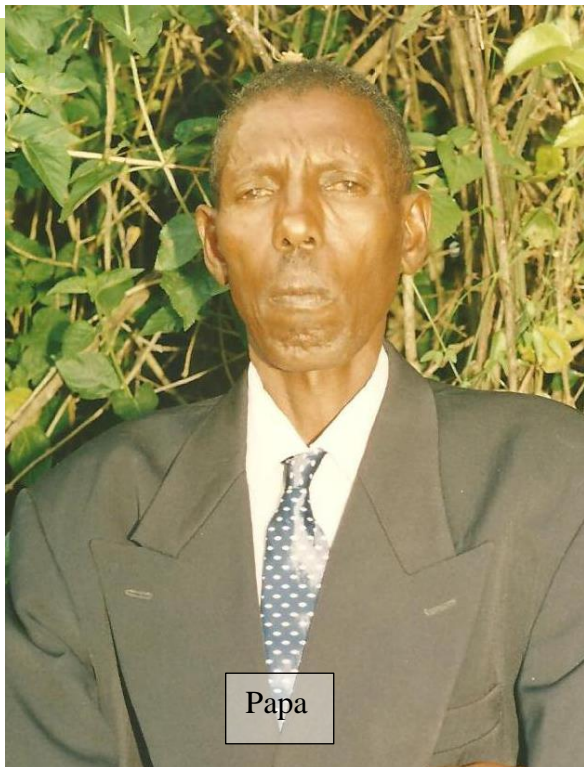


  
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Papa

## Goodbye Papa

We woke up early Thursday morning, July 12<sup>th</sup> to the sad news of the death of Jane's dad. He died at home with Jane's sister Esther at his side. He had a long battle with chronic anemia which also led to a weakened heart from years of it overworking due to his medical condition.

People came from far and wide to bury *Muzee*. Augustine, Jane's brother, informed us at that about 700 people attended the funeral and burial on Saturday July 14<sup>th</sup>. Being far away here in Canada during this time has been very difficult! It is hard for Jane to not mourn together with her siblings and to be part of laying her father's body to rest. We're going to miss our father and grandfather.

A number of you responded to our request for financial help for the family and we were overwhelmed by the response. This has saved Jane's family members additional financial stress during this difficult time. Thanks so much for your kindness extended to them. It will be difficult to go back to the homestead now and have Papa not be there. When we go to the family homestead we always talk about "going to Papa's" – I'm not sure what we'll say now...

## In Canada for the summer

With Jane's Permanent Resident card expiring soon we had a nine-month window in which to renew her card. We decided to come at the beginning of that window during the summer in order to get time with Kenny and Albert, work a bit at the farm again and take time to reconnect with friends, family and supporters. We definitely didn't want to come in the winter again and get the flu!

The week we arrived we were able to attend Albert's worship evening hosted by his worship music writing class from MEI Middle School. What a joy to hear Albert lead us in worship in a song that he co-wrote along with his classmates! Kenneth and Albert were both high honours students and did well in various sports and other school activities. It sure wasn't easy being apart from them over the last seven months but we're so thrilled that they're doing so well at their school. Thanks to our relatives, Rich and Nancy Balzer, for taking the boys in and giving them a home away from home while they are at school here. Please pray that the boys will continue to do well in all aspects of their school life as we will have another two school years until we come back again, God willing.



Albert leading worship along with his teacher and classmates



## Farmers helping Farmers

Our village outreach work with the communities surrounding Nawansoga is going very well. Having Isaac (our intern) out there on a more regular basis is making a big difference. More farmers are teaching more farmers how to practice Farming God's Way under Isaac's supervision. He is able to go more frequently than I was and for longer stretches of time. He loves the work in the villages where we are extending Farming God's Way and the farmers definitely love him. He has already learned Lusoga much better than me (I tend to use Luganda as the locals can speak and hear it as it is similar to Lusoga). He is full of energy and zeal and loves to help the farmers. We recently ran a one-day training before I left and Isaac took some of the sessions and did quite well. Since our departure in late June Isaac has run a couple more one-day workshops in two other neighboring villages. The farmers are excited after a very successful season. A few made some mistakes but, good enough, we were around to point them out and they know what to do to shore up their effort for next season.

