

Cornerstone

Newsletter & Magazine December 2023

A Family of Friends - Developing the Cornerstones of Africa's Next Generation

BEING THE SALT AND LIGHT

There are four metaphors Jesus used to describe how his movement, the Kingdom of God, advances in our world. He said it advances like 'Salt', like 'Light', like 'Yeast', and like 'Good Seed' that is sown in with the bad.

All of these four things penetrate their environments steadily in a silent and almost invisible way, and they do not leave it the same. It is a silent revolution. There are no marching bands or parading armies waving flags, but it's progression is unstoppable. As the scriptures say, one day, "the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and he will reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

It is a Kingdom of Love. It is a Kingdom of Light. And it is breaking more and more into our world, despite the darkness around us. And, WE are meant to be its agents. We are the light-workers, we are the bringers of the dawn.

This year, in some of our retreats around the region we have used the theme: "Let Your Light Shine." It is a well known notion taken from Jesus' sermon on the mount, found in the gospel of Matthew where he began by saying: "You are the light of the world." This declaration holds several implications:

1. There is some kind of a darkness in the world around us - which needs the light.
2. There is light already within us - which we can increase in brightness.
3. There are ways we can radiate or shine our light - into our world.

In this same passage, Jesus also says: "You are the salt of the earth." The main attributes of salt are, it adds flavor and it helps to preserve food. This carries a similar implication to being the light: Our presence is meant to uplift, enhance, and preserve Divine values within society. So when Jesus said you are the light and you are the salt of the world, he is saying: your influence, your energy is so strong and bright that you will change people just by existing around them. *We explore this theme further in this newsletter.*



Inside



and...



- * Updates on various programs around the region
- * Centerfold pictorial
- * Thoughts from Tim

Tim speaking with an AYLF small group at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda



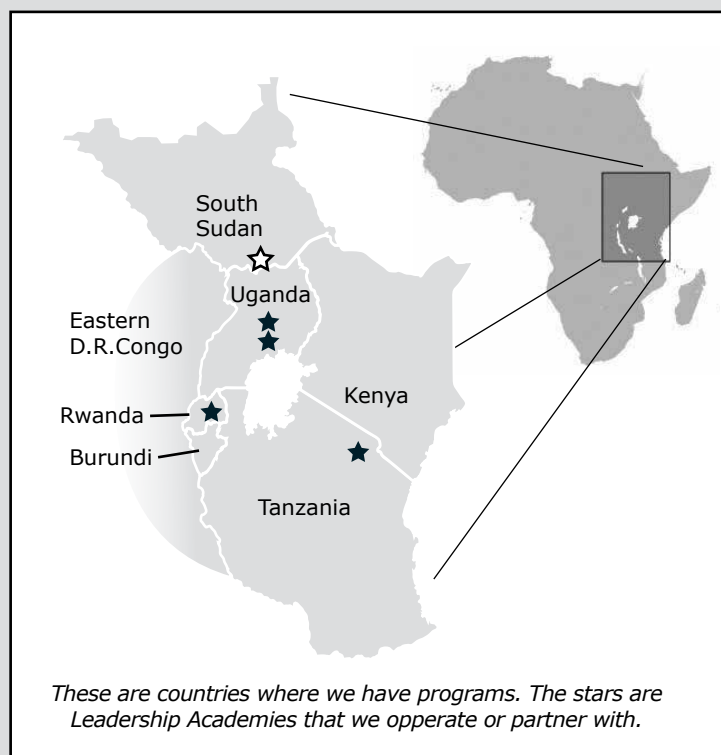
Cornerstone Development Africa

Our Vision: *An ever-expanding movement of transformational servant leaders in Africa, building a better world.*

Our Mission: *To be a family of friends in the Spirit of Jesus working together to develop generations of young leaders with vision and purpose, personal integrity, and committed to unity, reconciliation, and long-term relationships.*

Cornerstone Development was established in Uganda in 1988 to help in the rebuilding and development of the nation as it was emerging from a turbulent past. In recent years we have expanded to Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi, eastern D.R. Congo, and Southern Sudan. All our programs are directed towards helping under-privileged children, with a special emphasis on youth leadership development. Since its inception the work has steadily expanded to include over 2,000 young people today- in a variety of programs including five schools, five homes for homeless kids, three hostels for university students and sports programs - all designed for providing love, education and character formation.

