

1 July 2014

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

- II Timothy 1:7

## Saved From Mob Justice

*“One day the community decided to (punish) his witchcraft lies...”*

### Uganda

“God provided the resources for him to attend ISM.”

The following story is by ITMI's Muhindo Kawede, founder of International School of Missions (ISM) in Kampala, Uganda. It powerfully details the practical results of systematic Bible training among African pastors and why ISM is so needed to rightly train and prepare pastors in central Africa.

Pastor Fidele Birinzwamanso was the pastor of a small church in the country of Burundi. Humble, but faith driven, Pastor Fidele had a superficial and poor understanding of the Bible that prevented him from properly serving his congregation. Fidele began looking for a mis-

sions school so that he could become better equipped.

God provided the resources for him to attend ISM. Kawede regularly commended Pastor Fidele for his dedication and commitment for learning. Pastor Fidele completed his course work in 2012, graduating in December 2013.

Pastor Fidele put his training to work right away, as Kawede explains:

*“There is a popular song in East Africa that teaches the community that a witchdoctor and a liar deserve to be set on fire.”*

*“This happened to Mr. Buyongwe (Buy-yong-wee) John, an 80-year-old man who was a well-known witchdoctor, who lived in the Cankozo District in the Republic of Burundi.”*

*“The people of Cankozo were fed up with the witchcraft practices of Mr. Buyongwe. This led to poverty because many people paid all their money to him to solve their problems.”*

*“One day the community decided to (punish) his witchcraft lies by setting him on fire.”*

*“This happened one morning after the death of a man in the community. The people believed that Mr. Buyongwe's gods killed this man,”* Kawede says.

An angry mob, carrying machetes, spears, sticks, tires and petrol, surrounded Buyongwe's house, ready to burn him alive.



Kawede (right) very proud of Fidele



Fidele (center) with ISM students

(Readers may remember when machetes were used in Rwanda and Burundi to kill more than 800,000 people in 1994. Also, the tires and petrol were used as weapons of fear by communist terrorists in South Africa in the 1980s in their campaign to take over the country. Victims were placed on their knees with their hands tied behind their backs, then gas-filled tires were placed around their necks and set on fire, immo-

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## Zambia

News from Tim and Ashley Keller has been ominous at best. Ashley has for the last month shared on her Facebook page and through emails that Kabwe is under attack by an armed gang of thieves. The police, for whatever reason, have not been able to stop the hostage taking and the now far too frequent robbing of homes. There is a sense of terror in the town. Dear friends of the Kellers, who live in the same vicinity as the Keller ministry compound, were targeted and robbed by the thieves. Ashley asks for all our prayer support for them and the kids as Tim seeks to raise their compound block wall by two feet, and put more deterrents along the top of the wall. Tim is also hoping that he can serve the community by being instrumental in identifying and even catching the thieves.



## South Sudan

Jahim called Steve from South Sudan with a troubled tone. "My motorbike was stolen." Jahim had ridden to the internet café to send some correspondence and reports to ITMI one evening last month. When he was finished, he found that the cheap Chinese lock used to secure his motorbike had been cut off and his bike was gone. This bike is the single most valuable item that Jahim and Gisma have. It is the only means of transportation for their family. More importantly, it is the only way Jahim feeds and cares for his family - by using the motorbike to taxi people around Juba. Even though Jahim has lost his only means of transport and income, he still shares that God has never been unfaithful and that he hopes that the thieves will come to know Christ. We think God is wanting Jahim to have a new motorbike.



## India

Paul and Molly love their children, all 22 of them - 3 boys - 19 girls who were rescued from the godless culture of doing away with newborn girls if you don't want them. Between planting a new church this last year and even now outgrowing its rented facility, Paul and Molly so want to launch out into the even deeper water and trust God to help them start a school. Their 19 precious little girls must attend school by law. The only school in their village is a public school that mandates the daily ritual of praying to Hindu idols. First, Paul and Molly plead for all of us to pray God's protection around those little girls as they attend school. Secondly, they want to start a school based on Truth and Light. They are believing that God is big enough to help them build a school that will shine above all local schools in academics and in true inner growth. Have you ever wanted to build a school, we have just the place for you.



lating the victim.)

Mr. Buyongwe's predicament was very serious. He knew what the tire and gas were for. The people in the crowd had murder in their hearts. Many in the community remembered the events of the recent past and knew exactly what they were doing, possibly they had even participated in the war of 1994.

