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WAVELENGTH

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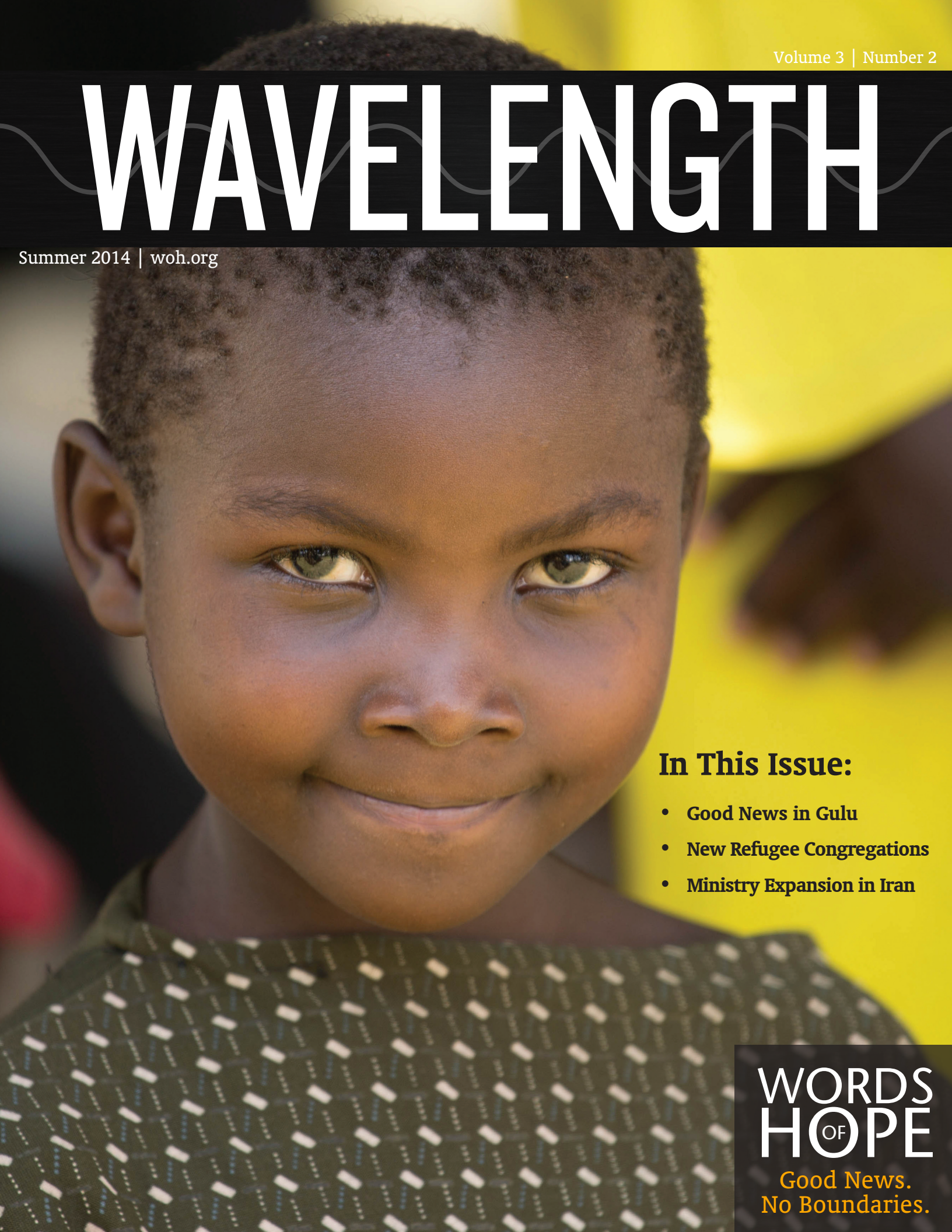

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WORDS OF HOPE

Good News.
No Boundaries.

GOOD NEWS IN GULU

How one church family is bringing the Good News to Northern Uganda through dairy farming and gospel broadcasts.

The Dairy Farmer

Wendell Van Gunst always wanted to be a dairy farmer, ever since he was a little boy. He eventually realized his dream and then some, building not just a farm but a thriving dairy along with it. When the time came for him to retire, Wendell prayed over what his future would hold. He loved farming and wanted to make a difference in people's lives.

Eventually many paths converged to lead him to Gulu in Northern Uganda, where he sensed God calling him to help the people there start a dairy farm with Partners Worldwide.

Dairy farm construction underway.

This would not be just any dairy farm. Dairy farming has been tried in Uganda—with limited success. Cows have been dispersed among families, one at a time, with instructions to give the first calf born to a neighbor so more people can own cows. But this method has never produced enough milk for any of the families to flourish or generate income.

The Dairy Farm

So Wendell put plans in place to build a research dairy farm. Not only would this farm provide income for people in Gulu, it would showcase new farming techniques to help others learn how to expand their own farms.

The church family that Wendell belongs to, New Era Reformed Church in Michigan, took enthusiastically to making this project a reality. Some church members had the opportunity to travel and help build the barn, while others supported with prayer and finances. Relationships were built with the individuals running the dairy, and ministry opportunities continued to expand.

