

## Uganda 2008 Mission Trip

By Todd Bentley

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Desk of Todd Bentley

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### INTRODUCTION

In September 2008, Fresh Fire Ministries headed to Africa with a team of over 100 people from nations across the earth. Close to 1500 people have now joined us in taking the radical, saving grace of Jesus Christ to the world which has resulted in seeing 1 Million people make decisions for Christ!

Many of us felt a strong sense of destiny heading into this trip. By the time we returned home that everyone had stories of how our time together in Africa changed our lives forever.

The Fresh Fire team met at several airports on our way to Uganda. As we spent time getting to know each other and each others stories, testimonies and things God had been speaking to us individually we began to realize a strong sense of destiny on this team. By the time we arrived in Africa there was already an exciting synergy between us.

As team leaders my wife and I knew right away this was going to be a much different trip than we've ever been apart of. After weeks of email and phone communication we were finally able to introduce ourselves to our team mates. We were blessed to meet such an encouraging, mature group of believers. This trip was the first Fresh Fire mission trip since the Lakeland Outpouring and almost everyone on the team had been there, some many times. We knew God had brought us together to give away everything He imparted to us and that we were to remember the miraculous testimonies of thousands as we went in His name. Those testimonies of Jesus are forever a prophetic declaration of His goodness towards all who seek Him.

### GULU CRUSADES

After arriving in Entebbe, Uganda we awoke afresh the next morning. We spent time meeting each other over breakfast then gathered for the first time as a team for instructions, schedule and prayer. Right from the start it was a powerful time praying and prophesying over each other and coming into unity. Straight away we traveled 10 hours north of Kampala to the city of Gulu. Travel in Uganda is long and challenging but we were to find it was abundantly worth it. Lives and hearts were going to be transformed forever and it wasn't going to come easy. Perseverance, prayer and joy sustained us as we reached for the fullness of what we were sent to this nation to see happen- signs, wonders and miracles in the hearts, minds and bodies of individuals and breakthrough in this land destined for revival.

Each night for five days we held open air meetings where thousands came to worship, hear the gospel preached and receive much needed miracles. Long time friend and associate evangelist Jim Drown joined Fresh Fire Ministries preaching and proclaiming the good news of Jesus to 20,000 people gathered by the last evening. After the outreaches during the day our team gathered for prayer and impartation before heading to the crusade grounds. Full of energy and excitement about the powerful miracles and salvation that took place during the day each of us were overwhelmed with His goodness and could hardly fathom what God would do that evening.

Every evening all kinds of powerful miracles took place, blind eyes opened, deaf began to hear, cripples walked, the demonized were set free, cancerous tumors disappeared and most wonderful of all approximately 5000 people made public decisions to give their lives to Jesus receiving the message of salvation One after another after another... people lined up on each side of the stage to testify. Jim preached and shared words of knowledge as well as inviting people to the stage for prayer for certain situations based on what the Lord had shown him Each night Jim invited people to receive Jesus into their lives. The response was so genuine and passionate as people of all ages ran towards the stage crying out to Jesus. Often after they prayed corporately Jim invited them to ask to receive the Holy Spirit. As the people cried out spontaneous deliverance would break out by the hundreds in the crowd as the Holy Spirit moved over the people setting captives free.

Our team is fully involved during the entire meeting. From their stage seating behind the platform they can see what is happening and are engaged in intercession the entire time. There is no time during a Fresh Fire mission trip where the team is only spectators. At any moment a situation can present itself where team members need to respond with prayer, a word of knowledge, street preaching or deliverance. It is in this kind of environment under a powerful healing anointing where people grow dramatically. From morning until night the expectation is miracles. We are continuously in situations where we need God to move, there is no other option, there is no plan B. We are utterly dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit.