"Pastor Fidele heard from one of his church members what the community was about to do. Pastor Fidele quickly rushed to the scene and found Mr. Buyongwe surrounded by a very angry mob, yelling and shouting that he should be burned. Mr. Buyongwe was sobbing bitterly and pleading for his life to be spared by this angry mob," Kawede says.

Pastor Fidele had been transformed by the renewing of his mind (Romans 12:1-2). Through his Bible training and personal devotion to Christ, he had become more than an intellectual believer, but a true man of action. He lived up to the words of Jesus: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

"When the neighbors assumed that Mr. Buyongwe was the source of the problem in the village, the

neighbors started throwing stones at his house and some youth were also attempting forced entry into his house to capture him. Some of the property of Mr. Buyongwe was thrown out (of his house). Finally, the youth managed to drag Mr. Buyongwe outside toward the crowd. Mr. Buyongwe was wailing, asking the crowd for forgiveness while other members of the community were slapping,



Mr. Buyongwe and wife



# Is a Cigarette Worth More than a Life?

## Stabbed to Death Over a Cigarette



Cunan was stabbed to death. Why? Over a cigarette. *A cigarette.* Cunan's life was worth less than the cost of one cigarette to someone.

That someone was likely raised in a sagging, splintering wooden shack. The insecure world of Stone Hill, South Africa seeping through every crack, is a constant reminder of his vulnerability. He probably didn't know his father. His mother likely lived with a string of boyfriends in their one-room shack. His culture gave him no reason to value life more than a cigarette.

That someone - who took a life over a cigarette - likely had no safe place to call his own. Nothing in the world he could count on...except possibly that cigarette providing relief from his ever-nagging fears.

## Life in Stone Hill

Stone Hill, or *klipwuehel*, is a squatter camp near Cape Town, South Africa.

ITMI's Charl van Wyk, who lives nearby, describes life in Stone Hill this way, "Most [girls] are encouraged by their mother to have sex before marriage and give birth, thus proving their fertility to any potential husbands." He says, "Homes are filled with illegitimate children who have no idea who their father is, and if there is a man in the home, it is probably their mother's boyfriend....Many young girls will be raped before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday."

One of the fundamental issues with this settlement is that fatherhood has been obliterated from their lives. Sure, men father babies, but for most, that is the extent of their investment in their children.

## Free Falling and Grasping at Straws

Without their dads' influence in their lives, they are falling through life, grasping at any straws-or a cigarette - they think might define them.

Pediatrician Dr. Meg Meekers, author of six best-selling books and a leading authority on parenting, teens and children's health, says,

*"Here's what solid, scientific research tells us about the profound impact fathers have on their children's emotional, physical, mental and intellectual growth: ...According to a study that looked at 90,000 kids, the number-one factor operating in teens' lives that kept them away from sex, drugs and alcohol was 'parent connectedness.' In other*

*words, when dads were engaged with their sons and daughters, the teens were much more likely to stay away from high-risk behaviors. (Meeker, 2014)*

## Filling the Hole, Ending the Cycle

Without intervention, the youth of Stone Hill are highly likely to follow in the path laid out for them by their culture. The deadly cycle must end. Thankfully, there are believers nearby who are working to reverse the downward spiral. Men and women have regularly gone to the settlement and developed trusting relationships with the youth there. They've bonded over crafts, activities and sports. They've demonstrated and declared the gospel.

## Losing Ground to Weather

With the onset of (southern hemisphere) winter, these relationship-developing activities will come to a halt. They can't be done outdoors and there are no appropriate facilities to allow moving the activities indoors. These faithful mentors hate to withdraw from the settlement just as positive progress is being made. They loathe to resign the youth back to the anarchy of the Stone Hill streets.

## A Cost-Effective Solution

The proposed solution to this dilemma is to construct a U-shaped structure made of shipping containers and a roof overhead. This safe haven would allow the mentors to continue offering their presence and support to this community, as well as expand their reach through tutoring, medical clinics, Bible studies.

The structure would be the one safe place the youth can go. Where they can let down their guard, knowing they are safe. Where life is more important than cigarettes. Where they can meet Jesus and learn what He is really like. Where their identity can be solidified through knowing Him.

The Stone Hill Safe Haven will cost USD \$43,000. (\$33,000 for the structure and \$10,000 for equipment.)

