

WAVELENGTH

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WORDS
OF
HOPE

Good News.
No Boundaries.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT



Thanks so much for being a partner in the gospel through Words of Hope! I am honored to be the new president, and I look forward to engaging with you in the greatest work imaginable in our lifetime: proclaiming Jesus Christ as the world's only Savior.

I formally began work on January 1, but my heart has been part of the Words of Hope family for many years. When I was ten I had a providential encounter with former Words of Hope President Dr. Bill Brownson. On a sabbatical I travelled to Uganda with Rev. David Bast. And recently I served a number of years on the Board. Through these things, I sensed God's preparation for this new chapter.

On that 2007 trip to Uganda, I witnessed Rev. Titus Baraka's passion and ministry. God was doing remarkable work getting that program started. Today, more than two dozen people work each week to produce programs and connect listeners with local churches and counseling services. I'm

especially happy that they are producing their own daily devotional in-country.

While I have a heart for God's work around the world, I am convinced that there is work still to be done in English, our own "heart" language. Proverbs 13:17 reads, "a faithful envoy brings healing." The word "envoy" can mean "hinge or opening"—as in a door opening.

I invite you to pray with me that Words of Hope might be an "envoy," an open door that brings hope and healing to all who hear the message of Jesus. From the United States to Uganda, from India to Indonesia, from Albania to South Sudan, and to every corner of God's world.

Thank you for your heart for the gospel of Jesus and the work of Words of Hope. Together, we will continue this good work.

To the King!

