



LEADERSHIP VISTAS INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

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Dear Friends and Family,

As you all know, usually I write this newsletter. But after our most recent trip to Uganda, it seemed like the right time to introduce another perspective on our ministry. Hence, I have asked Larry Walker, a local pastor here in north Texas and one of the instructors at the conference, to share his thoughts on this ministry experience with you. Our July 2007 pastors' training conference was co-sponsored with a local African organization---Leadia. For this conference Larry wrote and taught a new course---an educational experiment---on provocative subjects of personal and social significance to pastors and church leaders in Africa. I have found his observations interesting and insightful. I trust that you will also.

- Blessings, Jerry Brown

I was invited to develop and teach a course at the July 2007 pastors' training conference in Kampala, Uganda. The course was specifically to include issues like the abuse of women, child slavery, sexuality and other challenging topics. This was offered along with other more traditional courses such as Bible Study Methods and Major Theological Doctrines. We called the course *Difficult Subjects: A Christian Perspective*, and it includes the following 5 modules: (1) *Honoring God With My Sexuality*, (2) *Honoring God Through Our Women*, (3) *Honoring God Through Our Children*, (4) *Honoring God With My Sin*, and (5) *Understanding Satan*.

The Sports View Hotel, located in the district of Kireka, was our home for this mission. The hotel web site suggested it would be a nice hotel. (I felt a tinge of disappointment that I might not get to suffer enough for Jesus!) The hotel was clean, but otherwise lacking. Some rooms had air conditioning, and the restaurant had decent food. But the hotel is next to a metal works shop, on a dirt road, overlooking a burning garbage dump, and under major construction. Living there had its challenges!



Kireka proved to be a slum overlooking Kampala, Uganda's capital city. It is a one-industry town. The men strip-mine boulders from quarries on the hillside. The women pound the boulders into small stones used for construction. They work by hand, pulverizing stone by stone. On average, they earn about \$1.20 per day. Kireka is also a refugee colony. Many residents are members of the Acholi tribe, who were run out of northern Uganda by brutal civil war conditions. Although many of the people have AIDS and other diseases, suffer from poverty and endure inhuman labor,

virtually everyone we met exhibited a peace and joy that were quite remarkable. I saw no self-pity, bitterness or resentment.

Kyambogo University was the venue secured for the conference. It is near Kireka, so we traveled daily through the markets, mostly on dirt roads. The buildings are in need of serious maintenance. Broken windows, peeling paint, and overall neglect were obvious throughout the campus. Nevertheless, the meeting room and dormitories were adequate for the nearly 100 pastors who attended, and hearty meals were prepared---over open fires outdoors---by the campus food-service staff.





There were two big surprises in the pastors' training conference. First, we saw clearly that there were hurting men and women there. Pastoring a church, even in the U.S., is often a lonely and heartbreaking job. We sensed that there were people there who needed to be ministered to. Someone posed the question, "Who pastors the pastors?" We decided after some prayer and discussion that we could! We became intentional about doing so too. One evening, for example, we invited participants to stay and confess *their* sins, ask for prayer, or receive counseling on a one-on-one basis with our course instructors. More than two dozen did.

The second surprise was the relationships. A large number of the churches in Africa are not affiliated with other churches, so the pastors are alone. It was obvious that there was more than training taking place. Leadership Vistas is building long-term relationships with pastors and church leaders in Africa. At the same time, LVIM is facilitating their building of relationships with each other. These relationships are clearly valued deeply.



In addition to the five full days spent teaching at the University, we spent another week visiting with ministry leaders and getting to know more about their ministries. We heard heartbreaking details of wretched humanity--and exciting, encouraging news of what God is doing to heal and restore. Most would agree that the gospel is absolutely exploding in Africa.

I am impressed by the fact that Leadership Vistas is in a unique position to be used by God in an unprecedented way. Literally thousands of pastors are being called to lead churches and ministries throughout Africa. Most of them cannot afford training. I am convinced that the majority of those pastors I met are sincerely called by God. You can actually see Jesus in their faces. They are grateful that others care enough to come alongside of them to help equip them for the challenge God has called them to.

Having a business background, I tend to think in terms of "opportunity propositions." For this ministry, I see three:

1. African pastors and their families value education higher than almost everything else. (They will literally sacrifice food for education!)
2. African pastors are desperate for relationships outside their churches and for spiritual mentoring. (Some have asked me to be their spiritual father!)
3. There is a desperate need for leadership in the body of Christ. The challenges are immense. But the possibilities for building up God's laborers are great.

I cannot imagine a more perfect scenario in which Leadership Vistas might carry out its mission. But the ministry needs your help. Please prayerfully consider becoming a partner with us in this adventure with the Lord and supporting it with your financial resources.

- Larry Walker