Would you like to be a part of enabling godly mentors to access the youth that so desperately needs the encouragement and safety they offer? -Summer Kelley, Charl van Wyk

Meeker, Meg. (2014, June 13). Real Dads vs. "Dumb" Dads [Weblog Post]. Retrieved from <http://www.daveramsey.com/blog/meg-meeker-real-dads-vs-dumb-dads>.





pushing and kicking him. It was a very tense situation, it was life and death. When Pastor Fidele arrived at the scene, he was afraid to stand with the witch doctor and defend such a deceiver of the community. Both Pastor Fidele and Buyongwe were humiliated by the crowd," Kawede says.

But just as Jesus defended the woman caught in prostitution from an angry crowd, Pastor Fidele bravely followed the Spirit's leading and defended Mr. Buyongwe anyway.

Kawede continues:

"Pastor Fidele managed to (get through the crowd) and tried to prevent the community (from carrying) out mob justice. Pastor Fidele sheltered Mr. Buyongwe as they were trying to hit him. Fidele rebuffed the aggression and speaking directly to the frenzied mob, he told them that burning Mr. Buyongwe would not solve the problems that he had committed in the community, but Christ was the answer to ... community problems."

"Then Pastor Fidele took the opportunity to share the gospel with the crowd about Christ's salvation and immediately Mr. Buyongwe publicly ac-

cepted Jesus Christ to be his personal Savior. One by one, the angry (people) cooled down and accepted Pastor Fidele's plea (to spare Mr. Buyongwe). The Cankozo community began to understand that mob justice was not a godly way to (behave). ... People started leaving (the scene) one by one."

Two things happened as a result of this event. First, Pastor Fidele has matured into a believer similar to those great men of God mentioned in Hebrews, who "by faith ... performed acts of righteousness ... quenched the fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong..." (Hebrews 11:33-34).

Second, Mr. Buyongwe enjoyed real transformation versus a false confession merely to get out of a jam. He is forsaking all to follow Christ. (Philippians 3:8)

But the story gets better.

"Mr. Buyongwe joined Pastor Fidele's church and he brought all his witchcraft items to be burned at the church. Mr. Buyongwe was baptized ... and is being transformed gradually, all on display of his community. As a sign of his faith in Christ, Mr. Buyongwe gave his piece of land to Pastor Fidele's church in thanksgiving for knowing Christ and saving his life from the community."

"Currently, the once witchdoctor

Mr. Buyongwe is now an evangelist, sharing Christ to many in his community and also in the city of Bujumbura," Kawede says.

Such is the power of God in the lives of well-trained disciples of Jesus Christ. Through this story one can easily see the need of pastors to be trained, especially the needy pastors of Africa and the value of such pastors to their communities.

You can help by praying fiercely for the continued spiritual growth and physical protection of Pastor Fidele and new believers like Mr. Buyongwe in Burundi. African Christians are some of the most persecuted people on earth. You can also pray for discernment among the staff and partners of ITMI as they provide training, aid, comfort and resources to these valuable members of the body of Christ.

Kawede also stands before us asking for all of us to help him train pastors. Is there any better way to help reach the lost in Africa?

- Steve Lee



### For Praise ...

1. **Zambia** - Kellers have been currently protected from the civil unrest and calculated attacks of the gang of robbers.
2. **South Sudan** - Jahim incredible chance to preach God's healing ways on South Sudan national TV. (more on this next month)
3. **South Africa** - Charl van Wyk - "We are so proud of our Stone Hill sports ministry fighters. Six participants and six metals won."
4. **Poland** - Piotr Zaremba's K5N Church recently baptized 16 men and women which is the largest number in one service to date.
5. **India** - Paul and Molly - "Praise God for... the lives of the 250 youth who attended sports camp - 177 who made professions."

### For Prayer ...

1. **USA** - Mark Burritt (ITMI Finance Officer) as Vanessa (wife) is scheduled for emergency surgery for removing abnormal masses.
2. **Zambia** - Kellers' wisdom for ministry and protection for their family and property from gang of robbers.
3. **South Africa** - Charl van Wyk as he seeks to build the year round facility enabling them to reach the Stone Hill Township youth.
4. **South Sudan** - Jahim and family as they seek to provide living needs and the loss of his motorbike.
5. **USA** - Continued support of ITMI General Fund so that we can continue to "serve and empower godly nationals."

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