Our core focus is on “Developing the Cornerstones of Africa’s Next Generation”. That is, to raise up future leaders with a shared vision of positively transforming their communities and nations, as an outgrowth of their own personal transformation. Our approach involves creating loving, family-like environments in our schools and other programs for under-privileged young people, while empowering them with education and character formation in order for them to become leaders. Furthermore, the young people coming through our programs are forming a movement that seeks to make a contribution to the betterment of society while promoting reconciliation across



all that is dividing humanity. We as a community are a living model of this kind of unity in diversity, in that we are composed of all the different tribes, nationalities, cultures and religious backgrounds found in this part of the world.

In our character development curriculum we teach the timeless, universal principles of forgiveness, honesty, integrity, compassion, kindness, hard work, humility, and of service to the less fortunate, as exemplified in the teachings of Jesus and the perennial wisdom of all traditions, but without affiliation to any one institutional religious group.

See more online: www.CDAfrica.org

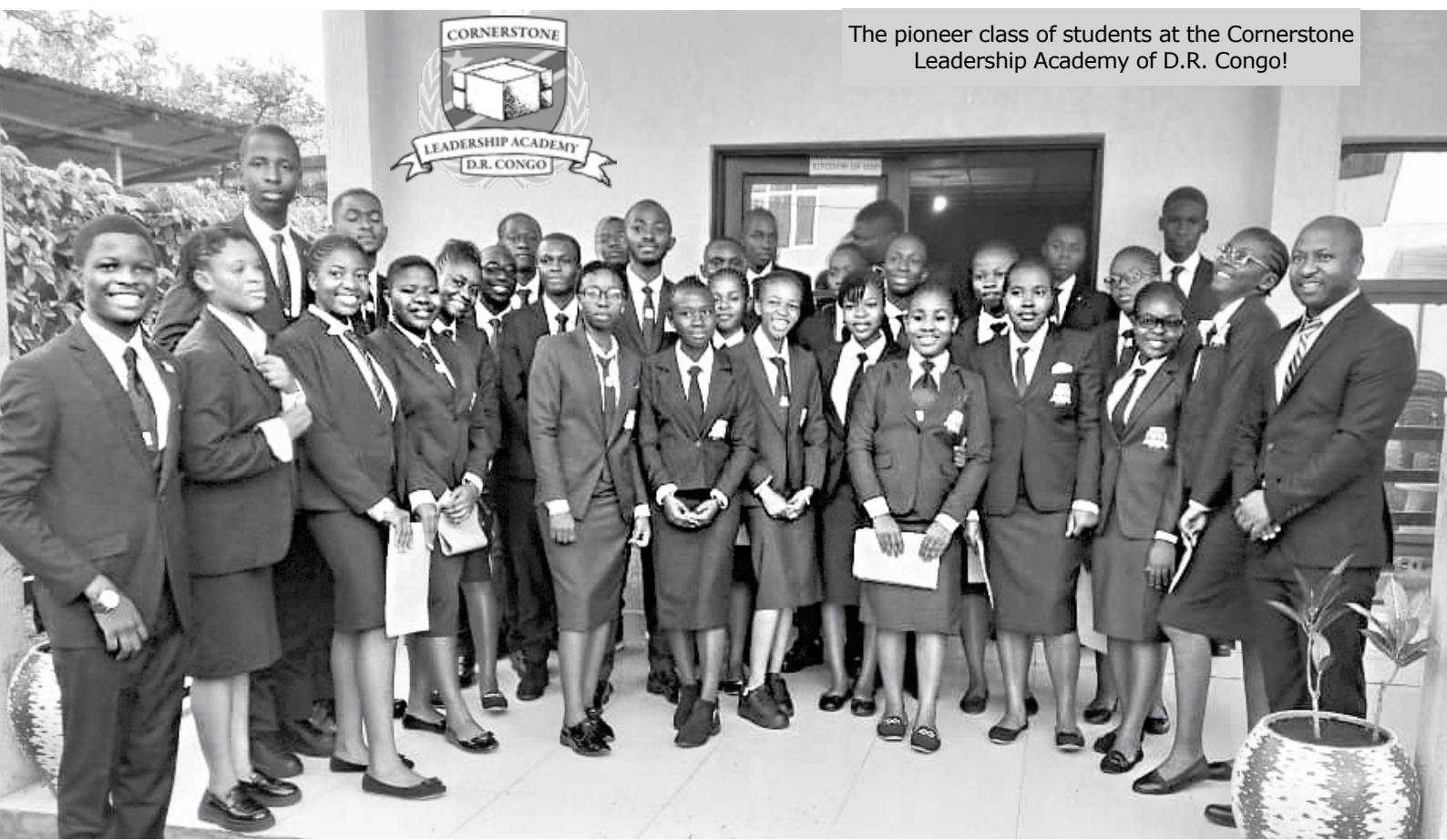
Our core focus is 'youth leadership development' after the model of Jesus. So, in addition to our schools, all the various programs we run serve this focus by providing a practical "training ground" where graduates of our schools can learn to serve and pass on what they have received. Each year we put out two magazine's like this one. Earlier this year, we highlighted several PEOPLE in our community, and now in this current edition, we turn to highlighting our PROGRAMS in general.

