



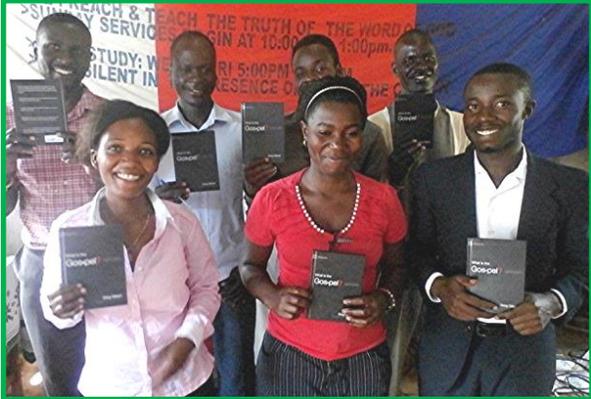
# THE CHURCH PLANTER

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## CPI's Mission to Uganda

Proclaiming the Gospel - Building Relationships - Learning about Needs

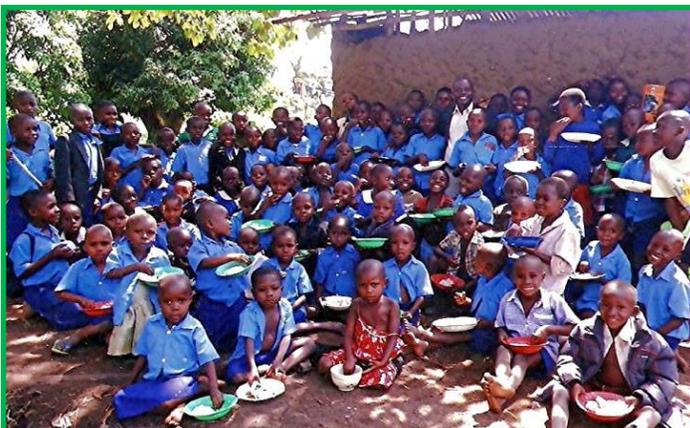
*By Steven Shepard*

Jonathan Shepard and I recently returned from an exploratory trip to Uganda (Nov. 2-17). Our purpose was to teach God's Word, build relationships, and learn about the needs. For a long time I have yearned for CPI to open new fields in which to plant the seeds of the Gospel. We began our mission in the capital city of Kampala by conducting a three-day training conference called, "The Power of the Gospel." We then traveled seven hours to a remote mountain area in western Uganda to conduct a one day version of the same conference. To supplement the teachings, we distributed about 250 books.

Everywhere we ministered, people were hungry for God's Word. Isaac Mugisa, the host pastor for the second conference wrote, *"Your teachings... have greatly impacted my life, family, church and our local communities. These teachings have renewed my mind in the truth of the Gospel.... I now see that Christ and Him alone is all that I need in every situation. He is all sufficient.... the wife of Pastor Jimmy, says it is only the true gospel that can bring real change in our life situations. She says despite their struggles at home, she will trust in the Lord whole heartedly for the rest of her life."*

Pastor Isaac, besides planting five churches in remote villages, also has started a micro-credit program and a children's school for 120 children (Pre K - 6<sup>th</sup>). The school, called "God's Mercy Children's Home," has unstable mud walls, dirt floors, and no chairs or desks of any kind – just empty dirt rooms. The teachers work for almost no pay and are motivated to give the children a better education than the government school. The children attend from 7:30 am-5:30 pm, and most days have nothing to eat during that time. Many have to come without a breakfast, only eating a dinner at night. Yet we saw children perform enthusiastically with song, dance, and poems that they had composed. I have never witnessed such an example of doing so much with so little. We were able to provide about 350 pounds of food for lunches; but that will only last a week or two. To adopt 10 of the children and feed them for an entire month would cost \$30. We would need 12 such sponsors to provide the children a lunch each day at the school.