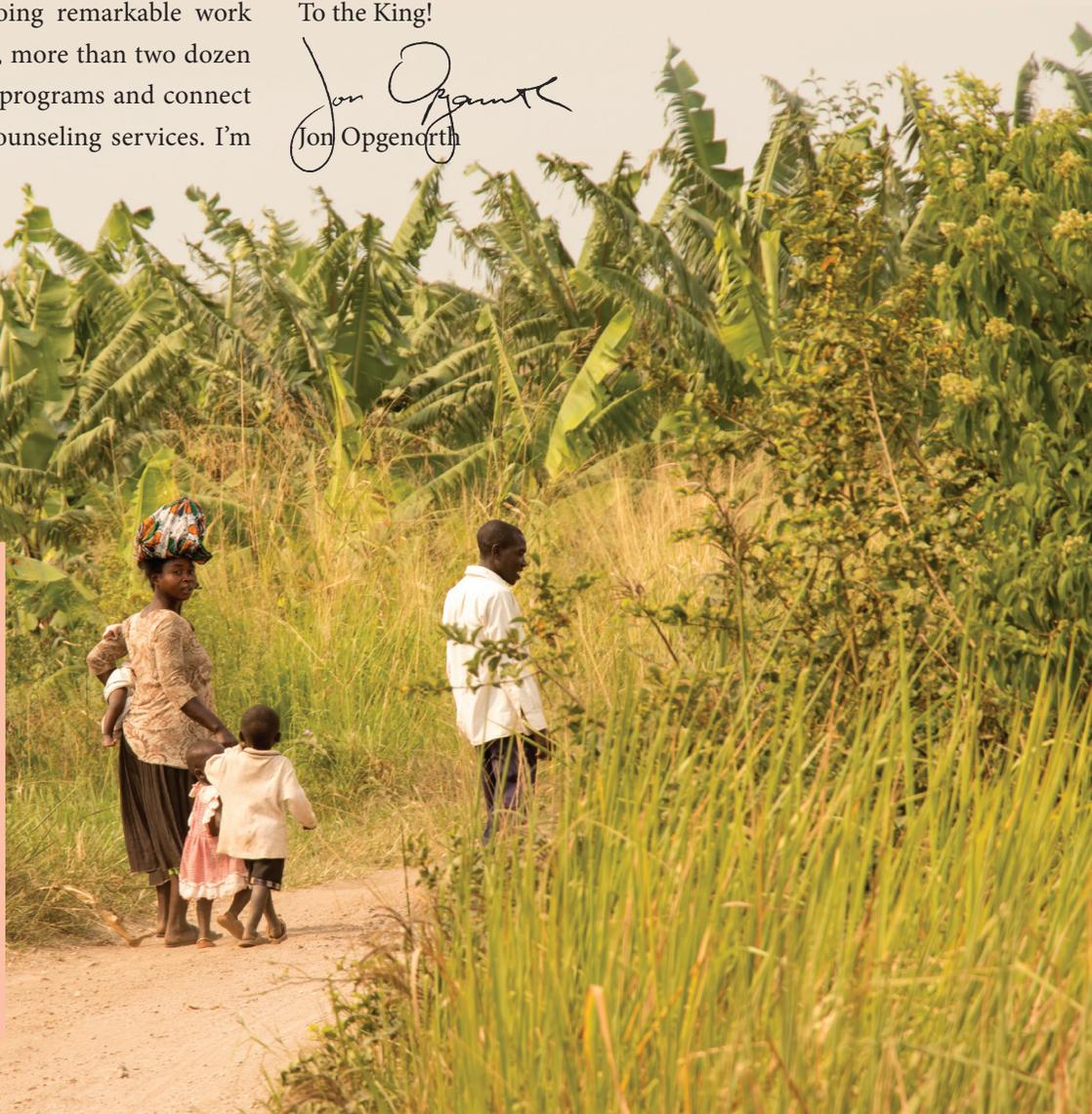

Jon Opgenorth

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New Opportunities in Niger

For the past ten years, Words of Hope Niger has been able to proclaim the good news through your prayers and support. In this strongly Muslim country, we broadcast in French, the national language of education, and Hausa, the more commonly spoken native tongue. Now, because of an exciting new partnership, Words of Hope will have the flexibility to start new language efforts in the country that will foster church plants. In addition to reaching further with French and Hausa, your support will now help us produce programs in three new languages: Zarma, Fulfulde, and Gourmantche.



Expansion in Turkey

This past November, we were able to help purchase a second radio station in the country of Turkey. The purchase was neither easy nor smooth. Our director of Turkish ministry, Haluk Bilgen, worked tirelessly to negotiate and coordinate with the seller, the bank, the government, and Radio Shema, our in-country broadcast partner. There were plenty of moments where we wondered if the sale was going to go through. This new station moves us that much closer to reaching the entire country of Turkey with the good news of Jesus Christ.



Devotionals in Various Languages

When you read the Words of Hope devotional, you are not reading it alone. Thousands of readers across the world are reading with you! Our English version reaches across North America; to homes, churches, hospitals, and prisons in the United States and Canada. Over 280,000 copies are printed each year, and many more are read online.

We also share the devotional with our international partners. Since 2010 we have helped print an Albanian version of the devotional. It has been a great tool for discipleship in the young and growing Albanian church. And in January, our partners in Uganda began printing and distributing their own Ugandan version. Within this country, good Christian materials are hard to find and expensive to buy. The Words of Hope devotional provides theologically sound teaching at a low cost. The first printing was around 1000 copies, but there is demand for many more.

We are exploring expanding to other ministry fields as well. The most promising one is India, where interest is extremely high. Words of Hope's director for English Ministry Christy Prins says, "It's a great problem to have. We know what they need, we have good people to do the work. We just need the resources to expand to new audiences."

If you are interested in learning how you can help underwrite the expansion of the devotional into a new language, contact us at woh@woh.org.

NO HOLDING BACK: Joshua's Story

One Bari-Kuku man turns his struggles into song.



AN EAGER CHILD

Even though Joshua Abure was visually impaired since birth, his disability didn't hold him back. "In those years I could see a little bit out of one eye," he explained. He was able to attend school and church just like the other children in his village of Takajunge, just south of Kampala.

Joshua also demonstrated a strong faith, even as a child. While his fellow classmates ran and played in the yard, Joshua would round them up and preach to them. Whenever they would invite children to go forward and sing at church, Joshua would follow. He could not see, but he could sing. Joshua sang at every opportunity. "I used to sing with the Sunday school choir as a child—and even in the adult choir," said Joshua.

Sunday school became a crucial part of his upbringing. "I grew up in Sunday school," he said, "and I always knew it was important." His parents made sure he regularly attended and had an offering to give. "School helped me grow to understand God's word."

VILLAGE VISITORS

Words of Hope Uganda staff began to visit Joshua's village. They told people about the Christian programs in their own Bari-Kuku language, distributed radios, and met with listeners and people who had questions about what it meant to become a follower of Jesus.

