference. They were singing and shouting hallelujah, offering up prayers to the Lord for over an hour.

The conference was held in a very rural area named Buwambo. This area had zero Christian influence. In fact, witches had declared that a church would never be established here. But that was soon to change. By the end of the three-day conference over 100 people had given their lives to Jesus, including the leading chairperson of that region (similar to a mayor). Jesus was the talk of the town, even in the bars. Many were set free from alcohol addictions and other strongholds as well. My wife, Holly, and I prayed for 7 young men who were addicted to alcohol. They later testified that they were free from addiction! Previously, they could not go a single day or night without a drink but now they could.

On Thursday evening, we ordained 10 pastors into the ministry. This was one of our favorite nights as God touched them in such a powerful way. At the end of the service, we laid hands on them for impartation and when we did, power was released. The atmosphere in the room changed drastically. It was so evident that God was pleased with the ordination of these pastors. This service was broadcasted live on Break Through Media television and 40 people who watched gave their lives to Christ. It was so glorious!

On Friday morning, those who were wanting to be baptized arrived early to hear several teachings on baptism. During this time, others helped fill the pool. It took 4-5 hours of hauling 5-gallon jerry cans to get enough water to baptize. But it was well worth the effort. Around 100 people were baptized that day, and it was powerful. Many were delivered from evil spirits in the waters of baptism and others received their heavenly prayer language. It was a day we will never forget.

On Saturday we headed to Kidera, where we previously drilled six wells. These wells provide safe, healthy, drinking water for thousands of people. We were there to witness the drilling of well number seven. While we were there, we were introduced to a widow who was taking care of 22 children. Eleven of them slept with her in a house that was 10x12 and another eleven slept in a similar house beside them. Moved with compassion, our team decided to try to do something to help this burdened lady. We communicated the need back home and several friends gave us enough money to build them a new home. Construction has already begun for an 18x30 house with a separate building for a restroom. Many neighbors gathered to watch the building of this widow's house and were moved to tears by this generous work. To top it all off, eight people gave their lives to Christ that day including this precious widow.

Sunday morning, we preached at our friend Pastor Steven's church in Nankoma. The service was great, and seven more gave their lives to Jesus. Many were touched by the power of God and were healed of their infirmities. Headaches seemed to be common there, even perpetual headaches lasting for years. We broke the power of witchcraft, and they were healed instantly. There were so many healings that morning. People were also delivered from shame and demons. One of the demons spoke out in perfect English saying, "Who are you?" in a scared tone of voice. I replied, "I am Ryan Bruce Edward Bridgeo, son of the most high God. In the name of Jesus Christ, shut up and come out of her." Immediately the lady was free. It was beautiful, exciting, and so much fun. What an honor to be a part of the family of God, and see lives transformed for His glory.

The next day, we gathered with the 200+ orphans in Pastor Steven's care. Everyone received at least one item of clothing. Children without shoes received them, and they all were given candy, including the adults. Some didn't know to take the candy out of the wrapper, this was a new experience for them. We hosted a meal (including a bottle of soda) for the children, their caregivers, and some community members. They were thrilled!

From left to right, back row – Nick Bowman, Ryan Bridgeo, David Gillespie, Isaac, Jozie & Randy West. Front row – Marianne Jones, Lauren & Holly Bridgeo, Lesa West, Teddy & Heather Hughes.

At the end of our time together we were completely overwhelmed, as the children came forward and gave us gratitude gifts of passion fruit, avocados, bananas, papayas, jackfruit, and much more. It was hard to receive, but they would have been offended if we didn't. We graciously took it, and later discretely donated it to a local school in need of food.

While there, we purchased supplies to support 30 widows with several weeks of food. Pastor Steven personally delivered these packages, and the widows were overjoyed. One elderly lady even did a special tribal dance to say thank you.

Later that day, we left for Kenya for the city of Kisii. There we preached the gospel at our friend Pastor Aboki's church. Thirteen people gave their lives to the Lord! We saw many miracles including the healing of someone's eyes who previously needed reading glasses, someone healed of an environmental illness that had made her sensitive to smells, and the healing of an older gentleman who had been in a motorcycle accident. He was still wearing the bandages on his leg. We were unsure what the exact injury was, but after prayer, he was doing squats and jumps because his pain was completely gone!

We visited 23 orphans that were in Pastor Aboki's orphanage. We gave the children the remaining clothing, school supplies, book bags, soccer balls, footballs, frisbees, and candy donations. We were thrilled to see their happy faces.

A favorite memory for our team was when our Muslim driver was touched by the love of God. He was so moved by our ministry to the children, the elders, and others, that one evening he asked us to lead him to the Lord. He then asked if we would give him a Christian name. What an honor! We gave him the name Nathaniel, which means gift of God.

From there we were blessed to see the beauty of God's creations while on a safari. We saw lions, giraffes, zebras, water buffalo, wildebeest, cheetahs, a rhino, an elephant, antelopes, warthogs, and much more. It was a perfect way to end the trip!

In total, we saw 170 salvations, 100 baptized, as well as many healings and deliverances. Only God knows the real impact that this trip has had on the nations of Uganda and Kenya and in our hearts.

If you would like to know more or how you might become involved in this ministry please reach out to Pastor Ryan at pastor@plumtreechurch.com or call 828-765-6919.

Ryan Bridgeo can be reached at 828-765-6919. For more information you can visit the church website at www.plumtreechurch.com or email pastor@plumtreechurch.com