

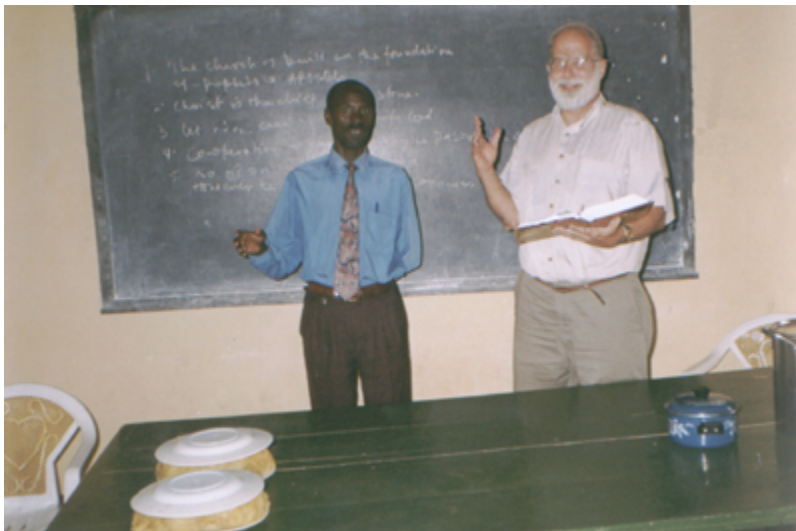
Donald T. Williams in Uganda 2004



One thing you can be sure of in Africa is surprises. You plan your ministry only because if you had no plans, you couldn't change them. I arrived in Entebbe on Friday, July 9, after a two-day ordeal of cramped seats and changing planes, only to discover that the airline had lost my luggage-including my anti-malaria and anti-diarrhea

medicine. Note to self: never go to the Third World with your meds in your checked luggage! They gave me \$100.00 for emergency replacements. I got the necessary medicine and a spare pair of underwear but did without most of the few reminders of civilization I had brought for the duration of the trip-until the luggage was finally found the day before I was to return to the States!

Fortunately, I had my notes in my briefcase, but I had to borrow a Bible. It is curious that inconveniences which would greatly annoy you at home can sometimes be relatively easily born as part of the Adventure of ministry when you are on the field. Truly God's grace is sufficient, and one of the greatest benefits of mission work is the opportunity to experience this truth in new ways.



Saturday was supposed to be a rest day to recover from jet-lag, but I had the unexpected opportunity to spend the day with a group of twenty pastors who are refugees from Sudan who had taken shelter in one of our churches here. They desire nothing more than to return home and preach the Gospel; but if they did so now they would certainly be killed by the Muslim rebels who hold their homes. I shared with them the

history of the English Refugees of the reign of Bloody Mary, who returned home to become the greatest generation of spiritual leaders that nation has known,

along with some of the material I had planned for the Leadership Retreat I was to speak at beginning on Monday. "If we would lead Christ's people in Christ's way, we must be men who have ourselves walked with Christ--on the Calvary Road," I said. And these men have so walked. They professed to be mightily encouraged.



Sunday the 11th I preached in two churches in Kampala, the capital city. Then on Monday it was time for the three-day Retreat for national leaders of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Uganda, where I was the main Bible teacher. I had been asked to speak on the topic of Christian servant leadership. "I am not going to say much about *techniques* of leadership," I said. "You will know more about what works in

your culture than I. But there is some key biblical teaching on the *attitudes* of leadership that we must absorb in any culture if we are to be Christlike leaders. The first requirement for Christian leadership is Christian character." So we contrasted the "gentile paradigm" of leadership, "lording it over" one's followers (Luke 22), with the example of Christ, who, being in the form of God, thought equality with God not something to be clutched, but emptied himself, taking on the form of a servant and washing the disciples' feet. The only One who had a right to lord it over people was the One who least used that right. "If we would lead Christ's people in Christ's way, we must be men who have ourselves walked with Christ--on the Calvary Road."



Then I was off into the countryside for conferences at Mbarara, Kybaale, and Kalasa, speaking on God's design for the Church in Ephesians 4:11-16, before beginning the long trek back to the States on Friday, July 23. Some of the best sessions are the open discussion times, where the missionary probably learns more from the questions than the national believers do from his answers. I had a very good such

session with twenty pastors in Mbarara, where the question of how to defeat false prophets was raised. "You cannot gather twenty believers here without one of them being a "prophet" who expects everyone to accept her as the Mouthpiece of God," said one elder. This "sister" had arisen to say that anyone who doubted

her word was opposing God and should therefore be put out of the church. Much nodding of heads showed that everyone was dealing with this problem.



"The next time this happens, go to 1 Corinthians. 14:29," I counseled them. "*Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment.*" "If we do not couch our 'prophecy' in such a way that this commanded judgment is invited," I continued, "then we are in disobedience to the clear command of the Lord's Apostle. I must therefore say, not, 'thus saith the Lord,' but rather, 'brothers and sisters, I

think the Lord *may* be saying this to us.' If it is so, it will be confirmed by other mature believers present. And if anyone refuses to abide by this instruction, then we must say, 'If you refuse to obey the Apostle Paul, you are a false prophet. It is not these brothers and sisters who must be put out of the church; unless you repent, it is YOU!'" An astonished gasp at my boldness was followed by thunderous amens, as if by this simple stroke I had delivered them all from the snares of Satan. And perhaps I had, simply by pointing them to the Scripture that could. For it is the Word of God that is powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. And it is our great privilege merely to be servants of the Word.

And so I want to thank all of you who gave and who prayed to make this mission possible. Please continue to pray about future opportunities. We have been invited to work in the Sudanese Refugee Camps. Pastoral training is an ongoing need. The Lord is doing a great work, and it is great Grace on His part to allow us to be part of it. This applies to you who gave or prayed no less than to me. May Christ be lifted up in all of our lives. Amen.

Donald T. Williams, PhD
University Church, Athens, Ga.
Toccoa Falls College
Church Planting International