

PT Shalom Women's Training Seminar
May 4th - 8th 2015



Preparations to host 130 women from six regions of Uganda had been heightened by mid-March, when Grace asked women regional leaders to put into consideration eligible women for training. Of greatest interest were wives of pastors and women leaders who actively serve in the church in various capacities.

Days before arrival were a busy time for us to think and plan as best as we could, in order to minimize the ordeal of putting the facility to use with such a large number of people for the

first time, in its less complete state. So we needed to join hearts and hands in prayer. A group of 30 believers gathered at the PT Center on May 1st and spent an entire day in prayer.



Planning focused on 'life at the newly built PT Center' involving all kinds of questions. How would their coordination from east, south and west be handled? Where and how would they sleep? What would they eat? Where would it be cooked? Where would they sit? What about the sound system? With six local and two international languages in the house, how would we communicate? How would we encourage interaction that allows learning together and from each other?



We needed a temporary shelter where we can do the cooking. Some pieces of iron sheets were gathered, poles erected and roofed; our kitchen served at its best and still stands until a better one is built.



Where to cook from: So we set the ground

We erected and roofed a structure that served as a kitchen shelter



The kitchen served to the best it could offer; Ladies prepared and cooking

Off-loading firewood & sheets



Working on stairs for access to lower ground for bathroom/toilets

Window glasses were fixed

Arrival on Monday

With 7-9 hours of travel from three of the furthest regions from Kampala, journeys began Sunday night for people from western Uganda, a group of 66 ladies arriving between 3:00am and 5:00am on Monday morning. Women from eastern Uganda arrived in 3 groups from 2:00pm to 6:00pm making Monday a truly 'arrival day'.



The Training Sessions

There were morning devotions which focused on women – the Samaritan woman, Deborah the judge and Hannah. Every session was planned in such a way that it introduced learning content, analyzed the ministry by looking back in 15 years, clarified the vision, and emphasized the values of the ministry and the heart-beat of the people that have promoted the work of PT over the years.



Mrs. Grace Twongyeirwe

Some ladies had been part of the PT ministry at national level when they were invited for PT 'pastors and wives' conferences between 2002 and 2008, and this was a helpful reminder as well as a new beginning for them.

It was clarified to the women that this event sets in motion the agenda of training women who will instruct serving women in their regions along a curriculum for ministering women.

At each local Bible school, there will be women who are trained to teach the Bible to other women and apprentice younger women to build godly homes and God-honoring ministries in and through their local churches as faithful Gospel witnesses in the communities of their habitation.

The PT Shalom Effort was explained as a forum for discipleship of ministering women especially wives of pastors whose homes and families must affirm the Gospel message they bear to the world through deliberate godliness.



The discipleship was clarified as hinged on a cause or platform for sustainable livelihood – teaching the Bible to women for hard work, for creativity at home, godly stewardship, for support networks and all virtues of the woman as described in Proverbs 31.

Women who could not communicate fluently in English formed a sitting arrangement that easily allowed one or two of them to translate into their local language, and gave the instructor the matching pace in teaching so that no one was left behind.



By the end of the training, fellowship across tribes had grown so warm through their music and dance presentations. Ladies took turns to lead the assembly in music and it was exciting to see them sing and try traditional dancing from region to region. It was a wonderful reminder that in Christ, 'tribes and tongues' will always gather before the throne of our great and mighty God to worship Him.



The historic nature of the event

Trainings have been held in the past, but non like this – built on the experience of a rich history of relationships, and looking at an expanding network through a sustained training program specifically enlisting women who have mainly kept at the edges as spectators in Gospel work.



Mrs. Elizabeth Asiimwe

- *(some of the instructors)*

- *Mrs. Sarah Wataba*

This event marked history by the venue on which it was held, by the selected group it was and by a special inauguration of the PT Institute.



Such training centers have mainly been initiated and run by men, but as God arranged it for us, PT has found blessedness to have women be the first trainees on this site. We were reminded of the witness of women at the empty tomb when Jesus had risen. We now continue to receive calls from their husbands and pastors narrating each woman's experience in appreciation.

Men leaders have talked on phone to Grace, to thank her and give her specific highlights as shared by their wives or other women in their region. It is very exciting for us to hear the women's testimony through the minds and hearts of men who were many miles away as the training went on.

The Food

The planning included a wonderful menu and in good measure for each day. Breakfast had bread and eggs and tea or porridge; two large sacks of potatoes came in with the group of women from the Western part of Uganda and Grace prearranged to feed the guests from her own chicken farm with about 85 birds. The ladies were encouraged to eat from Grace's farm in regard to the Shalom Effort.



