

WAVELENGTH

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WORDS
OF
HOPE

Good News.
No Boundaries.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

With retirement on the horizon for me, I often find myself thinking about the closing words of the book of Acts. Acts ends with Paul in Rome, confined and under guard, but free to receive visitors. Luke says Paul spent all his time preaching and teaching to them about the Lord Jesus, “with all boldness and without hindrance” (Acts 28:31). Luke doesn’t tell us anything more—what happened to Paul, where else he may have gone, when he died.



goes on. This will be not so much a year of endings for us as a year of new and renewed ministry. For example, we’ve just added a new staffer in Turkey who has launched a radio program teaching Bible stories to children. It will be aired—along with our regular Turkish programs—on a new radio station that will expand gospel outreach into a whole new area. This year a new young pastor from Uganda, Godfrey Kyome, will finish his training at Western Theological Seminary and return to assist Titus Baraka in the leadership of Words of Hope Uganda. I expect to see exciting new things happening there.

My take from this is that while ministers of the gospel come and go, the ministry goes on. That’s true for us. While workers at Words of Hope come and go, the work

I could go on, but you get the point. I am confident that God will continue to use Words of Hope in new ways, as he has used it in the past.

David Bast

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OPPORTUNITY IN TURKEY

Words of Hope and Radio Shema have partnered for the past fourteen years to spread the gospel through radio in the country of Turkey. Now, an exciting opportunity for growth has been made possible through the generous support of Words of Hope donors. Words of Hope has been able to help Radio Shema purchase a second radio station in Turkey, which will reach a part of the country that previously had no access to local Christian broadcasting. A new producer has also been hired to prepare additional Words of Hope Turkish programs. An elder in a local Turkish church, this producer's programs are geared toward children. Programs will combine Bible stories with sound effects and dramatization to bring the truth of the Scriptures to life in engaging new ways. We are excited for these areas of growth in Turkish ministry, and we appreciate your continued prayers that many in the region would come to know Christ.

NEW ALBANIAN RESOURCES

Words of Hope Albania is preparing to publish a book of 15-minute radio sermons in written form. Sermons are currently going through the selection process. This will be the first ever book of published sermons written in Albanian! Our hope is that this resource will benefit pastors, teachers, and small-group leaders in local churches in Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia. We are also working to record 365 audio programs for radio broadcast that will each feature the story of how a believer in Albania or Kosovo came to believe in Christ. Once these programs are completed, 50 of the testimonies will be recorded on video and shown on local secular TV stations. Please pray with us that these testimonies will break down existing barriers to the gospel in these countries.

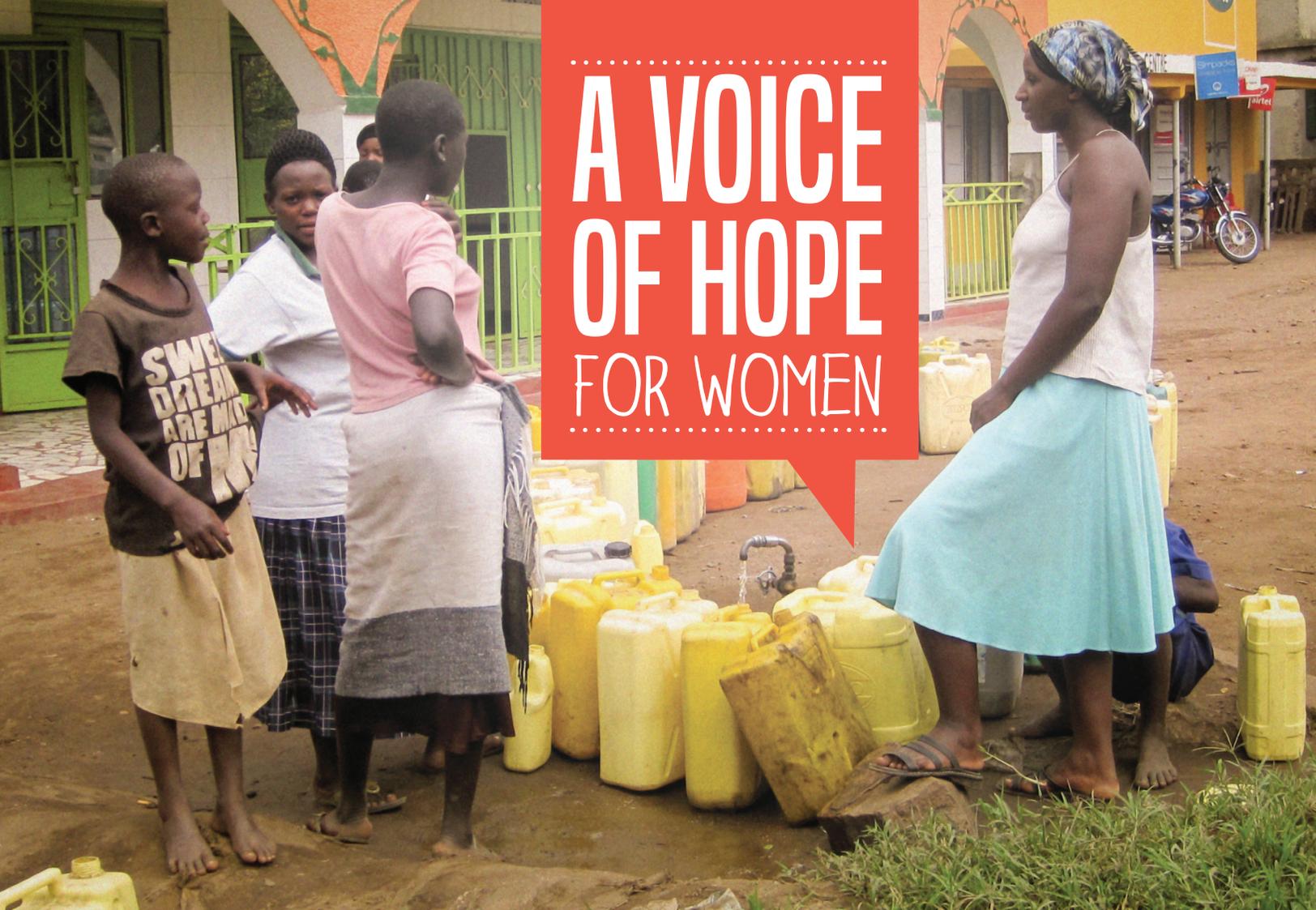
The remains of a church building in Zinder, Niger. This was one of 70 churches burned in January 2015.

