

A WORK IN PROGRESS

BY: BRAD CULLEN – FEBRUARY 4, 2004

I wanted this to be a report of sorts on the first group with which I interacted here in Africa. I wanted to do this as sort of an encouragement to the thirty or so other people around the globe that have committed to using “**The Retreat**” materials as a means to start small assemblies that gather for mutual ministry and multiplication.

This past Sunday, I met with eight African locals in a small, and primitive house in the Kampala suburbs; there were three men and five women in addition to myself. The language barrier made things interesting. While the national language here is English it is spoken in a dialect and accent laced with the second language of almost all the people here, Luganda. I have taken note in my travels – people that are multi-lingual seem to grasp things far more quickly than those of us that are limited to one natural language. That was certainly true with this group of eight.

I found myself unconsciously using a variety of synonyms and deliberately talking slowly. I had to listen very carefully and apologize often for not understanding what somebody was saying and having to get him or her to repeat it. Actually it made for enhanced communication.

The whole basis of, “The Retreat,” materials is to provide a medium in which all the participants are co-learners being led by the Spirit of God. I’ve had enough experience in small group, mutual ministry to be fairly comfortable with the dynamics, but that experience previously has been with people of the same cultural background, which also involves the idiosyncrasies of humor and slang peculiar to Americans.

What was singularly most exciting to me was that two of the men were wide eyed with amazement at the work Spirit was doing inside them – totally changed viewpoints about who God is and who they are in relationship to God. They both expressed in animated fashion, yet quite clearly, that their lives had been changed!

Why that excites me is twofold. First we went through the first session more or less “by the book” - see the above referenced website “The Retreat” (first session) Jan. 16th - meaning that the content, under the leadership of Spirit, does the work for which it was intended. Second, from the passages of the Scripture presented in the content, the light dawned upon the entire group: Not only was Jesus Christ far more than the religiously mouthed (even if biblically correct) “Son of God,” but also he lives in them! They were transformed and understood the concept of letting Christ do their talking. The ease and emphasis with which they could say, “perfect” when asked how they were was actually breathtaking!

Most of all, I was shown that I am still a work in progress. That progress is very rewarding and exciting as God’s Spirit ministered to me through these people.

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