

# the sperling jerry can

*“...carrying Living Water in practical ways...”*

## Off to a quick start

We are just into March and the New Year has already brought a lot of activity and a lot of change! We hope you've had a good start to the New Year as well. On January 7-9<sup>th</sup> we hosted a Farming God's Way (FGW) training here in Jinja, our home town, to over 80 people. We had farmers, leaders and directors of NGO's, an army commander's wife and leaders from Acacia Community church which is our home church here (where the workshop was also hosted). We had a great time challenging these people to be faithful with what God has given them and to devote their gardens and their lives to God's glory. We have a really great garden there in the corner of the church yard where church members are able to observe the progress of the garden each week. We've even had a weeding session after one church service!

Jinja Workshop at Acacia Community Church



## In Field Mentoring

The Second main event of the year that we hosted was In Field Mentoring. This was the first time that Uganda has hosted this event and it went quite well, despite a few difficulties. In Field Mentoring is a week long event where FGW trainers and advocates gather together in a camp setting to buildup their skills and to reach out to surrounding communities with a four day FGW outreach workshop. We camped at the Nile River Campground with amazing views of the Nile during mealtimes. During the week we assessed and built up our trainer base through observing trainers while they teach and train the poor rural farmers. Most evenings ended with a campfire meeting where we went over the day's events and encouraged and challenged the trainers in their training methods and their heart for the poor. We were really happy to also accredit Bill Stough, who serves with AIM, at the end of the week. He is now our 5<sup>th</sup> accredited trainer from Uganda!

Campfire time at In Field Mentoring



Grant Dryden, the author of the FGW material and a very close friend of mine was able to join us for the week and he was a great encouragement to our young men that we are raising up to be men of character, able to share FGW with skill and integrity. We were also able to have some time with Grant as a family, which we greatly enjoyed.

## **Mbale Training**

I was also able to train a large group in Mbale, eastern Uganda. One of the exciting parts of this training was the fact that I was able to train alongside one of our young trainers, Ronald Nabende, during the two day event. Ronald had been at In Field mentoring and had benefited greatly from the week of mentoring. He works for JENGA who hosted the training. We had folks from as far as Jinja, Kachumbala and Tororo come over to the beautiful town of Mbale. We're happy to see the kingdom of God spreading through the message of Farming God's Way to many corners of Uganda!

## **Good News and Bad News**

The end of 2014 was marked with grief as we got the news of our friend and father-figure, Rob Beck's death. It's hard to believe even still, but Rob was taken within a week of a severe bacterial infection combined with heart complications. Rob was many things to many people and it was no different for us. Jane was their "daughter" during their year-long stay in Uganda as she spent much of the year living with them. Rob was also my Principle at The King's School and my boss when I worked there the year after graduating. He had become a good friend over the years and we spent several months living with them in 2002 shortly after we were married. Our condolences and love go out to his wife (mom) Kitty and their children Alisha, Amy and Jesse and their families. He will be greatly missed!

We have had some really great news too! Several Ugandan men, from the same village, were imprisoned many years ago for the murder of a man in their village. The alleged murder had to do with land wrangles. Jane met these men in the "Condemned" section of the prison where she ministers. The men were on death row. About two years ago the men were moved to another prison in Kampala but there was some hope that their sentence would be overturned in Court. Recently, Jane got a call from one of the men and he was calling from his home in central Uganda. He had been set free with all of his Village mates. What is really exciting is that by the time these men had left prison they had ALL become Christians. What an amazing story; Set free here on earth and set free spiritually! We're hoping to visit them sometime soon back in their home village!

## **Teachers – an answer to prayer!**

Many of you have been praying that we would get a teacher for the boys as they have gone almost half way through the school year without a teacher. Our good friends, Jake and Mary Balzer, from our church in Abbotsford, sacrificed their time and finances to come and teach the boys for a full month. They are qualified primary school teachers and did a wonderful job of helping the boys to catch up! We had a great time with them which included mealtime stories of Uncle Jake's adventures! Thanks so much Jake and Mary for making yourselves an answer to prayer!

While Jake and Mary were still here in March, we got an e-mail from Mission Nannies, an organisation where we had posted a request for a nanny to help teach the kids. The e-mail had the wonderful news that a young lady, April Heki, was strongly considering coming to help us by teaching the boys. By the time you get this letter at the end of March, April should be here and teaching the kids (no pun intended). April is a young Christian lady from Iowa and she comes highly rated by friends and family. We're excited about her coming. She will help the boys finish off the school year and will leave in mid July. Then we'll be looking for another teacher for the next school year! Then we'll have 5 school-aged children. Wow!