Our new farmers include a number of women who have had a great first season with yields like they have never seen before! These ladies were full of smiles when we went to check on them towards the end of the season, meanwhile some of their neighbors who neglected the training suffered big losses. Incidentally, many of our farmers are women, which may or may not come as a surprise to you. They are such hard working ladies and seem more likely than men to change their habits and start to humbly follow God's ways. Please continue to pray for Ruth especially; she is one of our lead farmers but is mistreated by her husband and struggles on her own to provide for her children even though her husband has a good job.

The last few months have been jam-packed full of activity with national training events that I (Chris) plan. In May we had a compost making class hosted at Amazima which was very successful. Compost is such a key part in



Isaac at one of our Jajja's (grandmother) plot

## Farming God's Way national ministry

raising the bar in terms of crop health and quality and also in terms of getting high yields all the while keeping costs down. Since all of the compost materials are sourced locally by the farmer and the main input by the farmer is their labour the impact on profitability is very high. Also, in May, we had several field days hosted by various demonstration farms. We had great looking fields at [Amazima Farm](#) and [Vocare Ministries Farm](#) (Heart4Uganda) and the [Show Mercy Farm](#) had an excellent demonstration of the Farming God's Way Vegetable farming methods, inspiring most of us to grow more in that area.



Isaiah weeding the beans at the showgrounds garden.

In June we had our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Farming God's Way workshop hosted for the first time at Kira Farm, the home of Amigos Uganda. We had a great few days of training and we believe many more people from all over Uganda will be well on their way to implementing this God-exalting way of farming. While we are away there will be a Farming God's Way kiosk at the National Agriculture Show (8<sup>th</sup> year) and we will have a national training event at Amazima in August. Also crammed in the midst of all this was our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Young Lions Camp which we held at a gorgeous private campsite on the Nile River. The camp was a chance to challenge our young leaders to train at a high standard and to remain connected to Christ to be quality leaders with a servant's heart. All of these annual events create a platform on which we can build relationships and training opportunities so that we can intentionally spread the good news about the abundant life in Christ.



## What it's all about

Have a look at the picture on the right. No, it's not a poor African farmer receiving a gift from a rich white westerner who is having pity on her dire situation. No, this is a picture of a joyful woman who is giving freely and out of joy from her bountiful harvest to the people who shared the good news of farming God's way with her. Isaac and I received a generous gift of fresh maize for roasting from this lovely lady. I love this picture because it shows a number of things that, purely by the grace of God, we have been able to attain. Firstly, starting on the left God has provided us with our intern Isaac who has a heart for sharing the gospel and teaching Farming God's Way. God led him to us and he has been so eager to learn from me and the resource material so that he can turn around and teach and train the farmers under his care. In the middle of the picture is Mama Mutesi; she is the second person that gets me excited about this picture. She was taught by Isaac and put in her own Farming God's Way plot and, despite being very sick during the season, has an verdant plot of maize along with some beans and sweet potatoes. I don't think she has ever had a bountiful crop of maize like this. She will be able to provide for herself and her young children (you can't see her infant tied to her back with the blue shawl). Another person you can't see in the picture is you – our faithful supporter – who enables us to physically reach people like this and then to pray for the wisdom strength, protection, favour and blessing we need to reach out to farmers across Uganda. Lastly, the main reason I love this picture is that it is an image of God's abundant provision for a woman who has started the journey of walking in faithful and knowledgeable hard work which is resulting in the release of God's blessing toward her and her family. She represents many more in Uganda who are walking in the life that God has for his children as faithful and hardworking stewards of the people and possessions He has placed in their hands. God is so good!



Isaac and I receiving our gift from Mama Mutesi

## Family Update

Our family is doing well and excited to be (mostly) together. Andrew and Tugume remained in Uganda with Andrew looking for work in Kampala and Tugume finishing up his "O" Levels in Jinja. Please pray for Andrew to find steady employment and to work hard at whatever God gives to him. Pray for Tugume to be in good health and to do well on his exams this fall. Pray that he will be a spiritual leader and rely on God for wisdom and guidance.

