



AUGUST 2018

# harvesters

INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES



# On the Ground

## CHINA

### China Sees

Under the strong policies and return to historic “Communism” of China’s President Xi, our brothers and sisters are beginning to face persecution that has been largely dormant over the past 10 years. We are receiving reports from our contacts, almost daily, of government “visits” to house churches, underground seminaries, and individual church leaders. This is the first phase of a renewed interest in the Church from the government and we expect that this will continue and most probably escalate. While our hearts go out to our Chinese brethren, we also recognize this may be a deliberate time of God’s refining His church. The church in China has been one of the fastest growing in the world over the past 30 years. As with any period of rapid growth, there is good and bad. A time of testing the saint’s faith will inevitably separate the wheat from the tares and it will ultimately strengthen the church – which seems to always thrive under persecution!

Thus far, the leader we work with in our “country-side” ministry is on the move and lowering his profile. Thankfully, the more visible “city-side” group we have worked with has not yet been impacted, but they are preparing for this possibility. As well, it has slowed their plans to plant their new location as landlords are very reluctant to rent space to a church.

So, all in all, it is a changing season in China and a period of “wait and see.” Will the persecution persist and become more severe? Or, is it a period of sabre rattling that will pass? Only the Lord knows, but in all of this our prayer is that the Chinese believers will persevere in their faith and remember Jesus’ teachings on counting the cost of following Him.

Lord willing, we hope to take a short-term trip to China toward the end of the year. Given the situation with our country-side leader being “on the run,” a number of the network co-workers have asked if we can come and provide some teaching and encouragement. It is in our hearts to fulfill this request and we hope that we will be granted the time to be away from our U.S. ministry responsibilities for about 4 weeks toward the end of the calendar year.

Please pray with us that the Lord will bring about the circumstances to enable us to go ... It will be a sweet time of encouragement to our Chinese brethren as they face an uncertain future.

# Many Thanks!

## Doug Radford - Harvesters International Ministries

In our last newsletter, we told you about the need for additional student funding for one of our partners in India. They lost significant financial support from another ministry, used primarily to support their school, because of government intervention.

Because the Lord spoke to the heart of one of our donor churches to give, the 50 children pictured below will now be able to attend school for the next year! What an amazing blessing for these children to not only receive an education, but to also experience the love of Christ each day and to carry that message home to their families.

There are still opportunities to bless and encourage the children served by this wonderful ministry. If you would like to help, please contact Doug Radford via email at [doug@harvesters.net](mailto:doug@harvesters.net) or via phone at 252-230-9742. Thank you for your continued support and prayers for Good Samaritan Sewa Kendra!



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# Growth Explosion

Reuben Meriakol - Pokot Outreach Ministries, South Sudan

We thank all our ministry supporters for continued love and prayers. God is expounding our vision and refueling us with strength, courage, resilience, and passionate commitment to the call of reaching the lost. Our mission here in South Sudan is **Reaching South East Tribes**. (We have #tagged it with an acronym 'ReSET' MISSION). Our grand vision is to drive away spiritual darkness by letting light occupy the land through planting churches. Our church planting strategy is to establish mission hubs in strategic locations led by missional leaders, who through discipling leaders and church planters, lead the ministry of evangelism and church planting within the focus area of a given mission hub. We hope to gradually put up necessary infrastructure in every hub to support them in achieving their goals. The mission hubs we have so far for Toposa tribe are Kapoeta (our grand hub), Riwooto, Lotien, and Mogos, with more to be identified and established. For the Diding'a tribe, we have two big hubs Chukudum and Ng'auro and are in the process of identifying more.

## Evangelism

Church planting is preceded by evangelism or sharing of the good news. Effective evangelism is dependent on presentation of the message and community's receptivity, not only to the message, but also the messenger. Our training centers on equipping our evangelists with the knowledge of the message, skills of the message presentation, and awareness factors that influence relationships.

## Great Influence of Jesus Film

I praise God for the gift of three Jesus film systems designed for areas without electricity. In the last few months, the Jesus film has been shown over 25 times in 11 different locations with collective estimation of over 5,000 viewers. The easy-to-carry package has been a great companion to our ministry leaders. The leaders mount the package on their motorbikes and take them to the interior villages or preaching points within their hubs. Information about the film show normally spreads like wild fire and hundreds throng to the place where the screen is mounted. The most touching part is when



people are moved to tears upon seeing the suffering of Jesus. We make sure that we don't miss the opportunity of explaining the sacrificial and saving love of Jesus. Altar calls have over 95% acceptances as they pray the repentance prayer which is part of the film.

Being an oral culture, the good news is taken by unlikely witnesses. Sometimes it sounds like the innocent conversation of the two disciples talking to Jesus about Jesus as they were heading to Emmaus. People narrate to friends and even strangers about what they saw. It is amazing how conversation in pasture lands, gardens, wells, social/entertainment places, and around the fire places at night are radically transformed to center around Jesus.