Before each visit, Joshua would prepare songs to perform for the visitors. When Joshua and Words of Hope producer Emmanuel Bahati met, Emmanuel was inspired. Together they recorded Joshua's music and played it over the radio as part of Words of Hope programs.

YEARS OF PAIN

At age 20, Joshua's eye began causing him extreme pain. For six years he couldn't work. "Whenever I carried a load on my head, I would feel the pain in my eye," he said. "I had to stay like a child at home." His father struggled to buy medicine to ease his suffering. Then, Joshua's health worsened and he was bedridden for week after week. The pain was so bad that medical personnel had to come to his home and give him injections.

By his late twenties, Joshua's pain had subsided and he was able to resume normal activity. But one day, he tripped over a bicycle in the doorway of his home and injured his eye. Joshua was rushed to the local hospital. "All I could see was blood," he said. "They brought me into the operating room for eye surgery. I begged the doctor to save my eye, but he said it was too dangerous."

Joshua's father (left) and close friend (right) often accompany Joshua on church visits, giving him rides on their bicycles.



A LIFE OF SERVICE

Joshua's recovery in the hospital lasted a month, but his vision was gone forever. Depressed and alone, he turned to God. "What shall I do now?" I asked God. My only comfort then was remaining in God's work." But if Joshua's life demonstrated one thing, it was that things didn't always go according to plan. Joshua admits he has stumbled in his walk with God. "The time came when I left the church and backslid in my faith," he explained.

Then one day Joshua, now in his mid-thirties, was listening to the radio program and heard Emmanuel Bahati's voice, the same person who recorded his music so many years before. He took out the phone number and called the studio. They put him on the air with Emmanuel. Joshua shared his story, and Emmanuel advised him to attend an upcoming listeners' conference and renew his faith. It was at this Bari listeners' conference that Joshua rededicated his life to Christ.

SHARING HOPE

Joshua is now a Sunday school teacher and a choir leader in his village church. He travels from church to church leading children's programs and singing and playing the *adungu*, a nine-stringed harp.

"You could not see a smile on his face in the earlier days," said Titus Baraka, director of Words of Hope Uganda. "But now he can make fun, he entertains the children. He has a zeal to serve, and the children love him. Now he knows he's worth something, he knows he has a purpose. He knows he is valued. And the church has also recognized this."

Every Saturday, Joshua goes through the neighborhood to remind people to switch on the Words of Hope radio program. He is also working to create an album of original songs. He tours from church to church to perform and raise money to cover the cost of producing the album. "Words of Hope gives me courage and guidance," Joshua said. "Because of this, I've convinced many people to tune into the program. I cannot leave this radio program, and I cannot leave God's service. I am committed to serve God until the end."

UNITY IN RADIO

The Bari-Kuku people are mainly farmers, living in mud-built homes throughout western Uganda and South Sudan. Prior to the Words of Hope ministry, these tribes were fairly isolated from each other. "Now, because of the Words of Hope radio program, there is a sense of identity among the Bari-Kuku people," explains Titus Baraka. "They have approached me and have formed a committee. They now know how many [Bari-Kuku] people there are, they now have known communities."

The committee is working with Titus and the Bible Society of Uganda to rewrite the Bible in their own language. Please pray for the continued unity and growth of the Bari-Kuku community. Pray that soon listeners to the Words of Hope program will be able to follow along with their own Bari-Kuku bibles.

MASTERING THE ADUNGU



The *adungu* is a nine-string arching harp from northwestern Uganda. The instrument has an arched neck, a wooden sound box, and a series of parallel strings attached and tuned with pegs. The first, second, and third strings are tuned in octaves with the sixth, seventh, and eighth.

When Joshua was first learning how to play, he began with just four strings, then advancing to five, and ultimately to nine. "Each finger plays three strings at once, and it produces the rhythm that follows my voice," says Joshua. "It has become my favorite hobby."

