

# FAR REACHING INTO AFRICA



## Uganda, Kenya, & Sudan

story and photos by Ed Compean

*A child of the streets in a burning trash pile in Kampala, Uganda. Donny Gunter with*

*Far Reaching Ministries is reaching out to the glue-sniffing street kids.*





Wes Bentley, director of Far Reaching Ministries, playing with an HIV positive baby at the Amani orphanage near Nairobi, Kenya.

## Uganda

A Ugandan police officer tries to stop Wes Bentley as he hands out bread to a group of young people who are in a drug-induced stupor. They live in a partially burning trash heap near the center of Kampala. He warns Wes that it is not safe for Americans to be in the area, fearing that the drug-crazed youth might overwhelm the missionaries. Politely declining the officer, Wes, director of Far Reaching Ministries (FRM), and a few Americans continue giving out bread and sharing the Gospel. Even through the stench of the rotting trash in the hot African night, the telltale whiffs of glue are present on the children. They take the bread, but cannot communicate.

“They are always here. They band together for protection,” says Wes as he begins to minister to younger children huddled under a plastic tarp.

“Sometimes we find babies that are just left on the street,” says Faith Wanjeru of Amani

orphanage. Faith and the staff nurture these young ones with love and compassion. Dozens of the babies have positively tested for HIV and will shortly have AIDS. At one point last year, Amani was averaging one infant death a day.

Besides the HIV positive infants, the orphanage has more than 80 other preschool age children. Faith says, “All the children are gifts from God for us to care for and raise as He would.” Similarly, a second orphanage, Sons of King Jesus, has about 50 children.

In areas that are torn by war, poverty, AIDS, and a lack of Christian witness, FRM is active on several fronts. Amani is one of several works the ministry is involved with in Africa. It is part of director Wes Bentley’s vision of Christ for the continent.

Far Reaching Ministries has sent missionaries from several Calvary Chapels to the orphanages. FRM has been instrumental in establishing Calvary Chapel of Nairobi. In Uganda, they partner with Saving Grace Calvary Chapel to operate a refugee village for those fleeing war-torn Sudan. They are



A young girl lifts her hands during worship at Sons of King Jesus orphanage.



Children sleeping on the streets of Kampala.



Children receiving food at Sons of King Jesus orphanage outside of Nairobi.



Faith Wanjeru, director of Amani orphanage in Kenya, holds an HIV positive baby.

also establishing a Calvary Chapel in Kampala, Uganda. In Sudan, FRM has been given favor with the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA). They train chaplains to minister to the soldiers as they fight for freedom from the oppressive Islamic government of Sudan.

Pastor Donny Gunter and his family came from Montana to plant a Calvary Chapel in Kampala. They are assisting street children as well as adults who are in need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The church has nearly 200 in attendance. The youth held an outreach where 900 people came forward to pray and receive Jesus as Savior. According to Donny, 300 of the people that came forward were Muslims.

In Northern Uganda, Far Reaching Ministries works with Calvary Chapel Saving Grace to minister in the Kiryandongo Refugee Camp. According to Pastor Rob Douglass, recent violence in the camp has caused many relief agencies to consider leaving because of the danger. “There have been riots and threats among the refugees, including some people being chopped up with machetes,” says Pastor Rob.

**Last year, Amani was averaging one infant death a day.**

According to Wes, matters will be worse in 2003 as thousands more will flee to the camp because of the escalating war. A terrorist group has slaughtered many innocent people. In spite of the tragedies, Wes focuses on hope. “God has allowed this to happen, so we must respond to this call.”



## Kenya

Pastor Evanson Gitu stands on a knoll observing a team from CC St. Petersburg labor as they construct Calvary Chapel Nairobi. The Florida church had rotating construction teams. The following Sunday will be the first service in the new church, even if the roof is not complete.

“They work so hard; just last week there was only a slab of concrete,” said Pastor Evanson, as Kenyans and Americans partnered in building.

Situated near a game preserve, CC Nairobi would seem to be preparing for a tranquil ministry, but throughout the city, minarets of mosques pierce the sky. Morning prayers are broadcast from speakers. It is difficult to escape the cultural influence of Islam on this country, especially considering the majority influence that Christians once had.

As Islamic terrorism has swept through Africa, Kenya’s capital has experienced violence. Al-Queda cells allegedly operate nearby, claiming responsibility for the bombing at the American embassies in Nairobi and Tanzania in 1998 that killed more than 500 people. Despite persecution, there is a hunger for Christ.

“The people just want to hear the Word of God. They are like sheep that come to be fed,” the pastor added as he looked over the construction site. A radio station has begun broadcasting three hours of Pastor Chuck Smith daily. The message is so well received that doors are being opened for a satellite feed from the *Word for Today* for the whole continent of Africa.

“People here say that Christianity in Africa is 100 miles wide and ½ inch deep,” said Wes, alluding to the lack of understanding of the Gospel. “Pastor Chuck’s verse by verse Bible teaching has had a tremendous impact on the Christians here.”

## Sudan

It was an important day. Prayers were offered to God that the cloud cover would keep the government of Sudan from bombing the compound.

