“Wow!” Reformed Baptist pastor Simon Peter Kemboi exclaimed. “I never thought I’d see you here! What are you in for?” Pastor Peter had just run into an old childhood friend - at the local prison!

When we arrived at the local prison in Bukwo in far eastern Uganda - on the border with Kenya - Peter wasn’t expecting to see anybody he knew. Although growing up in Bukwo, Pastor Peter had moved to another eastern district - Kapchorwa - in 2004.

“Well,” said Peter’s old friend. “I decided to get revenge on my ex-wife and burned her house down - with her in it!”

There we were - a mizungu (i.e., white) missionary, a Ugandan pastor and a Christian police investigator by the name of Nelson - at a small prison to preach the life-and-destiny-changing gospel to murderers, thieves, rapists, child molesters, etc. Of course, being the mizungu, I was the “main attraction!”

“Men, you are here because you have a police record,” I began. “In the same way, everyone has a divine ‘police record’ because of crimes committed against God’s holy laws.”

I pointed to one of the banners that we had displayed: “WARNING! ADULTERS, IDOLATERS, LIARS, THIEVES, UNBELIEVERS, WITCH DOCTORS - HELL AWAITS YOU! (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Rev. 21:8),” and there was total silence.

“One day,” I continued, “when you’ve paid your debt to society, you’ll be able to leave this place. But you’ll still have your debt with God to pay. How can you pay it? The bad news is you can’t. The good news is Jesus can. But in order for Jesus to pay your debt, you’ll need to repent of your crimes (i.e., sins - 1 John 3:4) and call upon Jesus to be your only Savior and Lord. Jesus has to be ‘only’ because only He could pay your debt - with his own blood. You see, his blood was pure and undefiled. He never sinned.”

When we were done, the prison warden invited us to plant a church in his prison… and he is Roman Catholic! I noticed one prisoner raise his hand to ask a question, but the warden had already dismissed us. I pointed to the prisoner and asked if he had a question. He used his hands to imitate opening a book. I asked, “You want a bible?” He nodded. Pastor Peter and Officer Nelson are looking into at least getting Gideons New Testaments into each interested prisoner’s hands.

In August I had the privilege of making one more trip to the continent of Africa - my ninth! Besides Uganda, where I’ve made five trips now, I’ve led or participated in missions projects to the Portuguese-speaking countries of Cape Verde (1998), Mozambique (2001 & 2003) and Angola (2007). On my way to and from those countries I’ve also preached the gospel at Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg, South Africa several times. Let’s just say that God has opened the door for me over the years to take the gospel to Africa in addition to Brazil, and I love it!

After experiencing the reality of Africa - and most recently Uganda - I see so many needs. One of the BIG needs I see is for trained leadership for churches. There are so many pastors who have never had the “luxury” of formally studying the Bible in a bible college and/or seminary setting! I use the word “luxury” because of the economic reality in Uganda. Most people, including pastors, survive on what they can grow or raise on their own property. While you have to admire their courage to follow such a noble calling, because of a lack of biblical/theological preparation, many leaders stray off into bad doctrine and end up - maybe unintentionally - leading their flock astray with them. It is so frustrating to see this, believe me!

So I want this newsletter to be a challenge. Quoting from my recent Facebook post,

“Two GREAT needs Ugandan Evangelicals have are trained pastors and adequate facilities to meet in. Last year I had the privilege of raising enough support to fund the bible college and/or seminary studies of four Reformed Baptist pastors (or future pastors) and to fund the purchase of land and the partial building of a church of 150 that was meeting in a local school classroom that could hold, at most, 50 people.

“It only costs $400 to cover a single student's entire expenses for one year, and $600 to cover a married student at Uganda Baptist Seminary in Jinja. This includes tuition, books, transportation, housing, food and, in the case of a married student, money for the family while the husband/father is away. There are currently 20 Reformed Baptist pastors and future pastors in need of sponsorship.

“As for church facilities, it only costs $2,000 to purchase a sizable piece of land and completely build a local church building according to local building standards. There are 3 churches in Rev. Peter Kemboi’s area in need of their own property at the moment.”

I’d like YOU to prayerfully consider joining ME in helping with this need. I say “joining me” because I am prepared to match up to $2,000 given by YOU for these needs (in
MEANWHILE, BACK IN BRAZIL...

• I arrived back in Rio in mid-August during the second week of classes at Fluminense Federal University (UFF). Currently I am meeting weekly with the students to study the book of Colossians together. We will have a biblical evangelism training seminar in the near future with the hope of uniting and mobilizing the Christians on campus for the proclamation of the gospel.

• After recently lowering the price of our house we’ve been getting a few “bites,” one of which will hopefully free us up soon to make the move to the neighboring state of Minas Gerais (MG).

• The sale of the house will also help my oldest daughter Amelia move to England to finally be able to join her husband! According to Brazilian law 50% of the house belongs to my daughters (i.e., their mother’s %).

• My youngest, Jessica, is hoping to make a go of it in the U.S., so her 25% should be a big help!

• Valéria and I have been traveling to minister in our church’s daughter congregation in Sào Lourenço, MG every 3 to 4 weeks, and it has been a blessing! The church in MG is two years old and only has thirty members, but they are mostly young people whom we see as having great leadership potential for future church plants in the region. I’ve also been enjoying preparing expository sermons in Colossians, and the church’s response has been quite encouraging.

• My street evangelism ministry continues. The other day a so-called “Christian” girl stopped to try to convince us we needed to change our approach and preach the “Good News” vs. the bad news of sin, judgment, wrath, hell, etc. (which Jesus emphasized in order to make the “Good News” sound really good to a sinner under Holy Spirit conviction). She actually got so frustrated with my colleague, who kept preaching while she complained, that she began to rant and rave, drawing a sizable crowd. A number of people jumped on her bandwagon, but I noticed a large number stopping to listen and read our banner (which, yes, included the “Good News”!) Satan intended to interrupt the biblical gospel being preached that day, but his attempts actually had the opposite effect! Praise God!

SPEAKING OF FINANCES... OUR CURRENT SITUATION

Perhaps because of summer travels, my account with PEF (from which my salary is paid and a result of your gracious financial gifts) has hit the bottom of the barrel. The ideal is to have an ongoing balance of several thousand dollars in one’s account to cover the leaner giving months (usually in the summer), but my account is currently at rock bottom. Along with my earlier Uganda challenge, would you also prayerfully consider sending an additional gift into PEF for the next 1, 2 or 3 months so that my account balance can be increased enough to handle future fluctuations and guarantee that I receive a full paycheck each month? I got a short paycheck this month. Thanks so much!

You can give to this ministry online by going to the PEF website (www.pefministry.org), clicking on the “Donate” tab, scrolling down the ministry list and clicking on “Bill Hamilton Ministry.” Thanks and may God continue to bless you until my next newsletter.

Bill & Valéria Hamilton
PEF Evangelist • www.pefministry.org

My good friend Rev. Simon Peter Kemboi, Reformed Baptist pastor and leader of the Kapchorwa Baptist Association. He is one of the students being sponsored at Uganda Baptist Seminary - Jinja.