The day after the conference we traveled on unpaved roads to visit three needy villages. When we arrived at each village we were greeted by 30-50 people who were waiting to hear the Gospel. In one village about 15 people came up wanting to give their lives to Christ. There is no church in their village or in the next village that we visited. There are many such villages without churches in western Uganda. Nevertheless, in spite of the stark poverty, the greatest need is still for the Gospel of Christ, which alone gets to the root problem of all humanity. Only the Gospel can deliver us from guilt and shame. Only the Gospel can restore us as sons and daughters that are accepted and loved by our creator God. The Gospel message, however, cannot be separated from a compassionate response to physical need. We must do both – declare the Gospel and at the same time seek to alleviate human suffering.



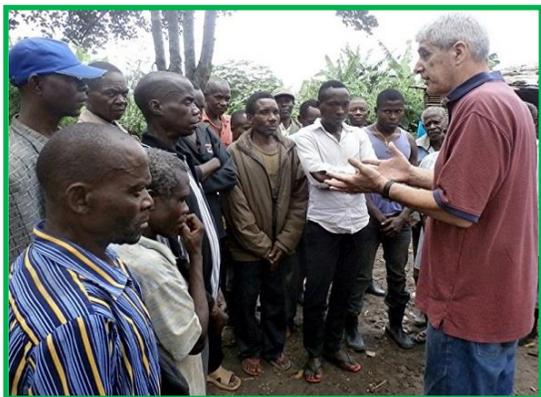
*Left: Children at God's Mercy Children's Home*



*Right: Children sitting on a dirt floor inside one of the classrooms made of mud and sticks*

# Why the Gospel Changes Lives – Devotional by Steven Shepard

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes... for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith...” Romans 1:16-17*



CPI has hosted numerous training conferences on the power of the Gospel in Peru, Mexico, and now Uganda. We are convinced that every person who understands and believes this message will be radically transformed. We have seen this over and over again. The Gospel is the central message of Scripture and is meant to impact both unbelievers and believers alike. Sadly, there remains a lot of misunderstanding even among Christians about what the Gospel is.

While there are many false gospels, there is only one true biblical Gospel. It is the good news about Christ and what He has done through His finished work. (1 Cor 15:1-8) Only this message contains the power of God to salvation. Salvation refers to being set free from the condemnation we deserve because of our sins. A lot of people don't believe in their need for salvation. They don't see themselves as morally guilty before their Creator. They don't believe that God

would ever hold them accountable. But God is both a personal and a moral Being; and He is infinitely pure and righteous. His perfect holiness will not permit Him to let evil go unpunished. (Deut 32:4; Rom 2:5-6; Nahum 1:3) Yet God loved the world and sent His only Son to die in the place of sinners. On the cross Jesus received the punishment for our sins in order to satisfy God's justice. Those who believe are forever set free from condemnation and pass “from death into life.” (Rom 5:9; Is 53:4-6; Jn 5:24)

Verse 17 explains **why** the Gospel is the power of God, “In it the **righteousness** of God is revealed.” This refers to the perfect righteousness or right standing that God requires of us to enter His presence. God freely gives us this righteousness when we believe in Jesus. It is not a righteousness based upon what we have earned, but Christ's own perfect righteousness credited to our account. (Rom 3:21-22; 4:5-8) Here are some facts about the righteousness that we are given through faith in Christ:

- It is a **perfect** righteousness. Even though our conduct still falls short of His standard, God continues to see us as innocent, blameless, and perfect in His sight. All sins – past, present, and future are already paid for. (Col 1:21-22; 2:13; Heb 10:14)
- It is a **permanent** righteousness. Once we believe and God declares us righteous, God will always see us that way. “Justification” is a declaration of an unchangeable status. *“Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”* (Rom 8:30)
- It is a **powerful** righteousness. Because Christ sets us free from guilt and fear, we now have peace with our Creator; and our response will be to love and obey Him. Having received new hearts, sin will no longer have dominion over us. (Rom 6:14) We can now progressively be conformed to His image. (Titus 2:11-12; Ez 36:26-27; John 8:31-32)

Knowing these things will fill our lives with peace, freedom, and confidence – no matter what our circumstances may be. This is why the true Gospel changes everyone that believes it and understands that through unmerited favor we have a perfect standing before a holy God.



**Right:** In Uganda CPI distributed about 650 pounds of food along with 10 water filters.



**Left:** Pastor Isaac standing with his dad in front of his dad's house

**Bottom:** Jonathan Shepard teaches in Kampala, Uganda



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