



SAMSON'S FAMILY HOME

Some time back, Marty teasingly referred to me as "Dial – a – Vision". I took no offense-in fact I took pleasure in my nickname.

I have long since embraced the missions dream which can be defined as a cherished aspiration...what I would *like* things to be. But over time I have discovered the Lord's perspective on vision is more realistic...the way things *are* in the timeframe He has chosen. (Matt 24:14) And it's always better!

ONGUTOI DREAM

When Marty and I first met the people of Ongutoi (2007), many who had just returned from secure but restricted life in displacement camps where they avoided the LRA insurgency at that time, we met many who had immediate need for health care support; we met nervous pregnant mothers (there was a 10% maternal death rate among birthing women at that time) others visibly sick and depressed; everyone we met simply had no income.

Our vision was for their pressing needs of survival; birthing support, medicines and renovation of the solitary makeshift clinic building with support for a nurse. Our aspiration was to keep them alive and healthy so one day they might hear about Jesus! That's the way we thought this could happen.

HIS DREAM

However, that first step into Ongutoi seemed to open the gates to a 12-year flow of miracles resulting in over 20 new buildings, all focused on providing various levels of health care. We had never intended this but every time we told the village population to pray-they did. Soon afterwards, we started to receive support from unexpected places and when it all stopped flowing, we had built an entire 60-bed health centre with residential medical housing.

This new facility was really a "miracle in the bush" as our architect Ken once declared. It was designed to be culturally respectable, self-sustainable with solar power, including rainwater collection with underground secure storage punctuated by modern toilet facilities with flush toilets...in the "bush".

Since the construction process took 12 years and since we had no money, we explained that to the village every time we met. And every time we would say the same thing in public meetings "If you pray and if God answers your prayers, and He puts something in our hands for you, we will build. I know they prayed because the miraculous flow just kept coming.

Over time we came to realize the difference between our dream (aspiration) and His vision. At the end of that construction period, we marvelled at the physical miracle before our eyes. But as we spoke with people, requesting physical show of hands in large gatherings, asking to know who had been praying, we realized many villagers, who had been raised in traditional religion like Catholicism and Church of Uganda (i.e. United) were now very much alive in their faith...still practising their traditional faith but now praying in earnest...watching God answer prayers will do that! Prayer brings revival!

Our dreams can result in good things, but His vision includes so much more!

WIDER VIEW

Seeing the local population now growing with returnees and even new births at the health centre (one every day) bringing community expansion, we could also see the dramatic lack of income possibilities here meant this community

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION FOR ANSWERED PRAYER



will likely remain in subsistence farming; that meant more was needed to ensure health care for expanding population. And with that, another chapter in dream vs vision started to unfold.

Our dream was to take advantage of this region’s excessively hot climate seemingly well suited for citrus growing, so we might grow oranges to supplement donations, ensuring ongoing needs are met. So, for months in 2018 our team researched and planned, finally converging at the site with water collection and drip irrigation materials from Israel, USA, Canada and Uganda to build the first standalone water harvest/collection/distribution system of its kind and once installed, plant the first 788 orange trees.

Soon, government leaders came to study the site as a model-even before it produced much.

And now in 2025, the 10-acre site hosts 2,800 orange trees growing; earlier trees producing fruit now in various stages of growth; others coming as well. Most recently the harvest was 15 tonnes that were sold to the nearby fruit processing factory who promptly requested another 20 tonnes; in exchange the highest price was given due to the fruit quality. It seems our dream (aspirations) were well underway. But our dream was a little short of His vision...

On our last visit, village leaders met with us with their own dream...the first I had ever heard from this community. They have watched how the Lord had miraculously provided them with a health centre and excellent care; they have watched how He has also provided support for their healthcare through an orange tree orchard and as leaders they are certainly aware this all happened after prayer.

