



COMMON GROUND

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Missions in Uganda

I cannot believe that summer is drawing to a close. My time spent in the African country of Uganda was precious and Godfilled. The five weeks that we spent on the ground have changed me not only as a person, but as a follower of Christ

We spent the first part of our trip in Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. This city is in the southern part of the country, bordering Lake Victoria. It is a dusty city. Everything quickly became covered in a thin film of fine red dirt. That was where we met the Ugandan staff and students we worked with. The first three days of orientation in Kampala sewed seeds of lifelong friendships between the two groups.

In Kampala, we spent time at two different mission sites. The majority of my time was spent at Rhema Academic Centre, a primary school that offers free tuition and fees for those students whose families are unable to pay for their children's education. While at Rhema, I spent a great deal of my time with the fifth and sixth graders. Each day that I spent with these students was unique and beautiful. I have had the pleasure and the blessing to be able to stay in touch with them through the teachers at Rhema: Jacinta and Peter. During our final weekend in Kampala, we spent Saturday at Rhema hosting a field day and church service with the children. It will always be a beautiful memory, walking in and being dog-piled by these bright-eyed and happy children.

It was a tearful farewell as we left Rhema that evening. However, the next part of our journey was to begin.

The second half of our work took place in Lukodi, a village just north of Gulu. Within this village, there is one little girl I will never forget. Her name is Sophia, and her mother is Lilly. Sophia stands out in my mind because she is the oldest of the children. She goes to primary school in Lukodi, and is a bright eyed and beautiful child full of energy. The rest of the children were preschool and infant age. It was not until the last few days of the trip that Sophia opened up to more than just chasing games and throwing a ball around. The evenings were spent in worship in the circle created by the huts. It was during these last few nights of worship that this spunky seven-year-old stayed by my side, attempting to teach me to dance, and playing drums with me. The second to last night, Sophia, as tall as she was, wanted me to pick her up. The last night she fell asleep in my arms as we sat off to the side and watched the dancing and worship with a few of the others. I will never forget the look of her face in the moonlight, peaceful and happy. This little girl who mostly just played but would never hug any of us, was asleep in my lap with her head on my chest. My heart felt as if it would burst with the love of God for this child. She stole my heart, my love. And I was able to pray over her in the moonlight that she grow up in a peaceful village, full of the love and beauty and grace of God

-Brayden Stewart



UPCOMING UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY EVENTS



Big Brothers Big Sisters UCM will be supporting a family this Christmas through Big Brothers Big Sisters so if you would like to donate a gift or food let us know so we can send you the list of things we need.

UCM Thanksgiving Dinner - Thursday, November 28th UCM will be hosting a Thanksgiving dinner for those of us away from family during this holiday. We are meeting at the UCM office at **Noon** and will go to the Moore's house where we will hangout together to play games, eat food, go for a winter walk, and eat some more. Feel free to join us and celebrate the ways God has blessed us this year

Caroling & Christmas Party Friday, December 13th we are meeting in the UCM office at 5:45PM and heading over to the pioneer retirement home to do some caroling and spread a little holiday cheer to its residents. Afterwards we will head over to Community Convenient Church for the UCM Christmas Pizza party and white elephant gift exchange. If you would like to participate in the gift exchange please bring a wrapped gift (any wrapping will do) that costs \$5 or less. Creativity and gag gifts are encouraged.

Tuesday Evening Worship is at 7PM in 103 of the Brooks Building. (Enter the front door of the building and go down one flight of stairs, the room will be on the right.) We call this worship service Vespers (meaning an evening worship service). The service consists of singing, student testimony, a short message, and a time of quiet reflection. This is a great mid week pick me up.

Thursday Bible Study every Thursday from **1-1:50 PM**. We meet Gruening Room 301. This semester we will be studying the book of John. Feel free to bring your own lunch; we will provide cookies and milk.

Call the UCM office at 474-7804 or email us at office@uafucm.org if you have any questions!