



Sarah and Simon Cawdell

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Contact details:

sarah.h.l.cawdell@btinternet.com
simon.cawdell@gmail.com



Location: Uganda



What we do: Coming alongside local Christians, helping them to grow in their faith, teaching theology to local leaders and building sustainability.

To friends and supporters,

Thank you for your prayers and support. We have been in Uganda just a week as I write. We have really landed on our feet, with temporary accommodation well placed for both our workplaces, and in a beautiful compound managed by Dr Katie, an American missionary who has been here for 17 years and is used to helping new mission partners in Gulu find their feet (see photo of compound). There is a young cat family to entertain us in the evenings, or whenever we sit down (see photo of cats).

We arrived in Gulu after a 31-hour journey, leaving the UK in snow and arriving in Kampala in rain, which petered out as we drove north from Entebbe. Our predecessor Malcolm Pritchard met us at the airport, and had kindly arranged with our driver from Kampala to pause at the supermarket in town (Cynibel) so that we could buy provisions for supper and breakfast: chickpeas and rice for supper and millet porridge for breakfast. We have since discovered the market and fresh fruit and vegetables: mangoes, pineapple, tamarind; tomatoes, onions and cabbage to start with. Also some delicious smoked fish which makes a very nice stew.

We are finding Gulu a busy city which is full of life and colour. Think of somewhere the size of a county town, say Hereford, Lincoln or Shrewsbury, but with the predominant transport being motorcycles, many of which are “bodas”, which are the preferred form of taxi service here, and the way in which many people make their living.

Simon goes to the diocesan devotions at 8.30am and is using the time to meet people and get the documentation together for our work permits. We find it best not to make any definite plans as yet, as they will only have to be changed while we get used to working patterns and build relationships. The warmth of the welcome we are receiving is both reassuring and encouraging, and we are having many encouraging conversations with new colleagues.

Sarah goes to college morning prayers at 6.45am for an hour, and the day unfolds from there. She has toured the college and seen most of the campus, getting to know the students and understand the systems and the duties of running the college. This included supervising the emptying of the men’s latrines and beginning to sort out the old library books which were stored in a place heavily used by birds! Two new scents to add to the collection.

On Thursday the bishop was back in the office, and helpfully issued our letters of appointment, which helps



*The view from the guest house
on Dr Katie's compound*

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With each other
To the edges**



towards the work permit applications. On Friday, Dr Katie kindly took us on a tour of Gulu town in her car and showed us the best places for this and that.

This Saturday we had a joyful example of unpredictability. It is the college day off, but in the afternoon Sarah received a call from the bishop to say he had arrived at the college compound, accompanied by retired Archbishop Henry Orombi. He had come to Gulu for a prayer breakfast at the university and decided to see the students here in training from Nebbi diocese where he lives. So we rapidly made our way to the college to greet him. It was a pleasure to renew an old acquaintance as we had previously met him at a New Wine conference some years ago.

We have enjoyed worshipping on Sunday mornings at the Cathedral – five minutes' walk away – and on Sunday evenings in the college chapel, which is a much more intimate occasion with worship led acoustically on local harps and drums. The joy of the worship is tangible.

We have arrived at the beginning of the rains, and are therefore thinking through what we should plant, and where, recognising that our efforts may be the subject of considerable scrutiny. Not that we aren't used to that – gardeners and farmers the world over have a slightly competitive streak when it comes to crop production! So we will need to learn quickly what is going to be most appropriate for the site we will be using. We will of course also want to try things out and look for wisdom as to how that will work out. The storms so far are well signalled, and torrential when they come.

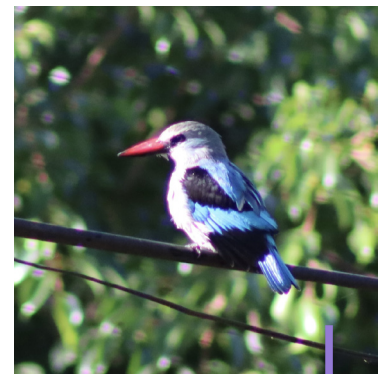
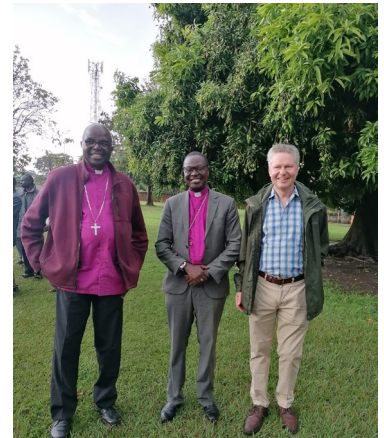
In the coming weeks we will be applying for our work permits, which will necessitate a couple of trips to Kampala and back. We would welcome prayer for our travelling. It is always the custom here to pray before travelling, and to give thanks on arrival. There are good reasons for this!

We are also appreciating the local flora and fauna which goes into making any place what it is. Opposite our front door we often see a captivating woodland kingfisher. It uses one of the roof water tanks for bathing, and brings a wonderful reminder that Jesus' first disciples were fishermen whom he commanded to become "fishers of men".

Prayer points:

- ▶ Thanksgiving for a safe arrival and good welcome.
- ▶ Prayers for safe travels to and from Kampala and that work permits are obtained without difficulty.
- ▶ For the continuing establishment of good relationships
- ▶ Pray for Sarah as she faces a huge list of things to do in college, and learns to make collaborative decisions about priorities. For instance, the students are very keen on the idea of a new football, but we wonder if a safe perimeter fence might be more important.

Love and blessings,
Sarah and Simon



Photos from top to bottom: Evening entertainment; head student Patricia with her daughter Divine, cleaning up the old library furniture; retired Archbishop Henry Orombi, current bishop of northern Uganda, Godfrey Luwum, and Simon; woodland kingfisher



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Jesus never gives up. Neither should we. We live in a fractured, hurting world. It can be tempting to give up: on hope, on people, on the idea that things can ever change. Yet, Jesus invites us to follow him on a journey to the edges. Find out more at churchmissionsociety.org/nevergiveup

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