The Jesus film also creates an instant rapport with new villages. Our mission leaders report of how people of the next village send a delegation requesting the privilege of a Jesus film showing in their villages. So we thank God for the bridges these tools are able to create for our ministry as we run the race towards the marked point.

## Church Planting

For the better part of the year we have paid extra attention to Chukudum and Mogos mission hubs. These are the hubs that received new motorbikes this year. We are excited to report that Chukudum hub has planted one church in Batalado, and plans are underway to plant one more in the next few months. They are taking the gospel to several preaching points and also showing The Jesus Film. Over 2,000 have had the privilege of hearing the good news and over 100 have given their lives to Jesus. On the other hand, Mogos hub has had an exciting experience; hundreds are turning up to Jesus. They now have a big congregation in Lodapal and preaching points in four other locations. Evangelistic meetings have an average of 500-800 people, while Jesus film attracts over a 1,000. Over 300 people have come to Christ in this hub alone! We praise God for how he is using our young evangelists and mission leaders for kingdom impact.

We have very encouraging data from all our hubs and preaching points. Since the beginning of the year, over 600 people have given their lives to Jesus, three new churches have been planted and over six preaching points established. We are commencing our first baptism of the village churches in August. And we can't wait to see how this unfolds as the kingdom of God spreads! We have very expectant spirits that greater things are still in store for our teams and ministry, and we know that He shall open doors and provide for what we need. We thank Him for the provision of what we needed this year. The structure of our main hub is now in finishing point and it is going to host our first pastors' and evangelists conference early next year. We are preparing for a high impact in the near future as we plan to get camping tents and other important things for our teams that are willing to take village evangelism to a higher level. Please continue to pray for us as we take the message of Jesus to even more tribes in South Sudan.

# Rebuilding in Rwanda

Doug Radford - Harvesters International Ministries

If you've read about the small African nation of Rwanda over the last several months, you've learned that the government has shut down several thousand churches throughout the country. This action resulted from concerns over the practices and teachings of many pastors. Numerous churches were thought to be led by pastors who were attempting to manipulate people in order to take financial advantage of them. Government leaders likewise were concerned about the number of congregations meeting in inadequate buildings that were deemed to be unsafe.

In order to exert control over this situation, the government has now mandated very strict building standards for all churches. Government inspectors have recently visited essentially all Rwandan churches and immediately closed any of those failing to meet the new codes. Holding regular open-air meetings or gathering outdoors under simple canopies is not allowed by the Rwandan government, even in rural villages. Special permission is required to hold occasional outdoor services. In-home churches are not allowed to meet as well.

Sadly, many legitimate, well-led churches throughout the country have been forced to disband as a result of the highly restrictive government action. The Seira Community Churches (SCC) have been impacted.



Several have had to combine with other nearby SCC congregations due to being closed. Eight other SCC church plants have been forced to stop holding services because their facilities did not meet the strict new standards. In some areas, these were the only churches present. The SCC pastors in those communities continue to work by visiting people in their homes and encouraging them as often as possible. It is challenging work given the strict restrictions.

Recently, gifts provided by Harvesters' supporters have provided for the construction of two new churches in the villages of Rukemberi and

Jarama. The pastors and congregations there are especially thankful since their previous meeting spaces would no longer be usable due to the new regulations. These two churches serve over 500 people with preaching and teaching the Word and other evangelistic and discipleship activities. For some other churches, our donor's gifts have allowed us to make required upgrades to church buildings so that they can continue serving their communities.

Moving forward, we desire to build new churches in the eight locations that the government has closed. Our priority is those communities with no churches available to evangelize and serve the people of the area. The leadership of the Seira Community Churches has a great burden to see all the people of Rwanda have the opportunity to hear the gospel and become disciples of Jesus Christ. We are all thankful of the work that God has granted us in this beautiful country and anticipate many blessings and wonderful testimonies in the days and years ahead.



There are currently several locations with plots of land that have been purchased or donated as sites for new churches. Typically, the local congregation can make the needed mud bricks and provides labor for much of the construction. Help is needed to purchase the roofing, windows, doors, and required cement floor. Also, the mud bricks must be coated with cement and adequate toilets constructed. We are praying for individuals and churches here in the US that have a vision for church planting and evangelism to support the work of the Seira Community Churches as we establish new churches in Rwanda. Not just in the locations where we have previously had congregations, but also in the many areas without churches or sustained evangelistic efforts.

If you would like to help with the building of churches in Rwanda, please visit our website at [www.harvesters.net](http://www.harvesters.net) or contact Doug Radford at [doug@harvesters.net](mailto:doug@harvesters.net) or 252-230-9742.



# Meeting Needs Opens Doors

Doug Radford - Harvesters International Ministries

The Union of Baptist Churches, Harvesters' ministry partner in the D.R. Congo, uses a number of approaches to fulfill its purpose of spreading the Gospel, making disciples, and showing the love of Christ in meaningful ways. Recently, with support from our donors, the ministry has purchased seven grain mills. Five have been installed, with two others to be completed in the near future. Local people will pay a small amount to have their sorghum, cassava, and corn ground into flour used to make bread and porridge to feed their families.