Watch Joshua play one of his songs!
WOH.ORG/JOSHUA



A COMMUNITY ROOTED IN RADIO

From the Hilltop

Radio Messiah, a ministry of the South Rwenzori diocese in western Uganda, was established to bridge the communication gap between the cities and the communities living up in the hills and neighboring districts. Much of this region is mountainous and many villages are very isolated. There are no real roads to visit the villages and no telephones to call them. If someone from a mountain village wants to make a phone call, they need to travel 50 kilometers to the nearest town that has a telephone.

In this environment, good radio programming is critical. Radio Messiah shares the gospel of Jesus Christ, but it has also health workers communicate to listeners about sanitation and environmental concerns. It gives the government a platform to address issues like domestic violence and security. And people have responded. “People love the radio,” says Bishop Jackson Nzerebende, bishop of the South Rwenzori diocese. “They take it with them to the gardens. They don’t want to miss the teaching messages, the gospel music, the testimonies. They want to listen to the current news coming from all over the world.”

As a result of the radio, the communities are reaching out. They began opening roads. They have constructed their own schools and built health centers. “Now I can drive my car from here to every part of the mountain,” says Bishop Nzerebende, “because people have, through radio, learned about the importance of having a road connected to their village.”

Radio Messiah staff encourage listeners to listen, worship, and pray together. In 2012, there was only one listener group, but today 85 groups have been formed. “We didn’t expect them to spring up so quickly!” explains Kezie Dionysius, production manager of Words of Hope Uganda. “The 85 groups were becoming hard to manage. They had to merge the groups together into fewer, larger communities so the small staff could keep up!”

Growing Together

At group meetings, members share their challenges and achievements. They look to each other for help in all of life’s circumstances. Many people have been inspired to learn to write and read, just so they can follow along in their Bibles while they listen to the program.

“They are learning together how to do many things: how to bring up their children, how to fight domestic violence in their homes, how to knit, sew, and farm,” explains Aeneas Kato, Radio Messiah producer. “When they are in their listener groups, they are able to guide each other and become strong believers together.”

“If the radio goes off the air because of anything—maybe there is no power, maybe a machine is broken... I have to switch off my phone!” says Bishop Nzerebende. “If I don’t switch it off, I will not do any work! I will spend all day answering questions. You can see how much people love their radio.”

EDSON OKINEO



Many youth want to listen to the radio but don’t have a chance to go to the crusades. But Words of Hope is reaching us where we work. When I heard the word, I was making bricks, and I had my small radio with me. Now I have started preaching the gospel, because the word set me free.



Reaching Further

We give thanks with the Radio Messiah team for the successful installation of a new transmitter this summer, which has greatly enhanced their coverage area. This new transmitter reaches 95 percent of the local diocese and much of neighboring Congo.

“We started with the capacity for our message to reach only 200,000 people,” says Bishop Nzerebende, “but after the installation of a 1000-watt transmitter, we can now send our message to over 3.5 million people covering many, many districts in this region.”



KAMBASU NYATARA



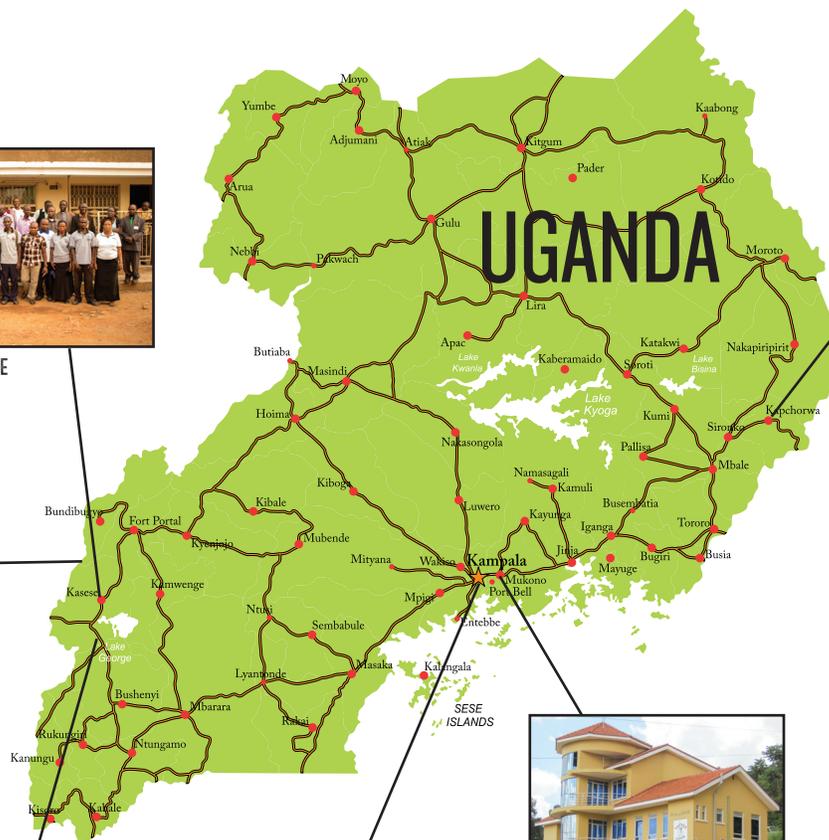
I heard Rev. Aeneas Kato preaching on Radio Messiah. He referred to Matthew 11:28, which says “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” I had been carrying the burden of sins, but because of that word I saw those sins and surrendered them to God. I was saved.



