



CRWRC

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

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Greetings from moist Kampala.

In Africa, rain is normally a real blessing after the dry season. In Uganda the vast majority of people are still farmers, so rain means food and income. This year however the rains have come in quantities that call up visions of the flood of Genesis 7. Uganda is one of twenty African countries across the middle of the continent that have been receiving exceedingly heavy and persistent rains since August. The northeast Teso region has been especially hard hit. Roads into the town of Soroti, where we lived until December 2005, are under water. Part of the main highway from Kampala, the only paved road into Soroti, is now at the bottom of Lake Bisina. Crops are rotting in the fields, houses are collapsing, people have drowned, and little food is available. Major relief agencies such as the United Nations World Food Program are delivering food by air. Hundreds of thousands of people are affected.

Our partner organization, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG), is doing community development work in the Teso region with hundreds of subsistence farmers and members of self help groups. In Amuria district the families we work with are the same people recovering from the violent incursions of the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in 2003 – 2004, which left most homeless and living in camps for the internally displaced. Many of these same people have also suffered due to violent cattle rustling by Karamojong cattle raiders over the years. However, by 2007 most were back in their homes and on their land, feeling more certain about their security because of the ongoing peace talks between the Ugandan government and LRA rebels. With the provision of improved seed and goats on credit to the self help groups, along with training, most were beginning to get back on their feet again, some even producing more food than before, due to the improved seed varieties. Some groups had started to buy cattle. With the onset of the floods, it seems that many are now destitute again.

CRWRC carried out a major relief and rehabilitation program in Teso in 2004, as families began to return home after the LRA attacks subsided. Now it looks like we may be doing something similar again, once the waters have gone down. We often tell people that Uganda's disasters are manmade, due to wars and insecurity. This one seems to be a natural disaster, or is it? Some are blaming the excessive rains on unpredictable weather brought on by global warming.

Once again, thank you for your prayers and support for our work with CRWRC in Uganda.

Jim and Josephine Zylstra