The Music

With six cultural groupings in the house, it was a wonderful mix of praise and worship.



Taking turns, women led in songs of adoration to God, and displayed diversity in their dance and rhythm. I (Julius), Isabel, Isaiah and Dickson helped accompany the singing with instrumentation.

Distributing Ladies' and Children's Apparel

A collection of dresses, handbags, shoes, skirts and blouses had been done over the months in preparation, from generous Christian women who desired to share from their wardrobe with these women. Thursday evening was the time for each woman to get into the store to be helped in choosing what to put on or carry home. Every woman went back with a worthy piece or pieces as choice and preference guided her to pick.



Some of the ladies in newly acquired attire

The exercise was smooth and humbling for both the givers and receivers; the women looked wonderful in their new attire and their husbands have called us day after day to appreciate those who gave. *“We have been loved and cared for with sincere and Christ-centered love”*, they exclaimed. Sometimes they came out of the dressing room dancing and shouting with great joy, bursting in traditional doxologies. It was a moving experience for all.

The significance of this event

Women took turns to share and feedback on what this event meant for them, for their ministering families, their churches and communities. One after another, they gave



highlights of the teaching and entire experience on participating in the PT Shalom Women’s Seminar. *“I have been a pastor’s wife for 11 years but I have never had teaching as impacting as this”*, a woman from Teso remarked.

“There are many lessons to learn from this seminar beyond the teaching; I have seen team work, great hospitality, and the love of Christ.

Upon arrival I was concerned that there are no beds and the facility is incomplete, but the heart and sincere motivation of this ministry has totally changed me”, Irene said.

“I had taken over leadership from my husband and other men in the church who seemed lazy and indifferent to ministry activity. But after the teaching on Deborah, I must regain my God-ordained place ‘to call on the princes of the new Israel to play their role’ like Deborah did, rather than replace them or push them out of the way in my misdirected zeal for God”. She was touched that Deborah never called on women to take over men, but appealed to men through a powerful mobilization play their God-given part in governing God’s people and protecting them from Sisera and Jabin.



Grace, Isabel and team serve food



With this event, the vision of follow-up through regional trips will be smoother and worked out with united hearts, and shared values. The men leaders in regions have a task to listen to the fresh agenda of involving women and supporting their training effort, including women’s seminars and Bible workshops at regional level.

It is in such efforts that Grace will be traveling to further encourage from place to place in their home regions. Selected instructors from these local areas will be enlisted as trainees at the PT Institute, so as to enhance their training capacity at regional level.

The way forward

As women focus on uplifting each other through sustainable livelihood, the sharing of resources is causing an overflow of thanksgiving in Christ, and more women are being reached through this effort with Gospel – some for evangelism and others for discipleship. This must be heightened.

Just within the last month, four pastors' wives have been supported to establish home-based projects whose progress should gradually be felt among other women in their proximity. The work of evangelism and discipleship will sustainably advance well in this manner.



It was suggested and overwhelmingly desired that this women's seminar be turned into an annual event to be held every May.

As the women change through faithful Bible intake and work their homes and relationships to admirable standards of sharing, hospitality, pastoral care to women, childrearing and productivity for livelihood, it is expected as is already happening, that at grass root level, an inter-denominational effort will continue

to grow. A joint evangelical effort is expected in this. Women from different Bible-believing and practicing (evangelical) churches are jointly embracing the work for greater testimony, maximizing resources and exhibiting the required unity in the Spirit, adequate to propagate the Gospel in their neighborhoods.

Sustainable Livelihood

It was shared and affirmed that women will continue to help each other establish home-based projects among themselves. Some initial capitalization may come from PT Shalom where needed, but the heart to uplift each other as a ministry remains a call for each of them. Grace handed over utensils (worth \$200) to Mrs. Kibumba for income generating in her home and community of Busembatia



Departure

Depending on the nature of their journeys, the women boarded buses in intervals beginning Thursday night. Others left early morning of Friday and many from the central region left after breakfast since their journeys were shorter. With many friendships established across their tribes, saying good-byes was difficult as they missed remaining together, but as they pledged to come together again as God allows.



We give ceaseless thanks and praise to God for making this possible and successful. Generous hearts that responded to God's prompting in made this event possible. We are ever grateful to our partners whose hearts and minds reach Africa to bring such a Kingdom influence.

