

THE OGWALS' CALLING (back) TO UGANDA

How Bishop Ben and his family came to the United States and to R.E. Lee Memorial (Episcopal) Church.

Mid-August, 1987. The Rev David Cox, new to his position as rector (that June) received a call from the Diocese of Southwest Virginia Bishop Heath Light's office asking whether R. E. Lee Church would consider hosting a bishop from Uganda, then exiled to the United States, with his family of nine. Bishop Light, who then chaired the Standing Committee on World Mission for the Episcopal Church, wanted to help out this family, and said that he thought that R. E. Lee Church could pull it off. The parish said "YES."

In succeeding years the Ogwals served parishes in Martinsville, Virginia, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and New Rochelle, New York.



Bishop Ben delivers a sermon.

The official call, during Ben's retirement, from the Archbishop of the Church of Uganda, The Most Rev. Stanley Ntagali, to be the Interim (Care-taker) Bishop of Kitgum.

October 21, 2014. "I am very delighted to inform you that after careful consideration and much prayer and consultation, I would like to invite you and Mama Alice to Care-take the Diocese of Kitgum. After a very long time of conflict and unrest in the Diocese [the incumbent bishop] was advised by his Diocesan synod and the House of Bishops of the Province of Uganda to take an early retirement which he finally accepted."

Bishop Ben explains the spiritual core of his mission to Kitgum Diocese, Uganda.

The Diocese of Kitgum is one of those dioceses where God sent us on a mission trip in 2013. One of the instructions for the mission was as follows:

"Go and assure my people in Uganda that I love them very much."



Alice and Ben talking about faith and how they lived in America.

Message from a retired Bishop of Kitgum, the Rt. Rev Ochola II.

"Ben, this is nothing less than a divine intervention into the situation of long confusion in the Diocese of Kitgum. No doubt your physical presence in the Diocese of Kitgum will definitely bring a radical change in the attitudes and mind-sets of so many people who actually went astray. I personally believe that every individual person in the Diocese of Kitgum is anxiously looking forward to your coming, as a long awaited light coming from the tunnel to lighten the path of people who were in darkness for so long a time."



Bishop Ben and Alice



Blessing the children



Alice speaking



Contemplations



Mothers Union in Kitgum - praying



Processional



Congregation seated



. Response to Altar Call to repentance and forgiveness in Kitgum



Praying for salvation



Preparing food in front of kitchen



Dances in celebration of the response



Alice praying for woman's healing



Family



Negotiating a dowry



The offeratory at a Sudanese-Dinka Service



Cows and goats for a traditional marriage



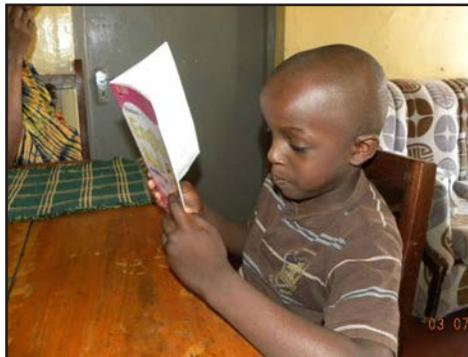
Visiting a friend in Kitgum



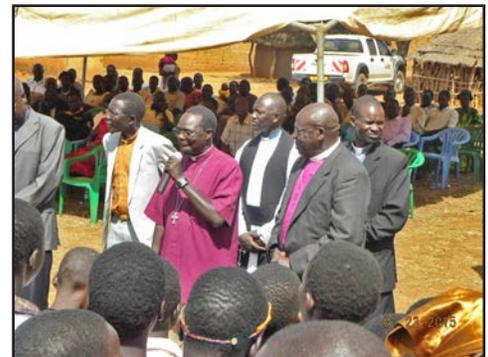
Youth choir at a Sudanese-Dinka Worship Service



Congregations reach a thousand



A child concentrating in his reading



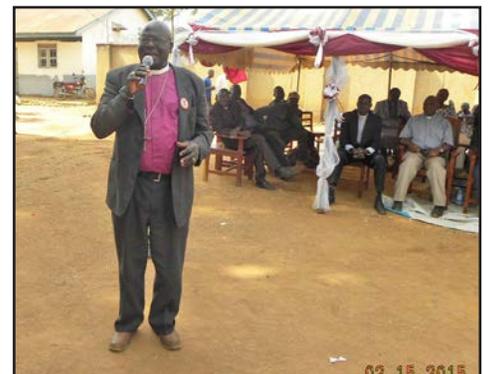
Bishops at funeral rites



Family/friends near Kitgum



Alice and family



Bishop Ben praying



Crest of Kitgum, Uganda



*2003 Toyota Prado refurbished for African roads.
It was purchased with donated funds.*

Bishop Ben states what he sees as the “calling” and explains his challenge.

The Diocese of Kitgum is one of the largest dioceses in the Province of the Church of Uganda. It is estimated to be 6,339 square miles with a population of about 1.2 million people. It takes maybe 5-7 hours to travel from one end of the Diocese to the other. In this critical situation, we are not going to be an Office Desk Bishop because we have to be out and about with the people where they are. There will be lots of travelling around the Diocese. As a former Refugee/Crisis Secretary for the Church of Uganda, ministering to refugees from Southern Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Southern Africa and Ethiopia, I know the importance of being present with the people and doing something for their needs. A vehicle is very much needed for us to take care of them as well. Sometimes I will run into situations where someone is very sick, or a woman is in labor or someone is about to die with malaria, and I will have no alternative but to act and save a life by transporting people to the hospital or some medical center. On many occasions the Bishop ends up being the Good Samaritan in every sense of the word including paying the medical expenses.

Bishop Ben reflects on the future of this Calling.

Another question which one might ask concerns the disposition of the vehicle, that was purchased with donated funds, after we finish being the Care-taker (Interim) Bishop of Kitgum and what we will do. The answer is that we will keep the vehicle as we see ourselves continuing in a similar ministry of Forgiveness, Peace, Healing and Reconciliation in the other three dioceses in Northern Uganda.

A prayer and expression of hope offered by Bishop Ben as the Calling to Uganda effort begins.

Pray for healing of all sorts. Pray that people will give of themselves for the work and care for one another. We are excited that the Lord is entrusting us with the welfare and spiritual care of these people, even though only as a Care-taker Bishop. You and we know that WITH GOD, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.

A concluding statement from Bishop Ben evidences his and Alice’s faith and optimism.

We are not afraid because we know that the God who called us will also protect His anointed messengers. We are going in His Name and will proclaim in words and deeds the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people. The Word tells us in 2 Timothy (NKJV), “God did not give us a spirit of fear, but power, and love and a sound mind.

For up-dates please go to: www.releechurch.org/bishopogwal.html