After people receive salvation the team heads into the audience, standing at the front of the stage, immersed in the action potentially praying for a hundred people in an evening. The first night many find it an intimidating experience, some are a little discouraged if they don't see as much breakthrough as they hoped for. But we always have seasoned team members and leaders who encourage each other and by the second or third evening everyone is seeing incredible miracles while they pray. It is a personal faith breakthrough that comes only one way: from doing it. No amount of books or courses can replace doing it. Team members always testify of seeing just a small, seemingly insignificant answer to prayer such as someone they pray for says the pain left their side. As their faith grows and they give thanks and glory to God they see a more and more. The transformation of individual team members from the beginning to end of the trip is absolutely incredible. Everyone has a story of how they grew in faith, boldness, love and compassion.

Sometimes people are healed instantly, sometimes in a few minutes or the next day. But we pray and believe and always see hundreds and hundreds of miracles. Always. We document as much as possible but ultimately it is recorded in heaven. Salvation and healing is always His desire and He wants to use you to do it. The heartbreak and victory of the experience cannot be replaced or refuted by any argument. When crippling pain leaves a persons body for the first time in longer than they can remember they leave the meetings very happy! When a giant growth shrinks- they praise God and know Jesus is alive! They know they are loved by Jesus! The fact for most that there is no relief from pain, sickness and disease without the power of Jesus meeting their need is a harsh, glaring reality in these nations. There is no other way, no other path, no other options. Without our prayers many would have died prematurely and remained crippled and sick. We always expect them to be healed, to be saved and to encounter the unending love of Jesus.

### GULU OUTREACHES

In the morning and afternoon we break into smaller teams and are sent out by leaders from our pastoral network in the area. We go to smaller villages in the countryside, prisons, hospitals, specialty clinics, refugee camps, orphanages, inner streets and local Bible schools. Anywhere there is a need. We spend the day meeting and loving the people, often we are invited into their homes or businesses where they ask us to pray for them and their families. All number of spontaneous opportunities arise.

During this trip Fresh Fire Ministries donated \$50,000 USD to the pastors in the area that was used solely for food distribution to areas where it was needed most. In the months before we arrived beans, rice, corn and maize were packaged and stored for when the team arrived in Africa. During our days in the Gulu area we came along side the pastors, leaders and dozens of volunteers to distribute thousands of sacks of food. It was such a rewarding time to bless the homes of people in such a tangible way.

We often had the village or camps create long lines where we handed sacks of food to each person as they moved through. And sometimes we carried it into the huts of villagers who couldn't make it to the place of distribution. Their faces would beam with joy and tears as we gave the gift we brought.

One afternoon we discovered there was a hospital just around the corner from our Gulu hotel so we spontaneously went to visit the people there. In many African hospitals the families of the patients are responsible to bring their own food, clothing, blankets, pillows and food. Some either cannot afford these items or do not have family to bring it to them. With permission from the hospital management we went two by two with our interpreters to each patient. We stood at their bedside, introduced ourselves, talked with them and asked if we could pray for them. We would find out what was wrong and pray for their healing, peace and full, quick recovery.

I remember once on a Fresh Fire mission trip to India there was a young man who had arrived in the hospital we were ministering in the evening before with broken ribs from a car accident. While we introduced ourselves he winced in pain almost completely unable to move. Within minutes of praying he reluctantly began to move and to his astonishment he was free of pain! He stood up and walked back and forth. Seeing this the doctors rushed over, urging him to lay down. Soon they understood what happened and were in awe. The patient and doctors joined with us in prayer and gave their lives to Jesus on the spot! With a big smile on his face the patient collected his belongings and headed for the door to leave. He was so excited! We always go with great expectation for what God is going to do in these places where people are hurting the most. Each team member had numerous stories of how our day spent in the hospital impacted them.

We told the others about our day when we returned to the hotel and a few of the team began to dream up a way to bless our new friends. Some members of the team took up an offering for the people in the hospital so we could buy them some food and other needs. Everyone pitched in a little and then we took a cab to a near by store. We bought food, blankets soap and other needs and returned the next day to the hospital. One man I spent the most time with lay in his bed in old, ripped clothes soiled with grease and dirt. It was all he had to keep warm each night. He asked earnestly for a blanket. Just thinking of him spending all those weeks in the hospital, each night laying in the dark cold. The next day the look on his face told me he could hardly believe his eyes when he saw me walking towards him with a big, soft, new blanket. A few dollars that meant very little to me, became a blanket that meant everything to him.