Kenneth is currently on a two-week missions trip called SERVE sent out by our home church; the first week was here at home in Abbotsford and the second is at Port Alberni on Vancouver Island helping a local church to reach out to the Native community and to run a VBS in addition to other serving in various activities in the area. Then he'll be back with us helping to babysit and maybe work a bit at Warkentin Organic Farm. Kenny is going in to grade 11 next year. Please pray that God will work in and through him during the missions trip and through the next year.

- Albert is at home and is currently working at the farm on the blueberry sorting line. He's going in to grade 9 next year which means he will join the MEI high school. Albert enjoys sports and is quite a social guy with lots of friends.
- Isaiah is going into grade seven and helps babysit a bit and loves fishing and adventuring at the farm with his buddy Blake. Any chance to be on or near horses he will jump at in a second.
- Ezra also helps pick a few berries alongside mom or dad and is enjoying the summer in Canada. He's going into grade 5. He's a good little golfer who recently won a couple tournaments in his age category and got his first Eagle!
- Anna is now a very good reader and is in charge of scattering pens and papers and artwork around our home. She's very creative and gets us laughing. She's going in to grade 3.
- Alin is a little big girl that loves being the little shadow in the family. She has a very mature vocabulary and thought process so we are wondering where that will take her...
- Jane is enjoying picking blueberries and picks hundreds of pounds each day. She's easily top picker most days, motivated by whatever project her money will turn into back in Uganda. She's happy to report that

the work with prisoners in Jinja main has gotten back on track since her team was allowed to minister in the prisons again.

- I (Chris) am the taxi driver for the summer getting everyone to work, friends and sports activities. I don't mind at all – I love to see everyone enjoying themselves and growing in their gifts and talents!

We're looking forward to visits with many of you and some good time with our big boys before we part ways in a month or two.



### Please continue to pray with us in the following areas:

- **Pray** that Jane's health will improve after she was diagnosed with Brucella. She's on some pretty heavy meds and pushes through long days on the farm picking berries like a hero!
- **Please continue to pray** for our son Andrew as he looks for work in Kampala and makes his way as a young man in the big city. Please pray he will make good choices as he enters the early stages of manhood. Pray that he will humble himself and truly seek God and follow Him in all his ways.
- **Pray for Isaac and our famers around Nawansega** during our absence. Pray that Isaac will continue to be a helpful guide to them as they prepare for the next season. Pray that the farmers will be receptive to the teaching we present and especially to applying God's Word to their lives!
- **Praise God for our new (to us) Landcruiser!** The car has been such a blessing with full-time four-wheel drive, seating for 9 and lots of room! It gets us to our farmers and fits our whole family!
- **Pray for wisdom** as we consider starting a project in our village for training youth in farming and management skills. There's so many young people and so little work in the urban areas which leads to a lot of idleness among the youth which in turn leads to a lot of crime. We are hoping to provide the opportunity for them to hear the word of God and to teach them about God's purpose for their lives in addition to providing training and employment where they can earn their own money and keep away from crime.
- **As always, thanks for all your prayers!** They play a key role to our life here and to the advancement of the Kingdom of God in Uganda! We are really in a spiritual battle which is often evidenced by the dreams we have (Isaac has had many significant dreams) and by some of the troubles we pass through.

### Physical needs:

- We continue to try to get closer to our monthly support target. If you'd like to help in this give us a call or email.
- Please continue to pray for our children's education. There are still many challenges with the younger kids schooling with uncertainty surrounding the future of the two home schooling centres we attended last year. We are still looking for a teacher so if you know of someone who could give about 9-10 months to teaching missionary kids please let us know.
- As the children grow into high school and university age we anticipate family travel to increase. This may sometimes mean us as parents or one of more of the kids travelling more frequently than the usual once in three years. We will try to be wise and frugal but the dynamics of having children in higher education and still being loved and supported by us as a family is a constant balancing act with our mission work. You can pray for us as we struggle to figure that all out.
- Donations of new woman's underwear in sizes Small, Medium and Large (mostly small and medium) would be greatly appreciated for the prison women. Bras for the women are also needed but we would rather receive money for those and buy them in Uganda to suit the women. Donations for bibles, medication, soap, sports equipment and Christmas meals are also welcome for the prisoners.

May the Lord continue to bless you as you serve Him! Love, the Sperlings!

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