

Dear Friends

The last few months have been busy, interesting and really getting back into the swing of things after our leave. Many of you now will be dreaming of holidays and lovely long summer days. We are in the midst of the rainy season and the temperatures are quite cool. When the temperature drops below 20c we have on our sweaters and searching for extra blankets for the bed!!! We adapt back quickly to tropical temperatures!

Many of the issues are similar to when we went on leave but we feel a greater urgency to try and tackle some of them. Heather is active with a child spacing programme as part of the wider safe motherhood programme they have in the Health Department. Unlike the UK which is facing a decline in the birth rate many African countries are having an increasing number of children.

In Uganda 51% of the population is under the age of 15years (David & I have therefore lived in Africa longer than most Ugandans). Ugandan women still on average give birth to 7 – 8 children. Uganda's current population is around 31 million, if the current trend continues it is estimated by 2050 the population will be over 100million. Gulp



Many Christians continue to have very strong views and ideas about Family Planning. At a recent seminar in Kei, we had invited 30 young couple to attend a training on Family Planning at the local Parish Church. We had some very interesting comments, especially from the men. One young man was worried " what will happen to all the women's wasted eggs if she in not producing?" another young man was worried "that the women will become idle

if they are not having children" another one said " the Bible says we are to go forth and multiply like the sands of the sea"

There is much work to be done, cultural ideas and values are changed over the course of generations, not overnight after a seminar. Yet there is an urgency we do not have that time. Over the next 2 months we are having 4 Radio Talk Shows on issues around Family Planning and spacing children. Pray we will be able to present Biblically based messages and the right people will listen.

David continues with Farmer Dialogue training, the topic at the moment they are discussing is on pests and disease that destroy crops. Farmers consider anything which reduce their crop yield as a pest. Insects, birds and other animals are considered pests whenever they cause damage to the crops. They had an interesting discussion on ways to prevent monkey damage to crops. Some not very ethical ideas were versed.

We continue having many visitors, Helen has now gone back to South Sudan and is investigating possibilities of work in Rumbek. Next week we have a young woman coming for one month for an overseas placement as part of her ordination training. She will be working with Rev Pamela Alesi in Arua Town Parish. Pray that this will be a valuable experience for her as she gets insights into the African Church.

Much Love

David & Heather Sharland