What have we been up to?

The second half of this past year (2023) has been full of activity and new developments! Some highlights include end of year alumni dinners, student leadership conferences and graduations at schools across the region, an annual Africa Youth Leadership gathering in Kampala, Uganda, and a quadrennial Jesus Gathering in Mombasa, Kenya, not to mention hundreds of workshops and small groups that meet weekly or monthly at campuses and homes across the region.

In particular, the introduction of the Cornerstone Leadership Academy (CLA) in the Democratic Republic of Congo marks a significant milestone for this country for many years to come. We successfully recruited 30 excellent students to join the school, and the official launch of our academy was on November 6, 2023, in Goma. The program aims to nurture transformational servant leaders in the spirit of Jesus, fostering a generational shift in the leadership culture that will bring about positive change to the country and region at large.

It has been a season of growth for us as we have also expanded our facilities at the Cornerstone Leadership Academy in Rwanda to admit more Burundian students in an effort for more strategic impact in the region. Additionally, in early 2024, we will complete construction of a new student hostel, guest house, and office facility in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania which will enable us to have a more strategic presence in the eastern part of the country and increase our programming and activities there.



The pioneer class of students at the Cornerstone Leadership Academy of D.R. Congo!



Headmaster Kenneth teaching discipleship at CLA Boys campus

Uganda

Cornerstone Schools

From the beginning, our community has had a vision to be a positive influence on the nation, hence the name “Ekitangaala” (which is the Luganda word for light). In this, we have maintained four pillars of emphasis in our curriculums: Leadership / Influence, Integrity, Long-term Relationships, and Unity across all that divides humanity. This cannot be possible if we do not have a highly motivated and supporting staff. In doing this, there is a high regard for academic and moral excellence. Our dependable staff have been outstanding in creating such an environment of academic excellence, and a life-transforming environment is foundational to how our schools run. This has been evident in the positivity and enthusiasm with which the year started.

Throughout the past year, our schools have seized various opportunities to extend their influence. Engaging in debating championships provided a fresh platform for students to showcase their capabilities, while the introduction of book reading programs equipped young minds with the wings needed for their leadership and influence journey. The influence of our schools has continued to extend beyond academic disciplines, permeating the community through various activities that shape young men and women into influential individuals of character.