The mills serve several important purposes. They offer opportunity for the local churches to generate income, helping to support themselves and their pastor. This is of great benefit to these congregations who often struggle financially in areas of high unemployment and poverty. A chance

to become more self-sustaining is sought after and the grain mills are a tool to help accomplish this goal. The mills also create opportunities for the pastors and church members to meet and befriend more of the local residents, resulting in opportunities for them to share their faith in Christ.

Pastor Athanase, the director of our partner ministry, shares the

story of a man called Bimenyi, who was unemployed and spent most of his time drinking. When he heard that the new grain mills were being installed, he came to Athanase looking for a job and for a change in his life. After spending some time of counselling and witnessing, Bimenyi accepted Christ, and he and his wife are attending church and serving God. Bimenyi is also working at one of the mill sites. These, and other accounts of God using His people to provide needed services to others in the community in order to create opportunities for witnessing, are repeated countless times among our partners. We praise God for supporter's gifts that make it possible to reach people like Bimenyi!

Another recently completed project which meets a practical need to reflect God's love is the water storage tank constructed at the village of Kibumba. Referred to as "the widow's village", this location has many women whose husbands were either killed by rebel soldiers or forced to join them in fighting. The tank is designed to store water that is captured during the rainy season to be used during the dry times of year. The stored water is treated in order to prevent bacteria and other contaminants from making it unsuitable to drink. While not adequate to completely meet their needs, the tank is a great blessing for the widows and children of the village. Currently, other projects are being done through the local church to help these widows in their day to day lives. God's word is clear on the need to extend love to our sisters in such circumstances. James 1:27 plainly speaks to this... "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." Again, thanks to all those who live out these words at home and around the world.



# The Power of a Praying Community

Samuel Mwesigwa - Kerith Ministry, Uganda

We want to thank the Almighty God for His grace given unto us to share His glorious gospel. I want to thank you too for your continued prayers and support toward the ministry that God has trusted to us.

Many of you have supported me over the last ten years of ministry in Pallisa, holding Gospel Crusades and open-air debates with the Muslims. I have seen hundreds of people come to the saving grace, churches opened where there was no church, Muslims converting by the power of Jesus – and I give all the glory to Him!

In the month of June, our church completed our annual 40 days prayer and fasting. This year, our emphasis was on the knowledge of God, but we also had time dedicated to praying for souls to turn to Christ, mostly the drug addicted. During the 40 days, eight souls give their lives to Jesus!

**Ayubu:** Ayubu was born in a Muslim family. He is very well known in our town of Pallisa and beyond because of his stature and violence, and known to the police because he has been in jail many times for robbery.

On July 1, as we were having a thanksgiving service, we saw Ayubu walking into the church by himself. He asked if he could give his life to Jesus. At that moment, all the church members jumped into jubilation. The District Police Commander, who happens to be the member of our church, could not hold her joy! I lead him into the prayer and immediately assigned someone to disciple him. Before the service ended, the news had spread everywhere in town, and I started receiving calls to confirm the news. His family members held a party for him and restored him into the family.

Today his life has changed! He attends every service and is willing to share with others what the Lord did for him. We ask you to continue to pray for him.



**Muhamad Otuke:** Muhamad was also born in a Muslim family. He studied Arabic and taught children in Islamic schools. He traveled to Kampala to visit his brother. There, he learned to drive and eventually started driving a taxi. One day, while driving, he hit a woman who died on the spot. He was given a two-year sentence.

After completing the sentence, he came out of jail frustrated and started drinking and taking opium. Muhamad is known in our town as a wasted person and had been rejected by his own relatives. Last Saturday, as our street preaching team went out, Muhamad gave his life to Jesus! On Monday, I invited him in my house, clothed him, shaved off his hair, and gave him shoes. He told me that he wanted to preach the Gospel and asked me to pray. Today, our street preaching team went out again, and Muhamad went with them. When the team asked him to share his testimony, almost everyone in town gathered to see what had happened to him. He said: "Come to Jesus! He can change you like me. Come to Jesus! He can change you like me." Those were his words over and over. This evening, our team led 18 people to the saving grace of Jesus on the street!

*"Come to Jesus!  
He can change  
you like me!"*

We want to thank you so much for your prayers. Please pray for our street outreach teams. Also pray that these new believers will follow through with discipleship and that their life testimonies will change others.

*You're Making A Difference!*

In our June newsletter, we told you about two children who were being cared for by Kerith Ministries. Michael and Betty's father died in December 2017, and their mother was struggling to care for them and her other five children. The family was living in a grassed thatched hut with no land to grow food for survival. Sadly, things recently became more difficult for them when their small home was destroyed in a wind storm.

We are thankful to report that because of the generosity of one of our readers, Harvesters has been able to provide the funding to build them a new home out of sturdy materials and to help meet the other needs of this family. Michael and Betty, who were particularly malnourished, are also improving and are attending school at the Kerith Ministries.

# CONNECT

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Help us stay in touch by sending your updated address.

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