

# WAVELENGTH

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WORDS  
OF  
HOPE

Good News.  
No Boundaries.

# A FAREWELL FROM DAVE

For nearly 23 years now, I have served as the President of Words of Hope. With my retirement now here, I find myself reflecting on the closing words of the book of Acts. Acts ends with Paul in Rome, confined and under guard, but free to receive visitors. The final verse of Acts says that Paul spent all his time preaching and teaching about the Lord Jesus, “with all boldness and without hindrance.” Luke doesn’t tell us anything more—what happened to Paul, where else he may have gone, when he died.



My take from this is that while ministers of the gospel come and go, the ministry goes on. That’s certainly true for us at Words of Hope. While leaders come and go, our ministry goes on—and keeps getting better! My successor as President, Rev. Jonathan Opgenorth, will soon take over leadership of Words of Hope. I am confident that God has called him to this role, and I am excited to see how God will use him to lead Words of Hope in new and wonderful ways to advance God’s kingdom and build Christ’s church in the world’s hard places.

Please join me in praying for Jon, and for the ministry of Words of Hope. And please also consider supporting our efforts financially in order to proclaim Jesus Christ as the world’s only Savior.

*David Baer*

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## Meet the New President

We are excited to introduce you to Rev. Jonathan Opgenorth, who has been appointed to serve as Words of Hope's next President. Rev. Opgenorth hails from Orange City, Iowa, where he has been the Senior Pastor of Trinity Reformed Church for 17 years. Rev. Opgenorth is already familiar with the ministry of Words of Hope, as he has served for many years on the Words of Hope Board, most recently as the Board Chair.



Rev. Opgenorth received his Bachelor of Arts in Religion from Northwestern College, and his M.Div. from Fuller Theological Seminary. He has a proven track record in fundraising, team-building, and vision casting. He has also traveled extensively, having most recently traveled to Uganda and spent time there ministering with Words of Hope's Titus Baraka.

Rev. Opgenorth is married to Ann, and together they have four children: Lauren (23), Andrew (20), Julie (20), and Nicole (20). In Rev. Opgenorth's free time, he enjoys listening to podcasts, running, and playing disc golf.

Rev. Opgenorth will be succeeding Rev. David Bast as President of Words of Hope on January 1 of 2017. Please join us in welcoming Rev. Opgenorth, and in upholding him, his family, and the greater ministry of Words of Hope during this important time of transition.



## Website Redesign

Head on over to [www.woh.org](http://www.woh.org) to check out Words of Hope's new presence on the web! Our website has been redesigned with a brighter, cleaner layout, and several new ease-of-access features. All your usual content is still available, only now you can enjoy browsing in a widescreen format that brings colorful pictures from Words of Hope's ministry fields to life on your screen. Responsive formatting scales screen content to fit the size of the device you are using to view the website, meaning you can now enjoy seamless browsing from smartphone to tablet to laptop. Look for quick, front page links that bring you directly to Groundwork broadcasts, daily devotional readings, the donation page, news stories, and more! Let us know what you think of the new look by visiting [woh.org/contact](http://woh.org/contact).

## Carols and Lessons

Just in time for Christmas, a new devotional book is available from Words of Hope. "Carols and Lessons", by Rev. David Bast, takes readers on a 31-day Advent journey highlighting one beloved Christmas carol per day. In these devotionals, David Bast tells the stories behind many familiar Christmas carols, and reflects on the messages they have for us today as we celebrate



the birth of Jesus Christ. In this Advent season, as you prepare for Christmas, we encourage you to read, sing, and consider these lessons. To request your copy, or to get one as a gift for a friend, or order several for a group study, visit our website at [woh.org/carolsandlessons](http://woh.org/carolsandlessons).





In his earlier years with Words of Hope, Dave (far right) traveled to India to meet with local producers.

2012: Dave baptizes a new believer in Armenia.



2013: Dave distributes radios to listeners in Indonesia.

Then, in 1993, Dave was called on by the Board to consider being the next President for Words of Hope. “Because of my sense of the need for a ministry like Words of Hope,” he says, “and the need to really reach to the ends of the earth with the gospel, there was no sense of hesitancy in my mind that this was the right path that I was called to take.”