We also saw substantial infrastructure developments, with two boys’ dormitories, a new classroom block for Senior one, and the beautiful one of a kind Library of Light, nestled amidst trees, have reshaped the Ekitangaala Transformation High school landscape. The Crown Tower, standing proudly at the heart of the Ekintangaala school, symbolises that the spirit of Jesus is alive, and showcases our commitment to providing a modern education based on Godly discipline and principles. Also,

Ekitangala Primary School has built a new library, new staff quarters, and the guest wing at the CLA Boys’ school has benefited from this facelift, as well as dormitories gaining a revamp, with clean running water flowing across the campus.

The core of our curriculum has always been transforming hearts and minds, in the way that Jesus did, and recently we have sought to improve in the area of ‘equipping the hands’. We have participated in and consolidated activities to set a firm foot for nurturing men and women with the potential to influence where they are with character. For example, CLA-Girls did several trainings this past year in practical skills such as making liquid soap, vases, jik, shampoo, and books, among others.

The introduction of the Writers’ Club and Interact Club, supported by the Rotary Club of Kampala 7 Hills, has also added to our ongoing efforts to cultivate transformational, expressive and learned servant leaders at our schools.

Our sustainability and progress very much rests on the bedrock of integrity and influence. This year, we hosted a large gathering, bringing together all Nakasongola district members of parliament, local government leaders, and the Minister of ICT and National Guidance, Hon. Chris Baryomunsi. The theme for the gathering centered around “Education with Character for Community Transformation,” resonating deeply with the essence of this newsletter. Education with character, we have found, transforms our students into ambassadors of light, allowing them to wield influence seasoned with integrity.

This year has truly been a remarkable celebration of success and continued impact of our schools, setting the stage for a bright future in the coming decades.

By Emmanuel Bwanga

University Programs & Alumni Associations

In our work with alumni of the Cornerstone Leadership Academies we seek to create a life-long brotherhood and sisterhood of friends united in Jesus, that will love and support one another while advancing a movement of integrity and virtue within Uganda and beyond.

Through our consistent fellowships this year, we have challenged each other to be part of intentional communities for accountability, prayer, sharing of scripture, and breaking of bread. We have held regular meetings at the hostels and campuses to challenge our students on being intentional about right living. We have held focused 'ladies', 'couples', 'mens', and 'singles' small-group meetings regularly across the country. Our members have increasingly gotten involved in reaching out and leading different groups in their churches, universities, and other communities. These fellowships have also challenged and provided positive models of living a life of moral integrity and also insights on good parenting. Since trust has been built through these gatherings, we now have groups that run joint business, save money together, visit each other, and jointly reach out to communities so that their light can shine and influence.

natural mentoring relationships. Each the graduating student is now intentionally connected with a senior Alumni to walk through life together after graduation.

Among the retreats we have organized this year are: the annual COSA retreat, six class retreats, and four retreats for volunteers to spur us into the vision of the brotherhood and sisterhood of friends. We have over 200 committed volunteers serving as campus coordinators, class coordinators, and small group conveners helping to mobilize each other and grow their leadership capacities. We also have 30 university students who are in leadership in their different faculties, class, and associations. We have also trained 20 social entrepreneurs through the Advanced Leadership Initiative "Accelerator Program" and five initiatives have been supported financially through the Impact Grant. They have been able to scale up their impact and streamline their initiative to support the communities better.

Through the Advanced Leadership Initiative, we have over 80 of our members committed and actively impacting over 5,000 lives through direct and indirect means to the needy and vulnerable in our communities through education sponsorship, skills and economic empowerments, health

and sanitation, microfinance support, mentorship and psychosocial support, and church outreach and ministry. All these members are living out the idea of lifting a lamp up so that it can light the whole house.

