

Maine 2 Mityana Mission
The Rev. Charles and Beth Bradshaw
February 22, 2015

*Are there any among the false gods of the nations that can bring rain?
Or can the heavens give showers? Are you not he, O LORD our God?
We set our hope on you, for you do all these things. (Jeremiah 14:22)*

Dear partners in prayer and mission,

“It rained in the swamp,” a visitor told us during supper one recent evening at home. The source of Mityana’s public water supply is a swamp outside of town. It can rain in the swamp without a drop falling here in Namukozi village. We had been without town water for more than a week. When we heard it had rained in the swamp, we opened up the spigots, hoping to fill our storage tank. But by then the swamp was dry again.

This dry season began earlier than usual, following a not very wet rainy season. We rely on our camping skills to conserve the water that we have, getting by on our stored rain water from last year. We measure every drop we use to wash dishes and bathe. A steady procession of neighbors comes for water from our tanks. While we have it, we are glad to share it with neighbors who need it. Miraculously, like the Sidonian widow’s oil jug (1 Kings 17:10-16), our supply is not yet spent.

Others have to set out early in the morning with their jerry cans to fetch water from streams, only to find a long line waiting, and nothing but mud in the stream beds. It’s a severe hardship on the farmers and their animals. We are praising God for two brief, merciful rainfalls this past week. We hope they herald the coming of the rainy season.



Beth’s music students welcome her to Kiweesa



Send-Off for “Dr. John” after his last class

In the last half of January, a pioneer class of 28 primary school teachers reported to Bishop Lutaaya College for the first 2-week session of the new Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program. I taught them classes in basic computer skills and English. People here insist that the new B.Ed. course is the only degree program offered anywhere in Mityana District. If so, it is a big step for this district, and the people of Mityana are quite proud of it.

Beth has been preaching in our home parish of Lulagala, and in St. Stephen’s, Kiweesa. Next Sunday she will preach at All Saints’, Busiimbi. When we worshipped in Kiweesa 2 weeks ago, many of Beth’s former music students arrived from various churches in the area to support her, and to surprise her with their singing and keyboard playing.

Dr. John Veldhuis of Virginia, an educator who has founded universities in Uganda and Haiti, joined the College faculty for 6 weeks, teaching 3 of the Ordinands' courses, including a new one called Introduction to Laws. His approach was refreshing for the students and for me. It set a good precedent for more short-term missionaries to help us at the College. Other recent visitors to Mityana Diocese from overseas were two dentists from Michigan, who spent a week at the diocesan clinic in Namukozi; and a team representing a group of parishes and church schools in the UK who have had a long-standing partnership with Anglican schools in Mityana Diocese.



Among his other attributes, John Veldhuis is a Rotarian. He invited Beth and me to last Monday's meeting of the Mityana Rotary. The members gave us a few minutes on their agenda to outline a project to provide safe drinking water and replace the crumbling latrines at the College. Two Rotary members were assigned to help us initiate a development grant proposal.

Chuck with John and Mityana Rotary officers



On Valentine's Day we attended the Introduction (engagement) ceremony for Dennis and Dorothy, a couple we have come to know well. We were there as members of Dennis's family. He was adamant that Beth should wear the *gomesi*, the traditional Kiganda woman's dress. Beth borrowed one from a neighbor, and it turned out not to be as uncomfortable as she feared.

The Introduction is an elaborate ritual, involving long speeches, dancing, drama, feasting, many changes of dresses by the woman's female relatives, prayers, and many gifts from the gentleman to the lady's family, including the bride price. It can be so burdensome that many young Ugandans rationalize they're better off cohabitating than marrying according to the local traditions. For Beth and me it was a good opportunity to immerse ourselves in Baganda culture, and not a bad way to celebrate Valentine's Day.

Beth attired in a Gomesi

We thank God for sparing the life of Henry, a young man who sometimes does jobs for us around our compound. While riding his bicycle on the paved highway to his father's farm, Henry was sideswiped by a *matatu* (minivan taxi). He had the presence of mind to fall onto the shoulder of the road, and not into the path of oncoming traffic. He was badly bruised and scarred, but he is healing well, and he is in good spirits.

We also thank the Lord for your loyal, generous support, and your faithful prayers. Please pray for the rains to return soon, and also for me to have patience as we navigate the bureaucratic hurdles to affiliation with Ndejje University for Bishop Lutaaya College's new B.Ed. program.



Dorothy "introduces" Dennis to her family

Faithfully,

Chuck + Beth