RADIO MESSIAH OFFICE



KUP-SABINY PROGRAM



HIGHEST POINT:
Margherita Peak on
Mount Stanley 5,110 m



ELEPHANT SIGHTING

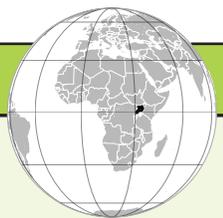


JOSHUA'S VILLAGE



WOH UGANDA'S HEAD OFFICE

FAST FACTS



PEOPLE

- 38 million people
- 60 ethnic groups
- Second youngest population in the world, behind Niger. Half the population is under age 15.
- Average woman gives birth to 6 children
- Life expectancy is 55 years

LANGUAGE

- 45 languages, official language is English
- Literacy rate is 78.4%

MEDIA

- 65% of adults own a cell phone
- 19.2% of adults use the internet

GEOGRAPHY

- Natural resources are copper, cobalt, hydropower, limestone, salt, arable land
- Varied geography of mountains, rivers, lakes, forests



A New Tradition

Words of Hope's Kup-Sabiny Program Celebrates One Year on the Air

Just a year ago, Words of Hope Uganda established a new ministry in the Kup-Sabiny language, broadcasting holistic messages to the Sabiny people in the mountainous region of eastern Uganda.

“Our program is just a baby,” says Rev. Paul Masaba, bishop of the Sebei Diocese. “But already indicators are so good! Very many people listen to the Word of the Lord now.”

Accurate information doesn't always reach these rural areas easily, and many people have held onto the same cultural practices for generations. “People who do not know Jesus may think that if you become saved, you may not do other things. You may not go to school, you may not farm, you just stick to the gospel,” says producer Keren Chalengat. “We let people know that even with Christianity, you are supposed to develop socially, economically, and educationally.” Because more and more people in these remote villages have radios, Keren sees the programs as a great way to teach listeners about Christianity, but also about business, health, and family issues.

One young listener (featured above with her family) explained: “They teach us about the effects of early marriage, and the importance of taking our children to school. They teach us about building the family relationship. Because when you have peaceful family, you have a peaceful community.”

Keren frequently focuses on women and family issues in her programs, because one of the biggest concerns in these villages is

female genital mutilation (FGM). On her programs, Keren often brings in experts from the church who are gifted teachers. Rev. Masaba says that “FGM is a very critical problem for us here. It is inhuman, it is unspiritual. The good news is, the church has come in and we are all involved in fighting the elimination of FGM in our country.”

But change comes slowly in Sebei. “For those who have a low level of education, they believe that FGM is the only thing that can be done to promote them within the village,” says Keren, who has lived her whole life in this region. “They hear from the elders that practicing FGM is okay, and that once you are circumcised, you are no longer a child. You are mature. You are respected. You are free to have a granary (a shed for storing grain) and get married.”



Producer Keren Chalengat

The Sabiny program doesn't yet have an office or a recording studio, so Keren voices the programs wherever she can with only a hand-held recorder. But Keren loves and believes in the work she's doing. “I knew it was going to be a good program. I knew it would help me to develop spiritually. Now, the programs are so good and I have been interacting with so many people. It is very important that we continue to make these messages.”