## EXPANDING GOSPEL OUTREACH

During Dave’s tenure at Words of Hope, many aspects of the ministry have changed. New language broadcasts have been added and new studios built to enable recording in other countries. Important partnerships have been forged with like-minded, biblical organizations. But perhaps the most notable paradigm shift that has come during his time of service is the broadcast strategy of “getting as close to the audience as possible.”

Dave explains: “During the early time of my tenure at Words of Hope, our practice was to share printed English messages with nationals in various fields who would then adapt them, translate them, and make use of them as they saw fit. But gradually, we decided to shift tactics a bit, and recruit people living inside the target areas to produce the broadcasts. We encouraged these people to write their own messages instead of just making use of ours.”

This decision brought with it many changes. Words of Hope has become committed to making sure that international programmers and producers are equipped with necessary biblical and technical training. “We can offer them encouragement, help them gain skills as communicators who already know the issues that need to be addressed, who know how the gospel can be applied in their own context so it is no longer a one-size-fits-all sort of message,” Dave explains.

Dave goes on to say that the real heart of the mission of Words of Hope is to build the church. “Our be-all and end-all is not to make radio programs,” he says. “That is simply one means to the end of achieving our mission. The end goal is to build the church.”

## MOVING FORWARD

Now, in just a few short months, Rev. David Bast will be retiring from his position as the President and Broadcast Minister of Words of Hope. He will not, however, be retiring from service to his Lord!

As he reflects on how far Words of Hope has come in the past decades, he is encouraged, yet also sees the need for continued hard work in the future.

“We need to remember the great needs of a still largely unreached world,” he urges. “I think of Iran, where there are no longer any open churches, or Turkey, with 5,000 Christians in a population of 80 million, or India, with four times the population of the United States and one-tenth the number of Christians, or Africa, with many pastors and Christian workers but no means of supporting them. We need to practice Acts 1:8 and be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.”

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

**ACTS 1:8**



# SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATIONS

English ministry continues to be an integral part of the outreach of Words of Hope. In 2010, David Bast helped to facilitate the start of a new English radio program and podcast in partnership with Back to God Ministries International of the Christian Reformed Church.

In the past, Words of Hope produced radio services, complete with sermons and choir songs. Later, this format shifted towards a program that contained a shorter sermon paired with additional voices of testimony or teaching.

In the 2000s, audience research was conducted, and it was determined that, in order to appeal to a younger generation of listeners used to the podcast format, a Bible talking program would prove the most engaging. This extensive research and partnership resulted in the program called Groundwork, which you can listen to today on either radio or podcast.

The weekly programs feature David Bast and Scott Hoezee discussing Scriptural topics. As they dig into what the Bible has to say, they emphasize that the truths found in Scripture lay the very foundation for our Christian lives.

While David Bast is retiring from his position as Words of Hope President in January of 2017, we are pleased to announce that he will be continuing on as Groundwork co-host. If you haven't gotten a chance to listen to these programs yet, visit [groundwork.reframemedia.com](http://groundwork.reframemedia.com) to stream audio directly, or to find listings of when the programs play on a radio station near you!

## Hope for South Asia

During the early years of David Bast's tenure, many new broadcast languages were added in the region of South Asia. These languages included Dzongkha in the country of Bhutan, Nepali in Nepal, and Dogri, Tibetan, Garhwali, and Kashmiri in India.

Dave explains that Words of Hope championed fundraising campaigns during those years with the specific goal of reaching more tribal language groups with gospel good news. These efforts were part of Words of Hope's new goal of "getting as close to the audience as possible."

Previously, Words of Hope English transcripts had been sent to large organizations for translation and broadcasting. Though this had the potential to reach many people, no opportunity was provided through this method for listener follow-up, and the results were often impersonal, with little ability to track or follow progress.

Under Dave's urging, new Words of Hope tribal broadcasts were begun from within each target area, and a commitment was made to produce programming daily in order to build up a stronger listener base.

At this time, the decision was also made to focus efforts on the Himalayan Belt of South Asia, moving programming away from the south to more northerly regions. Many radio broadcasts were already available in the south of India, but in the north, many people still had not heard of Jesus.