Every day our local pastoral leadership team lead us to new opportunities to bless hurting people. We visited over a dozen locations and prayed with and befriended thousands of people. Between our official outreaches some of the team would just go walk down the street to see who Jesus would bring into their path. Opportunities to love are everywhere.

### TEAM PRAYER

We ministered to the Lord from early in morning to late at night each day. During our days we went to the dirt streets of impoverished villages- loving those He brought to us, in hospitals where there was little hope. His light shone, late at night during the crusade meetings amidst tens of thousands, people were set free from a life of demonic bondage and oppression. Sometimes we simply went hut to hut just to see where Jesus would lead us. Who did He want to touch today and how would He use me?

We prepared for our days by giving them over the Lord each morning in prayer and worship. God met us in such powerful ways during those mornings, His presence among us was powerful. Often we were tired from long days of ministry but God filled and refreshed us each day. We sang worship to the Lord, prophesied into the nation and over each other and spent time giving testimonies. We treasured those times together, regrouping and coming into unity for the day. So many of the team members received miracles in their bodies and vision for life during those prayer times.

### PREACHING IN LOCAL CHURCHES

Team members also have the opportunity to preach in local African churches. Dozens and sometimes a hundred pastors eagerly request one of our team members to visit their church. We send them out in two's and three's to spread the love and encouragement of Jesus and they always come back soaring and thankful from such a rich experience. The people in these congregations are so hungry to hear the good news of the kingdom preached! Some of the churches are large with hundreds of members and others are small groups meeting in huts on the outskirts of a village. It's such an exciting event for them to welcome one of our team from another continent into their church family. In most cases team members are invited to the homes of the pastors where they spend time having an African lunch and getting to know the pastors family.

When we got to the end of matching up pairs of team members up with pastors to take them to preach in their churches we realized a few of our team were left over and didn't end up being sent to a church. There was one African leader named Victor who remained with us who dreamed of pastoring a church but he did not have one to take our guests to. They were all really looking forward to the opportunity so they were a little down about not being able to go. Then one of them had an idea to simply go up and down the streets near our hotel to find people who needed Jesus! Over a dozen people came to Jesus that afternoon as this few saw the opportunity that was literally right in front of them! Victor went with them on this spontaneous outreach and committed to staying in touch with the new disciples. In the weeks and months to come reports continued to reach us that a new church had been planted from that outreach

When Mandy, Sue and Michelle arrived at one of these churches in Gulu on Sunday morning beautiful African worship, dancing and celebration was already happening all around her. They hadn't even been introduced yet but undone by the presence of God, during worship they went through the crowd laying hands on people. The Holy Spirit began to move across the congregation and most were weeping and some fell when the power of God came upon them. God was moving in the people's hearts. During the entire service the people remained engaged with the Holy Spirit, as He ministered to the people like only He can. Isn't it beautiful when all that people remember of a meeting is the sweetness of God's presence? People testified of receiving inner healing as God spoke into the sadness and brokenness in individual hearts.

A blind elderly lady was brought to Mandy, Sue and Michelle. They prayed simply, just loving her and speaking life over her. Nothing appeared to happen but through tears they encountered the heart of the Father and persisted in prayer. When Mandy and the team arrived some of the local church members had given them fruit as a gift. It was all they had and it was valuable to them. While Mandy cried out to God she said, "God, the fruit I want is the healing of this ladies blind eyes!" She then heard the Lord instruct her to put her own tears on the ladies eye lids. She obeyed and continued to pray her simple words as she wept. After a short time she noticed the ladies eyes beginning to clear. Just moments before her eyes were frosted white and milky.