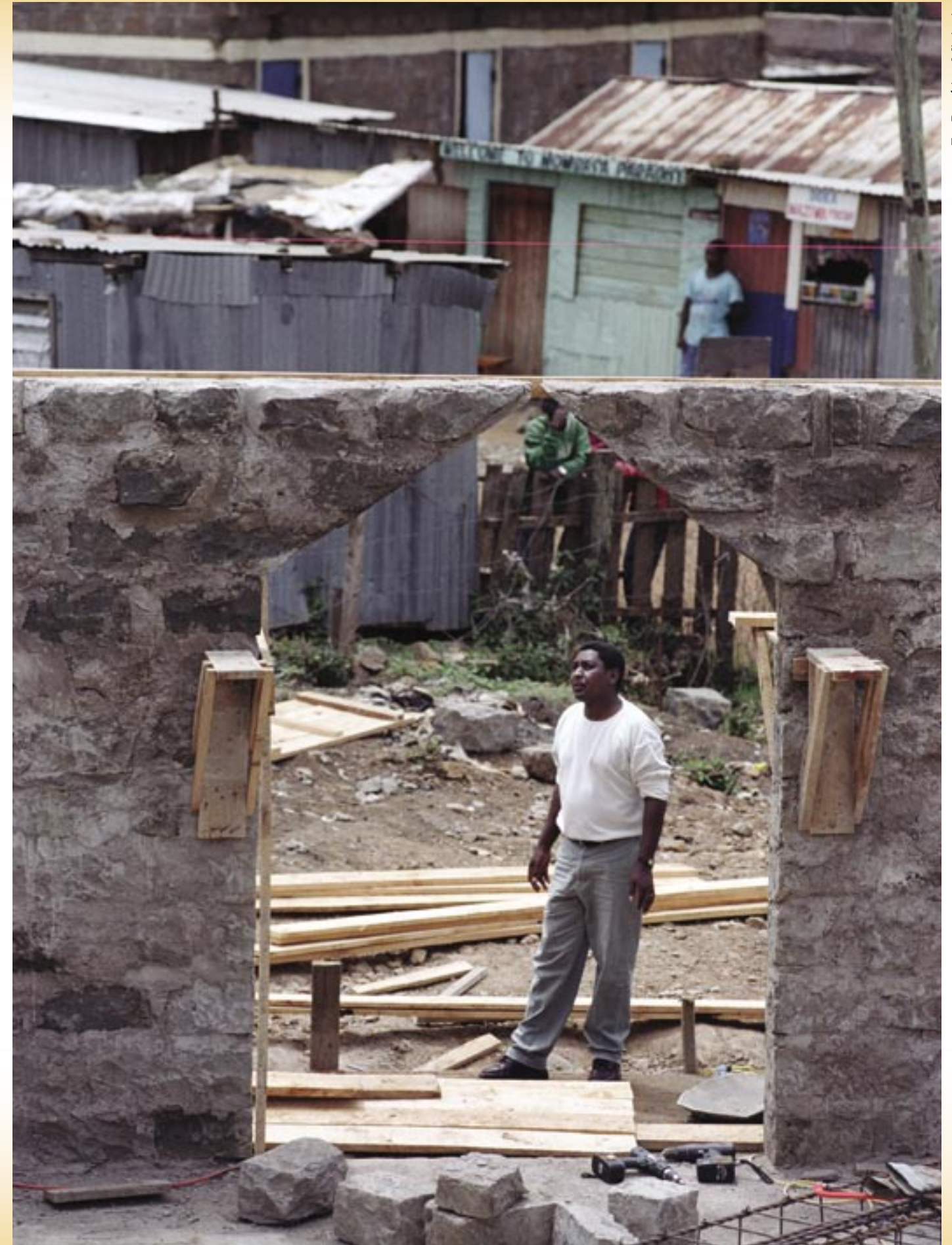
Fifty graduates of FRM chaplain training school gathered in Nimule, Sudan. On their knees in prayer, they were commissioned into the SPLA as lieutenant chaplains. The school, the graduation ceremony, and the celebration were all in direct violation of Sudan’s Islamic laws.



*Joe Esposito, top, and Tony Novak, CC St. Petersburg, work on the roof of Calvary Chapel Nairobi.*



*Tony Novak, CC St. Petersburg, sets saplings for the forms to pour concrete.*



*Pastor Evanson Gitu, CC Nairobi, observes workers building the church.*

**“Christianity in Africa is 100 miles wide and 1/2 inch deep.”**

—Wes Bentley





Eastern Africa: Sudan, Uganda, Kenya



Graduating class of SPLA chaplains.



SPLA soldier rejoices in a time of praise at FRM training camp.



Graduating chaplains receiving their final instructions the morning before being ordained.

Since 1984, Sudan has been in civil war as a result of the regime trying to force strict Islamic rule on its Christian and animist populations. Government of Sudan forces have routinely bombed civilian villages, hospitals, and schools. They've hosted terrorists training camps and have been a leading persecutor of Christians. FRM graduated its fourth class of chaplains. They will minister in a country where 2.5 million people have been killed and 4.5 million people have been displaced by the war.

As Wes addresses the chaplains, he reminds them of Paul's words, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

As part of the favor God has given FRM, Wes has been able to share the Gospel with several key figures in the SPLA. God recently opened the doors for a meeting with a commander who became a believer. He is allowing FRM to become the main chaplain-training ministry in the army. With the new relationship, trained chaplains will now be serving 735,000 SPLA troops.

To be trained as a chaplain, FRM uses Calvary Chapel pastors and others who travel to Nimule to stay at the Bible compound and teach verse by verse through the Bible. Upon graduation, the chaplains are then commissioned and sent to the war's front to minister.

Getting up from their prayer, the newly commissioned chaplains are greeted by tribal songs and shouts of encouragement. A cow has been butchered for the feast, and soon there will be praise music as only Africans can sing. The afternoon will be spent in celebration, but two days later, they will head to the war's front, some never to return.



Graduating chaplains being ordained at the Far Reaching Ministries compound in Nimule, Sudan.

### Contact Info:

www.farreachingministries.org  
 40335 Winchester Road  
 Suite E  
 Temecula, CA 92591  
 phone: 909-677-4474  
 fax: 909-677-4405