That was where Words of Hope came in. The folks from New Era are keen to follow Jesus' example of practical aid in combination with life-saving gospel.

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WAVELENGTH is published quarterly by Words of Hope to raise awareness of the work being done around the world by our ministry partners.

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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

What does a missionary in Africa look like in the 21st century? Many of us grew up with a certain image in our minds, probably of a Westerner traveling through the bush to reach unreached tribes with the gospel, laboring for years to translate the Bible into the native language. There have been many heroic missionaries who have done this.

The Good News

In this region of Northern Uganda, the native language is Acholi. Though school children learn English, many older people only understand Acholi. Even for children, Acholi is still the heart language.

Words of Hope Uganda began airing gospel broadcasts in Acholi in 2013. These broadcasts could be produced on a limited basis from studios outside the target area, but what the people really needed was a production studio of their own.

> "What is God doing? What is he calling you to?"

In early 2014, New Era Reformed Church adopted Words of Hope's Acholi ministry as their ministry of the month. Having already formed relationships and provided practical aid for these people, they wanted to minister to them spiritually as well. Altogether, church members raised enough money to cover all broadcast costs for a year and to begin work on the new studio. Wendell and a few others from the church have even had the opportunity to visit the location where the new studio will be built.

Christ's Hope

This ministry in the Gulu district is a vital one. The region of Uganda where we are partnering together was the birthplace of Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Despite the name, the Lord actually had nothing to do with the LRA. It was an insurgent force that committed such atrocities as kidnapping

Wendell visits with kids in the Gulu community.

women and girls for sex slaves, and torturing young boys until they killed members of their own family.

"The region has been devastated in every way," says Wendell. As the young people who were kidnapped into the LRA army return to their homes, their scars remain. Wendell continues: "Imagine a young boy who now is a young man, just saying, can God ever forgive me for what I did? . . . These people are scattered everywhere, and we just have to think the gospel is the only thing that can say: 'God can forgive you.'"

Words of Hope Uganda's Acholi programs are focused on exactly that. We aim to provide hope and counsel for those suffering the spiritual and emotional aftermath of the war, as well as supply practical biblical instruction for those who are illiterate so that they can weigh the truth of Scripture against the words of false teachers.

"I just think somewhere you have to give hope," Wendell adds, "and it seems to me that's the gospel. Whatever the circumstances, at least say that God cares about you, and God can forgive you. He has a purpose for your life."

But today the picture can be quite different. Doctors and nurses still serve as career missionaries. But there are also many short-term missionaries. These can be medical workers, to be sure, but also people with other skills and experience, like the retired farmer in our story who travels regularly to northern Uganda and has built a teaching farm and dairy there.

There are also missionaries in Africa who are Africans themselves. Words of Hope's Titus Baraka is one of these. A missionary is someone who intentionally crosses cultural, racial or linguistic borders with the gospel, and Titus does that every day as he leads Words of Hope Uganda in its ministry in a dozen different tribal languages throughout the country. Missionaries today come in many forms and do many different things, but their purpose is the same as ever—to bear witness to the love of Christ in word and deed.

David Bast

An Engaged Church Family

Susan Harris, the mission team leader at New Era Reformed, has enjoyed the opportunity to get the congregation engaged in ministry in Gulu and the Acholi language. She helps the congregation get to know a different ministry each month through Facebook posts, slides before the Sunday service, and bulletin inserts.

"I just beat the drum—bam!" she pounds the table emphatically. "What is God doing? What is he calling you to? What is he calling you to sacrifice to do this? And then just keep before us as a mission team and then the greater body, do these things!"

Susan's eyes sparkle a little brighter. "I just really sense the Lord saying 'proclaim the Good News!' Look, he's brought us this relationship in Northern Uganda, a whole community, and let's proclaim the gospel with Words of Hope!"

Words of Hope likes to build relationships with churches and help them really get to know the people they are supporting. If your church would like to focus on a specific language ministry through Words of Hope, email us at woh@woh.org, and we'll introduce you to one of our exciting new ministry opportunities!

NEW REFUGEE CONGREGATIONS

As violence continues in South Sudan, refugees are seeking safety within the borders of nearby countries. Many have settled in Uganda. Words of Hope's Ugandan Ministries Director, Titus Baraka, reports that at least six new congregations have been started in and around Uganda's capital to minister to both Dinka and Nuer refugees who have fled there from South Sudan.

Being able to worship with other believers in their own language is extremely important to these refugees, because they cannot understand the Ugandan languages, and their English is quite limited.

Refugees from South Sudan can also listen to Words of Hope's shortwave radio broadcasts in their own language, even though they are away from home.

Members of a South Sudanese refugee congregation.

"WE NEED GOD MORE THAN EVER"

Northern Uganda is in the process of recovering after 20 years of war. The Acholi language broadcasts bring comfort and peace to tens of thousands of people who must readjust after being displaced.

