

From the Staff House at Archbishop Janani Luwum Theological College, Pox 498 Gulu Uganda.
June 2023

Dear friends,

God bless you, thank you for your prayers and generous support of our venture. We find ourselves marvellously upheld in prayer, generosity and kind messages. We are enjoying being in our house, with Stella as our housekeeper. It has a bathroom with warm shower (solar), an open plan kitchen and living space and one spacious bedroom; we have inherited one cat with her three kittens, and seven hens. We ate the cockerel who killed his own chicks and was father to most of the hens, and we have been given (it is not an unusual gift here) a new, young cockerel. We were expected to eat him, and we may well one day – a larder on legs for unexpected guests and a welcome addition to the gene pool. Simon is beginning to build a pizza oven in the garden, so that we can entertain guests outside.

We are writing in the middle of June, thankful because we have had rain three days this week, and that might rescue the college maize crop. We have started eating beetroot from the garden. It has been hard work keeping them watered twice a day, but rewarding.

On to the real work.... Simon is thankful to have a translation team for the Rooted in Jesus materials, and progress on that is steady. This coming week, and the second week in July, Simon and Reverend Zachariah Otto (mission coordinator) are taking a road show round the nine Archdeaconeries of the Diocese presenting the idea of Rooted in Jesus to parish priests, and advertising the Diocesan Convention and Rooted in Jesus conference which is planned for February 2024. Simon is also appreciating regular language lessons in Acholi.

Simon asks for prayer for the Rooted in Jesus translation team please, and the road show over the next few weeks in promoting the course and the training conference. It will be a marvellous opportunity for him to tour the diocese, meet priests and find his bearings.

The college term is going well: over half way through and the students are settling down well together. There are one or two discipline issues, as might be expected when nearly half the students are unfamiliar with the institution, but the students are good natured, and get on well enough together. The college held elections for the new student ministers last week, and on June 22nd we will have a handover ceremony and meat and rice for supper to celebrate. There are various positions with deputies as well, including the 'prime minister'; the minister of information: gives the daily notices; minister for health: organises the cleaning rota; minister for food: oversees the daily allocation of maize flour and beans to the kitchen, and arranges for the grinding of maize into flour when necessary (about every ten days), and the buying in of food supplies; minister of agriculture: oversees the work in the college garden (a bit over 3 acres.). It is a good mark on the CV, of course, to have been in a leadership position for a year, and good practice for parish work.

Sarah is battling with government bureaucracy at the moment as she works to register the college with the national council of higher education. It is not only the application form, but the other requirements that go with it: a map of the college, a five year strategic plan, a constitution of the college and a functioning board of governors, that are so daunting. There are people to try and help, but no one seems to know exactly what is needed. I don't think red tape needs any translation – it is the same in every language, and certainly not one that Sarah is fluent in.

Next weekend we travel to the UK from June 27th to July 5th for our son James' ordination on July 1st at York Minster. Please pray for us as we travel and for James as he starts a new phase of life.

We were very distressed that on the weekend we moved in our lovely housekeeper, Stella, was attacked and robbed by a crowd of seven young people roaming the area. She is recovering well, but it was a nasty moment in her life, and a stark reminder to us of the need to be watchful and aware. There are many young people without work, or much hope. Please pray for them, and a creative solution to their need for nurture, hope and a flourishing future.

Thank you for your love and prayers. Please continue to pray for us as we pray for you. Sarah & Simon