As her faith increased she began to decree healing and told the lady to expect a miracle! Soon the lady began to testify she was beginning to see light! She told the people she had been blind for 4-6 years because of cataracts. It was obvious this sweet older lady had, had a hard life. For so many in Uganda life is full of trials few of us have known. Nothing comes easy. Many spend their days facing of extreme adversity raising their children alone and doing and whatever they can to get food and water for the day. Good news is hard to come by. Sadness and despair is apart of daily life.

This glimmer of light created such an excitement in her heart, now this lady was lighting up the room with the beaming smile on her face! She took Mandy by the hand and began to lead her to where the light was strongest. The hunched lady slowly, steadily made her way to the nearest doorway. They stood in front of the opening to the outside world that she hadn't seen in so many years. The congregation watched as they shouted giving thanks to God! While she stood gazing at the new sight, light poured into her eyes. A child ran past the door, surprised at the sudden movement the "blind" lady reacted stepping back and then pointed at the child! Her finger followed as the child skipped past her! A man began holding up fingers and again and again she counted them correctly. The accuracy of her sight continued to improve.

The church exploded with thanksgiving and praise! God gave Mandy a word that the Lord was going to restore more than this ladies natural sight. She spoke to her of the Lord's love for her and that her life had purpose and meaning. Mandy felt this word from God contained new life and was lifting this lady from the grave. Through the interpreter the lady testified God was healing her broken heart. She said that because she was blind she felt her life was useless. She spent her days alone in the dark and confessed she had wanted to die but now she had hope. The lady immediately stepped outside and began to greet the children that were playing near the door of the church. The children recognized this lady and began to gather to hear what had happened. Already this old lady was having a life giving impact on these children as she told the story of Jesus did for her. All this took place during worship in the first moments of the service. The songs of praise to the Lord continued, loud and strong, giving Him glory!

### SAFARI

On Fresh Fire mission trips we always like to take a day or two at the end of the trip to rest, get to know each other better and enjoy the beauty of the country we are visiting. It is often difficult to unwind from being so immersed in fast paced day and night ministry. But over the years we've found it to be a very positive part of our trips. It gives us down time to reflect and meditate on what God has done through us and in us. The team finds closure and deeper friendship in sharing with each the stories, testimonies, disappointments and breakthroughs. We pray for each other, free ourselves of any spiritual oppression and friendships that may have tried to come upon us, we prophesy life over each other and gel together has friends in worship focused on the Giver of Life.

During this trip in Uganda we went to Queen Elizabeth Park and stayed at a beautiful safari lodge. The team enjoyed telling stories of what God has done in their lives and during the trip. It is a memorable time where friendships are deepened. Early in the morning the team excitedly gathers to head out with professional guides to search for lions, leopards, elephants, warthogs and other African animals! Tons of fun and loads of great pictures! After sunrise we enjoyed an incredible breakfast from the mountain top resort that overlooks the African plains and two lakes giving 180° views for hundreds of miles. Beautiful Africa! During the day we enjoyed horse boat rides on the lake allowing us to safely get close to the hippos and crocodiles. Late afternoon we went out for another safari to watch and photograph the sunset as well to see what animals we could find. The expansive scenery is such a statement of Gods glory and beauty. Watching a heard of elephants at sunset in Africa with good friends is something I'm sure none of the team will ever forget.

### FUTURE TRIPS

Millions of lives in every corner of the earth have been impacted by Todd Bentley and Fresh Fire mission teams. It is our responsibility, joy and passion to freely give what God has given us by proclaiming and demonstrating the good news of Jesus Christ.

We have had more than 1500 people join Fresh Fire mission teams in taking the saving grace of Jesus to the nations. It is our mission to serve the people of these nations together, to build each other up in Christ and receive an impartation in the anointing. The testimonies are numerous of people who have returned home with renewed fire, increased boldness and a quickened passion for Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. Prayerfully consider joining us in the nations on the Kingdom adventure of a lifetime!

For more information about upcoming trips please contact [missions@freshfireusa.com](mailto:missions@freshfireusa.com).

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