To learn more about this ministry, watch the video at:
bit.ly/acholi_woh

NEWS BRIEFS

Ministry Expansion in Iran

For the fifteenth year in a row, a team from Words of Hope recently had the opportunity to lead a conference for believers and seekers from Iran. Each year such a conference is held outside the borders of Iran so that Iranians can worship safely together in community and receive discipleship training in person. This year's conference focused on the book of Philippians as well as on answering common questions that believers have. We are also excited to announce that we have added a new producer to our Persian ministry team. This allows us to double the length of the Words of Hope Persian broadcasts produced for Iran each week.

Spotlight in Albania

Two new Spotlight English Clubs have been started in churches in Albania. These clubs provide people with an opportunity to practice speaking English. Words of Hope produces the general interest audio programs in Specialized English, along with practice materials for groups who meet to listen to the programs and practice their English together. People of different ages and professions meet at the churches in order to engage in group discussion with English learners and mentors. "Pray that God will use this tool to give more opportunity to the local church to engage in Spirit-filled conversations with non-believers," says Words of Hope's Albanian director.

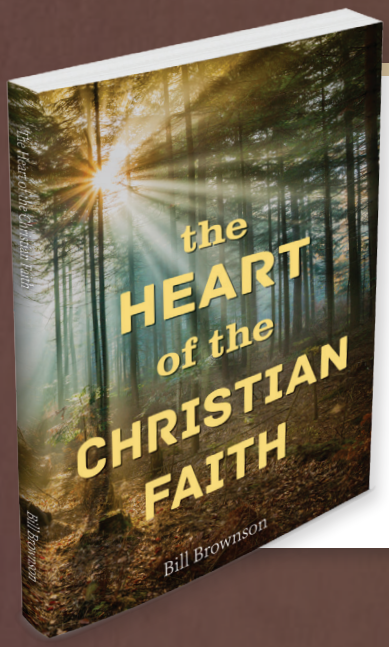
New Director of Ministry to South Asia

We are pleased to announce that Dr. A.K. Lama will be succeeding Stephen Paul as Words of Hope's and Back to God Ministries International's Director of Ministry to South Asia. The transition will become official later this summer. Stephen Paul is in the process of retiring after 36 years of faithful service with our ministry. Dr. Lama will bring extensive experience to his new role, having most recently served as the General Secretary (or Chief Executive Officer) of the Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India. The Council consists of 7000 congregations. Dr. Lama is fluent in six languages, holds a PhD from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois, and has taught at colleges and seminaries, spoken at many major conferences, and preached in different countries. Dr. Lama is married to Dr. Asangla Ao. Together they have two daughters and one son.

Conferences in Uganda

This summer, Dr. Timothy Brown from Western Theological Seminary and Rev. David Bast from Words of Hope will be traveling to Uganda to host two nationwide conferences. One conference will be focused on the importance of preaching, and all Words of Hope Uganda staff and the bishops of the dioceses will be in attendance. The other conference will center around the topic of "The Church's Mission Today." This conference will draw missions leaders from across the country. Please pray that this will be a time of encouragement and discipleship for local church leaders and Words of Hope staff, as together they work to build the church and spread the gospel in Uganda.

NEW FROM DR. BILL BROWNSON



With the thoroughness of a scholar and the tenderness of a father, Dr. Bill Brownson leads readers through the first eight chapters of the book of Romans verse by verse. A true celebration of the text, this joyful exploration of Paul's letter will nurture your faith, answer your questions, and help you apply the truths of Scripture into your daily life experiences. *The Heart of the Christian Faith* guides readers through the basic truths of Christianity, as summarized in the first chapters of Romans, and straight to the heart of Christ.

Complete with study questions, this book lends itself to in-depth Bible study. It is suitable both for personal devotions and for small group gatherings.

TO REQUEST A COPY:

Please visit bit.ly/brownson_woh or return the enclosed response card.
A donation of $10 is suggested to help Words of Hope offset printing and mailing costs for this resource.

IN MEMORIAM

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

Charlotte Beimers
John Bohlsen
Herbert Bolhouse
Kay Breed
Mary Jane Chandler
Gordon DeBruine
Wilma DeJong
Ralph DeMaster
Peter DeZeeuw
Adriana Dekker
Bill Denham
Helen Dornbos
Calvin Dykman
Benjamin Fackler
Donald Fieldhouse
Harold Goeman
Elsie Haveman
Bruce Hoffman
William Hutt
Anna Jennings
Gordon and Jeanne Kauffman
George Kloote, Jr.
Roland and Clara Krusey
Ronald McComis
Stephen Mitchell
Dorothy Mouw
Dwaine Muilenburg
Burdette Mulder
Martje Nauta
Shirley Perin
Peter and Dolores Ploegman
Diane Reck
Leon and Marian Reimink
Gordon Rens
Ann Ruiter
Clarence and Adeline Rus
Michael Sanders
Herbert Schuiling
Genevieve Spiekhout
David Sterk
August Tellinghuisen
Clarence Timmerman
Lucille Toren
Gertrude VanDeBerg
George and Alice VanDerMolen
Albert VanDyke
Elton and Beatrice VanPernis
Judith VanSchepen
Myna Veldman
Harriet Vermeer
Janeva Vermeer
Rodney Vietor

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