



July 4, 2014

Dear Family and Friends,

Greetings from Ithaca! More than 25 years ago, the Lord directed us here to be part of the Bethel Grove Bible Church (BG) pastoral staff. We are privileged to call Ithaca our home! Yet, we want you to know of a major transition in our lives and ask for your prayerful encouragement as we move into the future.



In our last Christmas letter we identified a new stirring in our hearts. Since 2007, I (Dave) made ten trips to Uganda to train pastors alongside Andrew Mwenge and Kampala Baptist Church leaders. Over the last year, Joyce and I sensed that it was time to transition from my Senior Pastor role at BG and begin “a new adventure” of training under resourced Majority World pastors. With the affirmation of the BG elders, the transition process began in January.

Ironically, it was on the same January day that the church **surprised us** and celebrated our 25 years at BG, I spoke of the need for a new Senior Pastor at a quarterly church meeting. Since then, the Lord has taken us through a time of evaluation as we searched for the best way to move forward. We started down one path, only to discover obstacles which helped to clarify our vision. When Pastor Andrew visited Ithaca in April, we spent considerable time brainstorming about how best to work together in Uganda. We established a strategy of five Ugandan visits for pastoral training pastors in the Masaka and Oyam regions. Other global ministry opportunities are appearing in unique ways.

In mid-June, we were approved to come under New Horizons Foundation, Inc. We love their mission byline - “taking your vision to the world”. Initial details of our future ministry are included on the enclosed sheet or you can view them at [www.partnershipsfortraining.org](http://www.partnershipsfortraining.org). As you can imagine, all this is in the embryonic stage, yet we are very excited about what lies before us. We’ll keep you posted on how you can partner with us in prayer as well as provide some financial support for this new adventure.

Last weekend, BG gave us a “send-off party” on Saturday evening and commissioned us to this new ministry during the Sunday morning service. The party was a blast, with great food and stories told of events and relational connections over the years (see pictures below). Some of the stories were actually true. We laughed and cried, all the time giving thanks to the Lord for his goodness through the years. It was good to have Matt and Ashley, family members and great college friends join us for this special night.



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Sunday morning was exceptional, as we worshipped around the theme that “God Is For Us”. After preaching on Romans 8:28-39, I invited the congregation to gather around the Lord’s Supper signifying our unity in Christ and his redemptive work on our behalf. There is nothing more precious than identifying all are on level ground before the cross of Christ. It was an incredible picture of God’s mercy and grace to us all!

Then, BG leaders came to the platform and prayed for us as we affirmed our commitment to follow Christ into this new calling. They prayed for our transition into this new ministry, strength for our marriage as we share in new ministry responsibilities, our relationship with Ugandan pastors and churches, and for blessing and wisdom as other ministry partnerships develop over the years. We wrapped up the service with a congregational song, my final benediction and a choral blessing that affirmed God’s presence and leading in the days ahead for BG and us.

Any transition requires much work and patience, not to mention trust in the Lord’s provision. We are keeping our home base in Ithaca, where Joyce will continue to work at Cornell University and be available to those God has brought into our lives. Initially, I will travel to Uganda for training sessions and while home in Ithaca write study material, develop new ministry partnerships and establish seminars on mission partnerships. My first extended trip is scheduled for August 20 – September 15. Joyce and I desire to travel one time each year for ministry together. Please pray with us that the Lord will direct our steps as we begin this new venture.

We are grateful to the Lord for all He has done in and through our lives over these years. Thanks for your loving friendship and your willingness to pray with us. Please pray for Bethel Grove as they work through the leadership transition. We will keep you posted on how the Lord is working and directing us in the days ahead and beyond.

Blessings,

