



Sarah and Simon Cawdell

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Location: Uganda



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

Dear friends,

Thank you for your prayers. We hope that you have a wonderful Christmas, and pray for you a blessed New Year. We are excited to hear of churches growing, taking up responsibilities during vacancies and being open to the surprising works of God.

You will have read in the previous link letter that the Korean missionaries in Gulu had given the college a library building some years ago. Now they have given us a chapel. I had a conversation with Pastor Kim one day over morning tea about the development of the college, and he went home and talked with his wife. The next week they came with the promise of funding, and after a wide-ranging discussion about placement they began to build the next month. I include a photograph of the ground-breaking ceremony with the bishop, and a picture of progress up till now. As I write, the walls are almost complete and the roof will be going on next week.

Before you are jealous of the speed with which buildings go up, remember that Sarah is still working on the registration of the college, and has now moved from trying to register with the National Council of Higher Education (NCHE) to needing to register with the URA, which requires re-registration with the URSB (our registration had lapsed because the accounts had not been uploaded prior to our arrival). It all means a lot of time in front of the computer, or haunting offices and asking for help. God is faithful, and the diocesan treasurer, Leah, has been walking through the latest problems with me. Meanwhile, in the college, we are trying to improve the plant by, for example, putting doors on the toilets and bathrooms, and replacing ceiling mats in the dormitories with fireproof ceilings. We have also almost completed construction of a piggery, both so that students can learn skills they can encourage in their parishes to diversify income generation, and hopefully so that the college can have another small income stream from pig farming.

What I, Sarah, really enjoy is opportunities to teach, and I had a lovely hour this week with the lay reader students, teaching them to sing some of the more frequently used English hymns. I am also learning to sing the Acholi hymns and recognise when they are translated from English. I can learn language well by singing the hymns: *porre* means "holy", which I have learned as we often sing Holy Holy Holy, Lord God Almighty... I



A picture of the bride and groom at our son's wedding in October

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



have also learned that *porro* means to “fail” or “fall”. The language has to be used with care!

We find the background of the students is inspiring. Here is one example: Students can’t always pay their fees in cash, and Richard, one of the students, wanted to pay us in firewood, which is a useful commodity, and very welcome. So David, the administrator, went with him to the place. On the way David discovered that every Friday this term, Richard has set out for an eight

hour walk to his home to lead prayers on a Sunday, and then he walks back again on Sunday after prayers. If he does not go home then there are no prayers. His place is very remote. To get to the nearest shop is an hour’s walk in each direction. This is a short story, but a lot of walking, and such courage and faithfulness to set out on that walk every weekend knowing that the walk back awaits.

I, Simon, am grateful that I have received promise of funding for the Rooted in Jesus conference and am about to get the material printed for that. This will run from 30 January–2 February. Please pray that the right people come from each parish, and that they learn well how to appreciate and deliver the material. As a preparation for that I had the pleasure of teaching a half-term course on discipleship using the Rooted in Jesus material, and it was a great joy to see how the students took to it. The examples were often illustrated by acting out and accompanied by much laughter and appreciation.

Our lay readers in college go home at the end of November, and the ordination students start again on 4 January (or at some point during that week).

We were blessed to attend our son’s wedding in York in October, and enjoyed a very happy weekend with the family. It was a good opportunity to bring back more books for the library and reading glasses for the students.

Please pray for:

- ▶ the reader students as they return to their parishes. They each run a church as a volunteer and take weekly services. Pray that they will be able to put into practice what they have learned here
- ▶ the ordination students as they come back for the final semester of the year, that they will settle back into college life and that we will be able to work as a staff team to teach and encourage them
- ▶ the Rooted in Jesus conference from January, for safe travel for the team from the UK and the local delegates and that the participants will put their learning into practice, and for the diocesan convention which precedes it
- ▶ for Sarah as she continues with the registration process
- ▶ for Simon as he moves on from the conference which has been the focus since we started here, and begins to work with those he has trained and that the Rooted in Jesus course will be well established in the parishes of the diocese.

Sarah and Simon



Photos from top to bottom: Breaking ground for the chapel with Pastor Kim (the donor), Barnabas (the works supervisor), Bishop Godfrey Loum (Bishop of the Diocese of Northern Uganda), Canon Willi Akena, two lay reader students and CT Wilson, the caretaker; the piggery almost ready for occupancy; the chapel in progress 15.11.23



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