Finally, we have done a good amount of local fundraising in support of the different needs around the members and raised over 30 million shillings this past year. These have been particularly around health, treatment and funeral expenses. Beyond just the financial contribution, we have also had members reaching out and visiting those that have lost or going through difficult times.

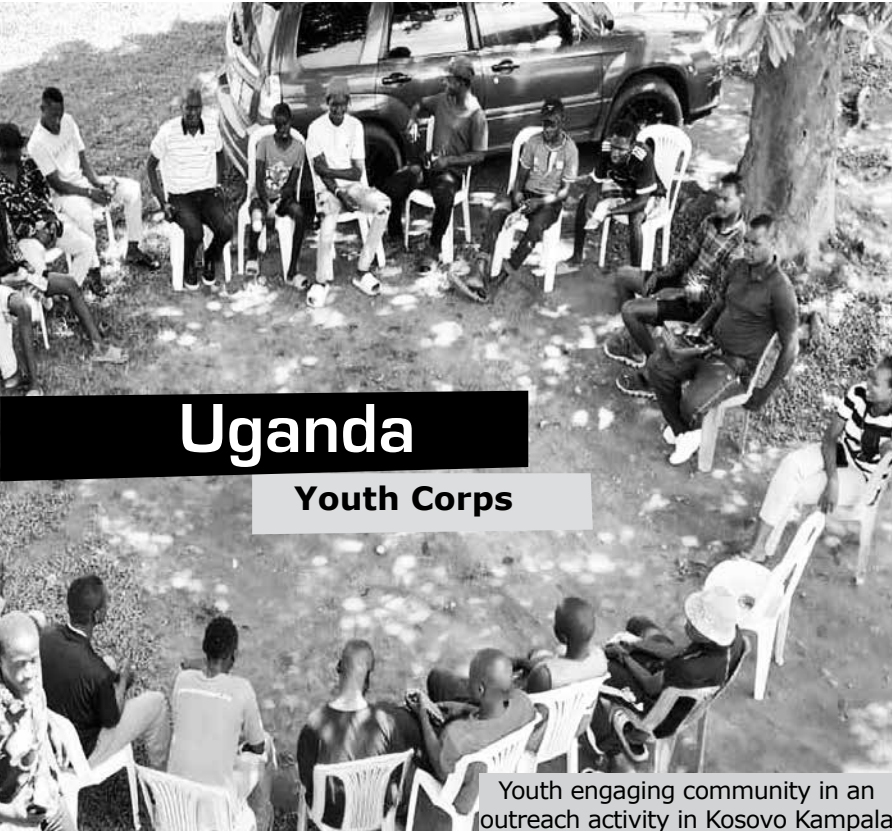
The principle of "One-to-One Mentorship" has become central to our program development this year. We have challenged ourselves to reach out more to the CLA schools through engaging our senior members in teaching discipleship, supporting students initiatives, visiting during their fellowship and small groups, orientation to the alumni association, and co-curricular activities like sports. Through this the students are able to connect with peers and older alumni and develop

In light of the above, we are constantly challenging ourselves about the central role that our values play in our lives and one's personal faith journey. It is these values that will determine our focus, motivation, action and response in everyday challenges of life as we follow Jesus. Because of this, we have great hope in what we are becoming and what we are doing in building a better world together!

By Michael Eluku



Eluku facilitating a discipleship class



Uganda

Youth Corps

Youth engaging community in an outreach activity in Kosovo Kampala

In each passing year, we embark on a journey defined by a theme, a guiding light, and a profound goal that propels us forward. For 2023, our theme has been “Enhancing a life-transforming environment for the holistic development of the youth.” At the core of our mission is mentorship – a powerful tool for inspiring the younger generation. We’ve come to realise that to truly make a difference in the lives of children and the youth, we must embody and uphold high moral values.

In the pursuit of this mission, we collectively embraced a sense of accountability, weaving the teachings and precepts of Jesus into our daily lives. This commitment has not only impacted the character of our beneficiaries but has fostered behavioral change and transformation over the years.

