

Showing God's character to the world by bringing healing to bodies and souls

Uganda/Sudan Medical Mission

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USMM Coming Events

January 12-20

Diocese of Kajo Keji
Synod, visit Juba

January 23

Gulu Medical School
Graduation

February

Return to USA to as-
sist Mom with opera-
tion



An orphan, Joy, receives her new doll (whom she named Brenda).

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Fertile Ground

Throughout Africa, subsistence farming is the focus of each day. Each family toils to produce enough food for its members. If there is any extra, it is sold to bolster the family's finances. Generally, there is little left over. The labor to produce the crops is tremendous. The work is done by hand, hoe and machete. In Sudan, the land has lain fallow during the war years, so trees and vegetation must be cleared and rocks removed. One enterprising soul began planting in an area that was recently de-mined as this process "tills" the soil! Recent droughts have caused many challenges... climate changes mean that the rains are now unpredictable. So the search for fertile land and reliable sources of water to nourish the crops is all consuming.

Africans love story-telling. Indirect cultures have perfected the art of delivering truths inside stories about everyday items and issues. Delivering truths inside a story (parables) was a principle teaching technique used by Jesus. In Africa and in the Bible, the images of farming are "fertile ground" for delivering truths. Remember the parable of the sower: "A farmer went to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown." (Luke 8:5-8). God is looking for "fertile ground" in us to plant His seeds. (The answer to the parable is given in verses 11-15: "The seed is the word of God.")

The apostle Paul understood the theological concept of "fertile ground" and his own role in the process. "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow." (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

In our ministry, we are looking for "fertile ground" in people that God has prepared for planting and watering of His seeds. These are the people that I sense God calling me to invest my life in. Pastor Chris Bwami is "fertile ground." Reverend John Chou Daau is "fertile ground." There are several medical students in Gulu who are "fertile ground" (Jennifer, Nathan, Moses to name but a few).

In our December Mission Fellowship in

Goli, we discussed this concept of "fertile ground" and the use of simple stories told to illustrate a moral truth (parables). The health workers in attendance considered how they could use health symbols (e.g. disease, pain, blood, and water) to give short parabolic messages of the gospel to their patients. We talked about looking for the God given opportunities to plant and water seeds.

I am also aware of my own need to be "fertile ground" for God's seeds. With the season of Lent around the corner, I desire to clear any rocks, thorns or weeds in my life that might impede the harvest. Ginny Owens speaks to this desire in her song, "I Wanna Be Moved." *I don't wanna be a flame / I want to be a raging fire! / Tired of my will, my way / Your calling's higher / I know it's time I stopped running from the truth / So I'll stand here still until I'm filled / I wanna be moved / I wanna be moved by You.*

May you also be "fertile ground" for God's seed and be used by Him to plant and water!



Church youth in Bor, Sudan at their demonstration garden.