And now, after 18 years watching the vision of God unfolding for them, they are for the first time, starting to dream. The community has met and agreed they wish to collectively donate **another 10 acres of land** for the purpose of expansion of the vision to support expanding health care through another 3000 trees. We were so encouraged!

Our dream was for healthcare-immediate and long term...His was for healthcare; immediate and long term PLUS spiritual revival PLUS the ability for damaged people to dream again, after so many years of suffering in isolation and sickness. His vision is always so much bigger than ours!

For now, we are planning to plant the final 260 trees and alongside our friends at the Rotary, drip irrigation and water collection will be also expanded later this year and into 2026. We will need about \$1,200 to complete what we have been saving for this facet of the project-please pray about this. And we are starting to wait on the Lord for the next 3000 trees in Ongutoi!

RADIO DREAM

In 2003, Marty and I first arrived in Uganda to meet with our Ugandan partner Grivas Musisi who is certainly a man of vision. We were pleased to help him build his unique Dunamis FM radio station which the Lord has used to bring thousands of people to Him in faith; we have met some of them and will never forget that experience. Our dream at that time was simply build one radio station. But when our feet first touched Ugandan soil, the Lord began to unfold His vision for that nation and allowed us to join Him. It has been life changing for us and many others!

For the next 22 years we have been so blessed to build Christian School (Nakyessa) Christian Radio (Teso region and South Sudanese refugee radio and in Mbararra) Christian Health Care (Ongutoi) Christian Education for Pastors (Mukono) and Christian humanitarian support for prisons, schools and disadvantaged people in various locations.

And with fresh lessons learned in Ongutoi we applied ourselves to ensuring all these ministries would continue for many years through indigenous income...essentially, we would grow coffee trees which would become donors for the other Ugandan ministries.

BUMPS IN THE ROAD

Having travelled from one side of Uganda to the other-multiple times-I can affirm there are bumps on their roads-many bumps. But delayed momentum is an African reality that seems to spill over in so many parts of our experience there, including growing coffee.

We bought land to grow coffee. But soon discovered squatters who simply appeared and have no plans of leaving until they are “compensated” or assisted to leave when the long legal process finally takes place.

And then we plant coffee, only to discover all land must be fenced. Even seemingly quiet land is accessible to animals-some domestic and some wild, but all enjoy the tasty coffee tree seedlings...so we build fences.

And when coffee is replanted, delayed seasonal rains can interrupt growth (causing us to build cisterns and water collection systems for excessive dry seasons so coffee does not die) or it can be the opposite-unexpectedly large rainfall, causing flooding and loss of trees.

As we replant (again) and somehow divert excessive rainfall, life becomes normal as coffee grows happily...until it does not. Without warning, flooding can (and does) occur when uncontrolled neighbors (like businesses) decide to close culverts or set up mini dams for their needs. Regardless the reason, one such circumstance can and does wipe out acres of trees and set back growth by at least 3 years.

ANSWERED PRAYER

In times like these, we can understandably begin to doubt our direction, struggling to reconcile with the reality the Lord had led us to set up such a process. It’s like looking at a puzzle and we cannot find the missing piece. But then we do!

SAMSON

In 2024, we had planted thousands of coffee trees in a land site locally known as “the estates”, because the land is known to be prime growing location that attracts even well-connected business people who value such areas. In one year, our land value grew by almost double. This prime growing area is dedicated to pastor training which we truly needed since so many more are pressing us for training, and each class of 12 requires about \$1000...a good investment but an investment that needs to be in hand. We were so optimistic until an unusually heavy rainy season drowned about 40% of the trees.

Fred had employed local farmers to drain the land through a trenching process that sounds simple to do but requires a deeper understanding of traditional growing process that would drain the land in such a way that allows for drainage but still maintains ground water sufficient for tree growth. If done properly, the need for a water source (like a bore hole or cistern) would be eliminated.

It is a delicate balance that few seem to understand.