VISIT TO NIGER

Words of Hope's Vice President, Lee DeYoung, traveled to Niger in December of last year. "This visit was unlike any of my ten previous trips there," Lee recalls. "It occurred eleven months after an unprecedented wave of 70 church burnings. Seeing the charred ruins of two church buildings where I'd previously worshiped saddened me deeply. The cynical, premeditated nature of the planned arson attacks was more apparent than I'd previously imagined. I learned from witnesses that the arsonists had brought flame accelerants and tires to the targeted churches. Looters removed all metal windows and door frames from the churches and sold them. The evil nature of the attacks seemed palpable. At the same time, the resilient hope of each targeted congregation was strikingly evident as well. Temporary worship facilities have been quickly constructed next to the charred remains of each church."

Issaka Moussa, a leader in the church denomination Words of Hope partners with, explains that "the church is stronger now than it was before those events. We are seeing the hand of the Lord in everything we are doing. This has been an opportunity for us to launch programs to help and to save Muslims in our country." Worship attendance at the targeted churches has increased as well—boosted by the addition of new, previously non-Christian, attendees. "A few days after the events, the first reactions of the church were publicly heard through our radio broadcasts," Issaka continues. "The Words of Hope Director stated that we Christians forgive for all that has been done."





A VOICE OF HOPE FOR WOMEN

Thanks to generous donor support, a new Words of Hope Uganda broadcast will soon reach an isolated community of people living high on the slopes of Mt. Elgon. These mountain-dwellers are known for their tradition of ritual cutting, also called female genital mutilation.

A TRADITION OF PAIN

Last week little Kijai was a carefree seventh grader. In the mornings she trekked down the mountainside with a handful of other children in order to attend classes in the valley. In the evenings, she hiked back up the mountain to join her family for dinner and then sing and play until dark. But soon life for Kijai will be different. She will not be making the trek to school again. Since Kijai recently entered puberty, her parents have told her it is now time for her to become a woman. This means that it is time for her to be cut.

Kijai knows most of what to expect. In order for her to be seen as a woman in the eyes of the community, she must undergo a ritual cutting ceremony known to the outside world as female genital mutilation, or FGM.

Kijai will not be alone in her experience. Other girls will be cut alongside her. (The instruments used will not be sterilized.) She will be allowed a little time to heal, and then a man from the community will choose her as his wife.

He will pay a dowry for her, meaning her family will gain goats and cows. In this way she will bring honor and prosperity to her parents. Ritual cutting is a way to bring honor to her husband and new family. After the procedure they will allow her to fetch grain from the grainery and water from the well. She will have a voice in society and not be at risk of cheating on her husband. She will be offered an honorable burial when she dies.

For all these reasons, Kijai is eager for tomorrow to come. She has looked forward to this day for years, with a mixture of anticipation and dread. Tonight she goes to sleep a child. Tomorrow she will become a woman.

A CHANGING CULTURE

Kijai is a fictional character, but as disturbing as her story is, her experience is very real.

