



Jumpers for Joy (part two) P2P Butacho July 2012



This summer's batch of jumpers travelled to Uganda with an unusually large entourage. 24 brothers and sisters and young people who had been on the Prepare to Preach training course in Scotland last year took the knitted woolies with them on their two week trip to Butacho in the south east of the country. It was a real moment of joy for the P2P group at the end of the trip to turn up at the orphanage when the jumpers had been distributed. We were welcomed by 52 singing and smiling children all kitted out in beautiful sweaters. The P2P group had been working at the orphanage and had made lots of friends with the little people. Clothes were in short supply and most were dressed in pretty ragged but clean uniforms. To then see them wearing the jumpers was as if real personality and individuality was able to shine out from each child and it was an absolute joy to behold. No wonder James 1 v 27 is the motivating factor behind all your knitting. It was religion as clear and shining as the sun.

The P2P team set up camp in the grounds of the Butacho ecclesial hall. The tents were brought out from the UK and very late at night our bus rumbled along the rutted country track to the hall and by torchlight camp was made. The tents would act as homes and refuge from mosquitoes at night. We were the guests of Butacho ecclesia and their welcome was warm and generous. As well as arranging for meals to be cooked for us, other kindnesses had been thought of – fruit, bottled water, a generator for light at night and a western-style toilet for our use. We settled into African life under cloudless skies and working on the good red soil of Uganda.



The trip had many objectives: to preach the gospel, to encourage the local brothers and sisters, to teach bible classes, to teach Sunday school classes, to run classes to help young brothers with exhortations and bible study, to run sisters classes with bible teaching and practical new skills. We were greatly helped by the local brothers – by Fred, Mayende, Peter, David, Godfrey, JJ and many more who came each day to work with us. Their insight as to how best to reach a wide audience for our talks and yet too how best to see the small detail of a kindness that we could show on a personal level was invaluable.



We also focused on the witness of the life of the gospel in action to the local community in various projects. We knew beforehand just what we hoped to achieve and had brought suitcases full of tools, equipment and supplies. Every day we were up early for tea and bread, readings, a thought and singing. Then with prayers of thanks and asking for God's blessing on the day we went to work.

We started cleaning, painting and running health classes at a nearby clinic. 2,000 mosquito nets had been bought. The medical centre team acted out plays of how to use a net and, sometimes on the verge of wholesale chaos, gave them out. Word spread that nets were free and borderline mayhem ensued at times. But many more local people will be sleeping in safer conditions now. The team scrubbed and bleached and painted health advice murals on the clinic walls. And, in a blessed evening, were able to help

save the life of a woman and her new baby after complications arose. A bumpy hour's trip through the dead of night to the small maternity unit ended with lives saved that surely would otherwise have been lost. We were very conscious that the blessings of God were in evidence every day.



Another team tackled building fences round two local water bore holes. Starting from scratch by ordering the wood and watching someone climb up trees to chop the branches which would serve as fence posts. Construction work and painting on a big scale went ahead at a local school. The ecclesial hall was painted inside and out and now, when walking back through the village in the sunshine, the hall stands out like a bright beacon on the sloping hill. A new hall sign was painted. Under the shade of the small trees sisters talked and read and, along with visiting ladies and girls, sewed patchwork blankets to give out to widows in the ecclesia and as gifts for widows in the community. Even torrential rain didn't stop us sewing 50 french lavender bags. We just moved inside the hall and sewed and talked in the dark. The rain was another blessing for the ecclesia where most are subsistence farmers reliant on good harvests to feed their families. Large groups of children sang and played bible games, watched bible puppet shows and enjoyed lessons. Lots of preparation for children's activities had been done before the trip, so there were great crafts and games. Late afternoon saw the quick turnaround from physical labour to bible teaching at outdoor classes back at camp. Many villagers have now heard clear, straightforward Christadelphian teaching. Young brothers from Butacho, Lumino and Nekuku took notes and got some good ideas for future preaching. Question and answer sessions went on into the dark -so wonderful to have keen interest in the Truth. Our evenings ended with singing, prayers and a feedback report from all the groups.

The second week brought visits from everyone to the orphanage where your jumpers were to go. Painting murals, rigging up electric power and rainwater collection and fitting out a new dormitory were worked on. New beds were bought and mosquito nets were hung and the knitted blankets that you sent from the UK look wonderful. Curtains and decorations were sewn to add colour and brightness. The boys and girls are delightful – full of life and energy in straightened circumstances. HIV is still a huge scourge all over the country and there is a relentless addition to the orphan population in Uganda because of it.



So know for a surety that, like the garments that Dorcas made, these little jumpers will be of value and of use and of real worth. The teachings of the Lord Jesus to be of service to our brothers and sisters and to the wider world as we wait on his return have limitless opportunity in Uganda. Thank you for this gift of service in His name.

With love from all the P2P team.

