

5/2/18

Dear friends, family, and supporters in America,

Greetings from Karenga, Uganda.

A request went out from headquarters back home to shorten newsletters down to “hand out” size, so that they can be easily distributed among interested congregations. So if you have been following me lately, you’ll be enjoying brevity, “that soul of wit,” in future postings.

This will be my last letter from Uganda before returning to Karamoja next January. In between, I’ll be working with WatchWord Drama Ministries, Lutheran Island Camp, and with schools as a first semester substitute while based in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. Landing back in Minneapolis on the May 15<sup>th</sup>, I’ll be just in time for my sister’s wedding over Memorial weekend. I leave two weeks after our STA, Rebekah, and a day before our national director, Nate Jore, and his family for their furlough. With all this vacating, the Bergers are moving down to the Jinja area to help the Raans (who also have upcoming travels) hold down the fort.

How do I summarize this year’s ministry? Let’s go with three highlights.



#### 1) Scripture Study with Pastor Alex Wakabi.

We started meeting in January on nearly a daily basis up until my departure to Karenga. We resumed lessons during my Easter break, and I hope to get one or two more before airport travels. We’ve read through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, and most of Judges.

It wasn’t long before Alex requested using the “NIV Live” recordings for all of our lessons. These are performances I generally use while driving back in the States, but my dad happened to put them on my new computer. They made the perfect dramatic companion to our lessons.

The actor who voices Moses is particularly good. Alex marveled at his heart for his people and Israel’s consistent failures on their way to the Promised Land. Some of the content of our lessons is going to end up in my Performing Arts Camp in a production I’ve titled *I’m Going Home*. It performs at Lutheran Island Camp July 27<sup>th</sup>.



#### 2) Encouragement for and from Ambassador Institute Classes

In the picture of the white matatu (“taxi”) behind us, I am with the A.I. leadership team and some of those we visited after a full day journey to the village of Poleessa. It took the full day because, in typical African time, the taxi arrived to pick us up

four hours late. (My early rising at 6am to rush down to the pickup location was for naught.)

We got the afternoon to describe A.I. to the village church, and I presented a sample lesson on Blind Bartimaeus.

Chairman Musassasi, kneeling in the front of the picture, is holding the jerry can we are using for hand washing. Our new friends produced a cavara ("bag") of rice pouches in which were bits of fried goat meat. This was our food for the day as the taxi rattled off into the night. With no spoon and lots of jolting from the rough roads, getting even half of the food successfully into my mouth was a feat.

A long day, but a total success. As one voice, the congregation was enthusiastic about getting a teacher to come for an overnight once a month. The traveling teacher will have four lessons prepared each time he or she comes. This is just one of many good memories with Ambassador Institute this year.



3) And of course, my Karenga students.

This Monday, I got a request from my co-teacher Patrick to come in every day this week so the students could have an extra two lessons before I go.

Unfortunately, after a brief illness over the weekend, my voice gave out on Monday and I am currently speaking in a low gravelly whisper. But Micah volunteered to take my place. He will bring them a second lesson on Lazarus this afternoon.

Yesterday's class was a good one. We gave the story of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the story of Zacchaeus. Explaining the gospel approach to repentance was probably the deepest theological challenge for these students this term. They asked plenty of questions, and Micah and I had the blackboard filled with diagrams by the end of the lesson. What a joy to present the Lutheran understanding of the free gift of grace.

I look forward to writing you again next year. If you would like me to come and present at your congregation, contact me at [rokenbrm@csp.edu](mailto:rokenbrm@csp.edu). I currently have weekends open in June, early July, August, October, November, and December.

God's Blessings,

Michael Rokenbrodt