Today, broadcasts in South Asia continue to expand in reach and number. Broadcasts in Nepal can now be heard on over 30 radio stations, and new language broadcasts for Bangladesh and Pakistan are under way.

Outreach in the region is taking new forms as well. Audio recordings of the Scriptures and Bible teachings can be accessed by many over the Internet or through mobile phones. Recording studios funded by Words of Hope donors are outfitted as community centers where, in addition to sound recording, people can gather for computer lessons, seminars, and medical care.





## Words of Hope Uganda Celebrates Ten Years

Two hundred and fifty people have gathered together from across the country of Uganda to celebrate the past and dream about the future of Words of Hope. An elaborate cake shaped like the ministry headquarters is demolished by guests, a meal is shared, and music performances are enjoyed.

This is the ten-year anniversary celebration of Words of Hope Uganda. The ministry had humble beginnings. Back in 2006, the first broadcasts were recorded in an outbuilding on the bishop's compound in Mukono. A dog frequently barked in the yard, causing the programmers to have to pause and wait for silence before restarting the recording.

Today, Words of Hope Uganda broadcasts are aired throughout the country in 13 different languages. The ministry reaches out to everyone, but focuses especially on marginalized groups such as the Batwa—a pygmy tribe that has been evicted from their forest homes; the Acholi—a people group in northern Uganda that has suffered the ravages of war; and those affected by harsh cultural practices such as the Kup-Sabiny who still struggle with Female Genital Mutilation.

Words of Hope Uganda partners throughout the country with church dioceses. This allows for close follow-up efforts with listeners who tune in to the broadcasts. Care teams from the churches can go and visit radio listeners with questions, and counseling services can be provided if necessary. Ultimately, the broadcasts serve the greater purpose of drawing more individuals into church bodies and into communion with Christ himself.

At the tenth-anniversary celebration, hopes for the future of the ministry are high. Those in leadership urge the importance of programming that will reach out to the younger generation of Ugandans. Training up this next generation to help produce programs and bring new insights is emphasized.

And Rev. Titus Baraka, the Director for Words of Hope Uganda, is not content to see the gospel message of the radio broadcasts stay within the confines of his country.

“Now we need to go to the neighboring countries!” he urges. “South Sudan ... we’re already involved there somewhat. We need to reach Congo! Congo is hard ground, and there is a lot of need for the gospel to reach there.”

Today, Words of Hope Uganda airs programs in 13 languages in Uganda and South Sudan.



# THANK YOU, DAVE!

"The leadership of Dave Bast has been the means through which we have come to love the ministry of Words of Hope. His whole-hearted love of the Lord and his passion to reach the lost with Christ's love have been evident in many tangible ways. Through him, neighbors and nations have heard the Good News of Jesus Christ. Dave has ministered to our hearts through his teachings, travel experiences, and through the pleasure of his friendship. David, like his namesake, is "a man after God's own heart." We praise God for his obedience to the Scriptures and for his faithful service."

**SANDRA CHURCH**

Former Board Chair

"Thank you Dave for taking time to meet with me back in August 2008, and for believing in us so early in ministry. Because of your help, your catching that vision and believing in us, the ministry of Cross-Way church in Nepal could really flourish. Thank you so much."

**ARBIN POKHAREL**

Director, Words of Hope Nepal

"Thanks Dave for your friendship and for our many years of ministry together at Words of Hope. I have been blessed to be part of this great mission effort, and your vision has enhanced its growth in so many ways. You are a true man of God, with a singular focus of sharing Christ's love with the world. Jesus is Lord."

**TODD SCHUILING**

Director of Advancement

"You are such an amazing man. A leader who has raised many people, who has encouraged many people in Uganda. You shared your vision and encouraged us to raise other young leaders, those who will replace us. You've been an exemplary leader—a servant leader. I love your passion for the gospel. I can't wait to preach the way you do! I don't know if I'm gifted in that way, but I am so moved by the way you bring out the Word. May God bless you, Dave. We love you."

**GODFREY KYOME**

Assistant Director, Words of Hope Uganda