## **Keep Praying!**

We just want to be sure that you all know how thankful we are for your prayers! Please keep praying for us! We need it! We pass through many difficult times here and I believe much of that is spiritual oppression. Jane often

feels unwell and there are other challenges that we face at home and with our work. Your prayers are needed so that we can continue to share God's word effectively and that we will not be tempted to solve the problems we face with human wisdom but with God's wisdom. We know that "there is a way that seems right to man but in the end it leads only to death" (Proverbs 14:12) but "...the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrew 4:12). Please keep praying that we will live by the Word of God and that we will not be afraid to proclaim it as the only way to truly bring transformation both in our lives and in the lives of the people we are working for and with. You can also pray the prayer that Paul asks the Thessalonians to pray "... brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. <sup>2</sup> And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not everyone has faith."

## Financial Needs:

- Finances for Chris' International travel with his work on the Farming God's Way Stewardship Team (2 trips this year to South Africa –May and September) **\$3000 total**
- Ongoing expenses like our salary and ministry costs (mostly related to rural travel and internet costs). **E-mail us for a full report of how our money is raised and used.**
- Money for a newer vehicle; our current vehicle is becoming old (21 years), small for us (it seats 7 -- we need 10) and beat up from all the years of banging around the Ugandan roads. **\$20,000**
- Money for a small plot of land (2 acres) to act as a nearby training site for training local farmers and a money making venture to have some sustainable income here. **\$10,000**
- Finances for new work permits and visas. Our Equip Uganda NGO status has been renewed so we are now filing for new work permits, dependant's passes and student's passes **(~\$1000/year)**

*\*To contribute to the Sperling's needs please see the addresses and links at the end of the letter*

## Prayer requests and praises!

Please continue to pray with us in the following areas:

- Pray for **effectiveness** in our ministry; that many will come to know Christ and become His disciple in a manner that glorifies God and His Kingdom.
- Pray for our **safety and health** with our crazy roads and the many tropical diseases around.
- **Praise** God for sending **April** to come teach our children this coming term.
- Pray that **our hearts will be ready** for God to work anew in and through us in Uganda.
- Pray that **God will give us heart's willing to give sacrificially** to those He calls us to.
- Pray for **Andrew** to make the right choices right now so that he will walk in God's ways and not the ways of the world which he finds so attractive.
- **Praise** for good house help which has finally been found. **Please pray** that Sarah and Fiona will work hard and honestly and **pray** that we will be kind and loving to them.
- Thanks for all your prayers!.They are essential to our life here!

Love from Chris and Jane, Andrew, Tugume, Kenny, Albert, Isaiah, Ezra, Anna and Alin



In Canada donations can be sent to:  
Equip Canada  
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Duncan, B.C.  
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In the US donations can be sent to:  
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Chris was best man for our friend Dan in December. Here Dan and his beautiful bride Judith are cutting their cake. Chris' sister April came for the wedding too and was matron!



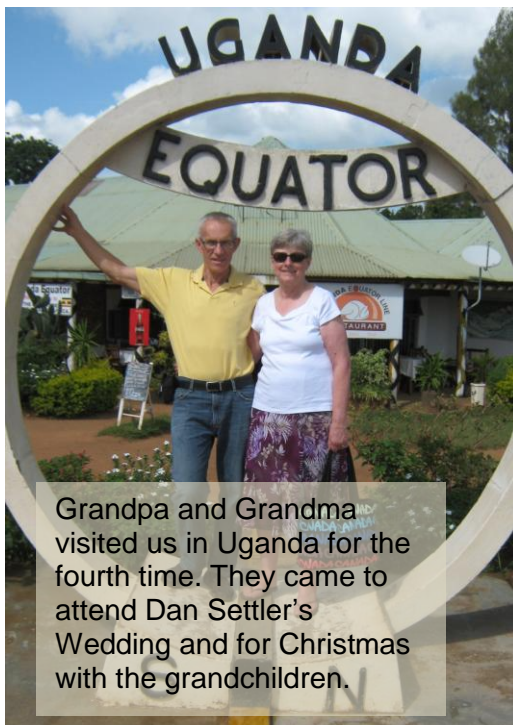
Chris and Jane on a date – showing their Saskatchewan pride!



Alin, our busy little lady



Showing off their Christmas gift of soccer jerseys!  
(Back L>R)Grandpa, neighbor Paul, Isaiah, Tugume,  
(Front L>R)Steve, Albert, Anna, Ezra and Kenny



Grandpa and Grandma visited us in Uganda for the fourth time. They came to attend Dan Settler's Wedding and for Christmas with the grandchildren.