For centuries, the Sabiny (pronounced sa-BEAN) people have practiced FGM on young girls of their community. This intensely painful procedure has the potential to debilitate a woman for the rest of her life. Due to an extreme lack of sanitary practice both before and after FGM, they have an increased risk of contracting HIV, dying during childbirth, suffering post-traumatic stress disorder, dealing with incontinence, or even becoming paralyzed.

This practice has continued for so long in part because the Sabiny are isolated from the outside world in many ways. Approximately half of the tribe is illiterate, and many do not readily understand more common Ugandan languages. Their geographic isolation in the mountains means that they are rarely visited, even by pastors. Sometimes the Sabiny come down the mountain to buy radios and cell phones, or to go to school, but few people venture up to them. In fact, the Sabiny language did not even exist in written form until about fifteen years ago, and radio stations reaching their villages have only been in operation for the last seven years.

Though loosely Christian, the Sabiny also believe that practicing FGM somehow prevents future misfortunes from occurring to women and their families. In the last few years, however, the tribe has been contacted more and more by the outside world, and as a result their worldview is starting to change.

FUTURE HOPE

Your support has now made it possible for Words of Hope to begin producing radio programs for the Sabiny in their own heart language of Kup-Sabiny.

A Sabiny woman named Keren Chalengat has already been recruited to produce these programs, since it is often the women themselves who insist cutting must occur. When she

speaks over radio, she will be teaching the women of her tribe, showing them that they do not need to undergo FGM in order to have a good life. “I am alive. I have children. My marriage is okay!” she will tell them. Men will also be featured on the programs to urge others in their tribe to protect and honor their wives and daughters.



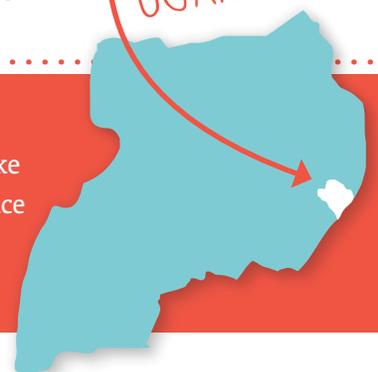
Words of Hope Uganda Director Titus Baraka explains that it is important to celebrate the good aspects of Sabiny culture, while also emphasizing the value of human life. “Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit,” Rev. Baraka says. “God intended to create our bodies to bring glory to him.”

“Partnering with local churches will also be helpful,” Rev. Baraka continues. The overseeing pastor for the region is already excited about this opportunity to transform the Sabiny culture with the gospel of Christ. He foresees girls in the future being allowed to continue their education without pressure to be cut or married early.

As the truth of Words of Hope’s programs reaches listeners in the mountains, we pray that FGM among the Sabiny will come to a complete end. If you would like to support Words of Hope’s radio ministry that is bringing hope to the Sabiny of Uganda and beyond, please see the enclosed response card. Thank you for your prayers and support.

MOST OF THE 230,000 sabiny people live in Kapchorwa District, a mountainous region in Eastern Uganda. The region has fertile soil, and many of the Sabiny people make a living raising cattle and cultivating beans, wheat, corn, and potatoes. They sell their produce when they are able, but poor roads and mountainous terrain make it difficult for them to bring their produce to the market. More than 60% of the Sabiny people live in poverty.

KAPCHORWA,
UGANDA





RAISING UP

NEW LEADERS

Godfrey Kyome has a smile that can light up a room. His laughter is contagious, and the joy of the Lord is evident in all that he does.

Godfrey serves as Words of Hope Uganda's Assistant Executive Director. He organizes radio ministry throughout the country and makes sure that each station airs quality content. He also records his own sermons for use on the programs and hosts listener conferences for people to gather and share their testimonies.



Godfrey takes the snow plow for a ride.

Currently, though, Godfrey is in West Michigan completing his Masters of Theology degree at Western Theological Seminary. Once he returns to Uganda this summer, Godfrey hopes to use his degree to help Words of Hope reach out more effectively to young people. "I am envisioning how congregations can

transform communities through teamwork and partnership," he says. "I want to see how we can equip them for leadership and discipleship, and also how I can advance the ministry of discipleship through media."

As he pursues his studies in Michigan, Godfrey is also experiencing snow for the first time! "I dislike the coldness," he says, "but the snow is beautiful." Recently Words of Hope staff member Bryan Boersma made sure that Godfrey got a full experience of Michigan snow. He bundled the Ugandan in many layers of coats and took him outside to plow! After clearing the driveway, Godfrey took part in another winter-only activity. Grinning from ear to ear, Godfrey made his first snow angel.