**MEETING TIRED ONGUTOI
COMMUNITY 2007**



**PLANTING ONGUTOI ORANGE
TREES FOR HEALTHCARE**



**UNIQUE WATER DRIP IRRIGATION
SYSTEM**



TRAINING LOCAL TEAM



**ORANGE TREES SUPPORTING
ONGUTOI HEALTH CENTRE**



ONGUTOI HARVEST



PREPARING THE NEXT SECTION FOR TREES



ENJOYING THE HARVEST TOGETHER



FLOODED COFFEE TREES



**FRED EXPLAINING SLOW
GROWTH CHALLENGE**



**ESTATES COFFEE FLOURISHING
ONLY MONTHS LATER**



**SAMSON'S FAMILY HOME IN THE
COFFEE FIELD**



SAMSON'S HOME AND STORAGE BUILDING NEEDS SOLAR POWER

But after months of searching, Fred happened to hear about a unique family who had somehow acquired this special skill. For the next few weeks, this family worked the estates, carefully trenching and evaluating as they worked. Only time and the next rainy season would confirm their work.

So, on this trip, we visited the Estates and to my surprise, these original trees that had been stunted in their growth process only months earlier, were now thriving and in fact even started to flower, which is the process that occurs when coffee beans first appear. If I had not seen both sides of this progress, I might not have believed this could be possible. But having now seen the “before and after” I was convinced this family was unique.

MAWOKOTA

We left the estates to visit our next project which had suffered even worse flooding, exacerbated by workers that meant well but simply misunderstood the real need for delicate trenching balance. On our arrival, I quickly raised my drone but could not find the tree seedlings from the air. They had endured so much water; they had just not grown. They could be seen at the ground level, but from the air they were non-existent.

But then my drone camera caught something that had not been there before. Standing in the middle of the 6-acre coffee field were two grass thatched structures and in front of one, were several people, standing in front of the larger grass hut. Drawing closer, I could see Fred speaking with them; my own curiosity got the better of me.

Landing the drone, I walked the muddy field to Fred who introduced me to the very family that had actually reclaimed our Estates coffee site.

Samson proudly showed off his wife (pregnant) and his two children, with a visiting friend. Fred went on to explain that Samson had heard about our Mawokota challenge and felt strongly motivated to move his family here and build this grass one-room house so they could live in the field and work to reclaim it for us. They had actually asked Fred for permission to do this for us. I just could not grasp this kind of dedication and commitment.

They could not be or look poorer and yet they did not ask anything from us-they were happy with the small token Fred had provided for their work. I was certainly moved, but once Marty caught a glimpse of their conditions, their humility and their overall demeanor, it was a full court press (on me) to get praying...to get writing...to get busy so we might secure them against the environment and the animal life living all around them. And I was certainly in agreement. Fred contacted builders and assembled a budget...\$1,500 for a pit latrine...\$7,400 for a three-room house (one for parents-one for children-one for storing harvested coffee) ...\$2,000 USD for solar power so they might have security lighting and small power for phone charging etc.

SURPRISE

We had just arrived home and planning to start raising awareness for Samson, but before I could write anything, the first \$1,500 appeared...then within an hour, a surprise email from a friend who “wondered if there was any need” for help... within 15 minutes the house was completely provided.

Almost immediately, construction began and we only need the solar power. Please pray about this need for \$2,000 for Samson and his family who will not only trench the site, they will live here, providing security and coffee maintenance. Sometimes I wonder if the Lord makes angels and calls them Samson...

Our simple dream was coffee for pastor education support, but when we evaluate it now, we can see His vision was longer and larger; it was for long term success...sending unique people we never knew we needed.

I love it when my dream submits to His vision. There is just no better place to be.

Don

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WEBSITE: WWW.HAGCM.ORG OR WWW.BVVBROADCASTING.ORG
PHONE: 905-898-5447
IN CANADA: PO BOX 95561 | NEWMARKET, ON | L3Y 8J8 | MAIL@BVVBROADCASTING.ORG
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