Godfrey says he is enjoying his time in West Michigan, where Words of Hope supporters have shown him much love and fellowship, but he is also missing his family who stayed behind in Uganda. "My wife Erinah is one of the youth leaders at my home church. She is a worship leader and an intercessor. I call her my prayer pillar," he says. The couple also have two young children, a boy and a girl: Able Torah Mugabi Kalanzi (two and a half) and Dorea Joy Kwagala (fifteen months).

Words of Hope Uganda Director Titus Baraka is very happy that Godfrey is advancing his education at Western. "Godfrey is gifted especially in evangelism," he says. "He's gifted in mobilizing young people for ministry, and he's very creative." He pauses, then adds with a smile, "I'm really proud of him."

Did You Know?

Today most people in developing countries listen to radio programs on smartphones instead of tuning in through traditional radio sets. This phenomenon seems odd at first since most developing regions do not yet have widespread Internet access. How then do people listen?



The fact is, all smartphones are manufactured with FM receivers built into them. Even the phone in your pocket probably has one!

Smartphones can receive FM radio signals without relying on Internet or data plans, meaning that Words of Hope radio programs are completely free for our international listeners! It is common to see Ugandans, and people in many other countries, listening to Words of Hope radio through headphones plugged into their smartphones.

So can you listen to radio for free on your phone as well? Chances are probably not. Most cell phone carriers in the West turn the FM receivers off in the phones that they sell, which forces customers to pay additional money to stream radio programs through them.

This is certainly frustrating, but we are thankful that our target audiences overseas are able to listen for free!

THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIES IN USE

Last year 25-volume boxed sets of theology books were distributed to Words of Hope producers, programmers, and partners throughout Uganda, thanks to the generosity of a Words of Hope donor. Each of the 50 recipients also benefitted greatly from practical, hands-on training with the resources. The smiles on staff faces as they left with their boxes of books showed us what a treasure they considered these book libraries to be.

Now it is clear that the books are being regularly utilized for radio production. Radio programmers prepare their messages with the help of the commentaries and dictionaries. If they are asked to speak about a certain topic, they reference the books first, and then add Ugandan contextualization to make their words more relevant for the listeners. We are thankful for printed media like these books that make greater theological education attainable for many in Uganda.



Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them." ~ Revelation 14:13

IN MEMORIAM

In the past year, Words of Hope was blessed to receive memorial gifts and bequests in remembrance of:

Yvonne Anman	Dorie Hielema	Charles Mastbergen	Nellie TenBrinke
Vicki Baker	Clarence Hoffman	Cornelius Mekkes	Lucille Toren
Gertrude Becker	Harold Hoffman	Arline Meyer	Ruth VanEngen
Ronald Beery	Dorothy Hostetter	Stephen Mitchell	Marjorie VanGelder
Howard, Judy, & Robert Boy	Lyle & Marge Hummel	Adrian Newhouse	Bertha VanMilligan
Helen Brownson	Arie Huyser	Angie Pattison	Herbert VanVuren
Howard Claus	William Johnston	Carl & Marlys Pennings	Elaine VanWieren
Virginia Dalenberg	Gayle Kamper	Gary Raglin	Leona VanWyk
Lucile DePenning	Geraldine Kleiman	Andrea Ravella	Doris VanderBroek
Florence DenHerder	Paul Koets	Laura Ruth Rooks	David VanderLaan
Ruth Doezema	Janet Kooi	Grace Rosenwinkel	Robert & Ann VanderMeer
Sylvia Dubbink	Richard Kreutzfeldt	Gordon Schuiling	George & Alice VanDerMolen
John Duke	Wilson Bud Kuiken	Arnold & Esther Sonneveldt	Verlyn Verbrugge
Janice Dykstra	Donald Lam	Angeline Streur	Russell Wichers
Jean Dykstra	Alma Langstraat	Marian Swager	Dale Wieghmink
Benjamin Fackler	Herman Langstraat	August & Eleanor Tellinghuisen	Delbert Wieman
Gerrit & Jane Frens	Elizabeth Leestma	Burton Tempas	Bud & Nina Zoet

These generous gifts are helping to build the church in the hard places of the world.

WORDS OF HOPE CAREGIVERS

Words of Hope knows that when individuals listen to our programs, they often have faith questions that they long to talk about. For this reason, our Ugandan team has developed the concept of Community Caregivers. These caregivers often come from local churches and are trained by Words of Hope staff in the areas of counseling and discipleship mentoring.

Phone numbers are given at the close of all Words of Hope programs. When individuals call in to the station with a faith question, their names are given to a caregiver who can follow up with them.

These caregivers also work to facilitate Words of Hope listener groups. When they judge that a number of people

from a certain area are serious about spiritual growth, they suggest the individuals register with Words of Hope to meet together regularly. Group members listen to the Words of Hope programs on their own and then gather together as a group to further discuss what they have heard.

Caregivers return often to mentor the groups they have started and to respond to questions. Eventually, when they are ready, listeners are connected to a local church body.