This year’s journey brought valuable lessons. Integrity emerged as the compass guiding us through the complexities of leadership dynamics. Transparency, consistency in moral behaviour, and accountability became our organisational cornerstones, strengthening trust and confidence among our team and the larger community.

Consistency between our actions and beliefs is crucial to setting a positive example. Influence and integrity are intertwined in our leadership story, representing the essence of who we are. As my influence expands, it becomes more challenging to maintain this integrity. Continuously assessing my choices, actions, and communication is essential to transition from being held accountable by others to becoming a beacon of accountability.

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Our department began the year with an annual planning meeting, focusing on “Enhanc-

ing a life-transforming environment for the holistic development of the youth.” This year, we combined two goals into one to guide us toward the overarching aim of “Transformed and Empowered youth positively impacting communities.” Our achievements so far include celebrating the success of our 2022 candidates, who received scholastic gifts and beddings, and supporting four youths who graduated from universities.

Additionally, our staff underwent capacity training in areas like the criminal justice system, children’s rights, the criminal code, the penal code, and personalities, among others. We also encouraged 10 of our team members to enroll in short courses at Makerere University to gain certificates in child protection, case management, and safeguarding which they did.

While many of the young people we work with achieved excellence and growth, we also faced challenges. Some struggle academically which makes it difficult for them to continue with formal education, two youths who were rehabilitated in 2022 relapsed into drug abuse, and one girl struggled with mental health issues. Recognizing that many of these issues originate at home, we plan to hold additional family sessions to foster healing and reconciliation.

Our collaboration with Worship Harvest Nakawa allowed us to provide financial support to at-risk youth in the Lungujja Kosovo slums to learn valuable skills at the Youth Corps Learning Centre. Additionally, our partnership with Omugaso Sanctuary International enabled us to train women and girls in crafts such as basket and bag weaving as part of our Community Outreach program. Lastly, we are in the process of registering Lungujja Girls Home with the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development to obtain a license for the rehabilitation of at-risk girls.

In conclusion, our journey in 2023 has been one of growth, learning, and transformation. It has reaffirmed the importance of integrity, accountability, and authenticity in leadership. As we strive to empower and transform the lives of the youth we serve, we remain committed to the values that guide us. By being committed to accountability, we hope to inspire positive change not only in the lives of our beneficiaries but also within ourselves. We look forward to the challenges and opportunities that the future holds, knowing that through our collective efforts, we can make a meaningful impact on our community and the youth we serve.

By Harriet Adongpiny

The light and salt in a dark and tasteless world.

Reflections on the theme by Paul Kalyango

Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." (Luke 19:8)

In most positions of leadership, we are by default stewards of resources entrusted to us. And, as we are stewards, we ought to ensure that our services reflect the values of the Kingdom of God such as love, justice, integrity, accountability, peace, and the total well-being of the community - which is our big family of friends.

One of the values I have struggled with in my leadership and stewardship is one of integrity, especially financial integrity. In Cornerstone, many of us are entrusted with financial resources for which to manage affairs in ways that fulfill the objectives of the departments under which we serve.

Personally, I think I am not much different with Zacchaeus in the story about him found in the Gospel of Luke. When I started in this department, I always found myself withdrawing more than I needed to get a given job done, and keeping the change on some purchases. In doing so, I become divided about fulfilling the objectives of the department and my own personal requirements.

Once, when I felt guilty, because I knew what I was doing was wrong. So, I reached out to my mentor Uncle Paulo and I shared my struggles with him. He guided me with words of wisdom. He told me that integrity is not a one-time thing. You either live with it and you have it, or you don't. I knew I had to repent and change my ways. Zacchaeus repaid 400 percent, I couldn't repay 400 percent of what I felt I owed to the department but what I could calculate and account for, I took back as income to my department. Going forward, I now find it a joy to take back excess, unspent cash as income so to get more work done.

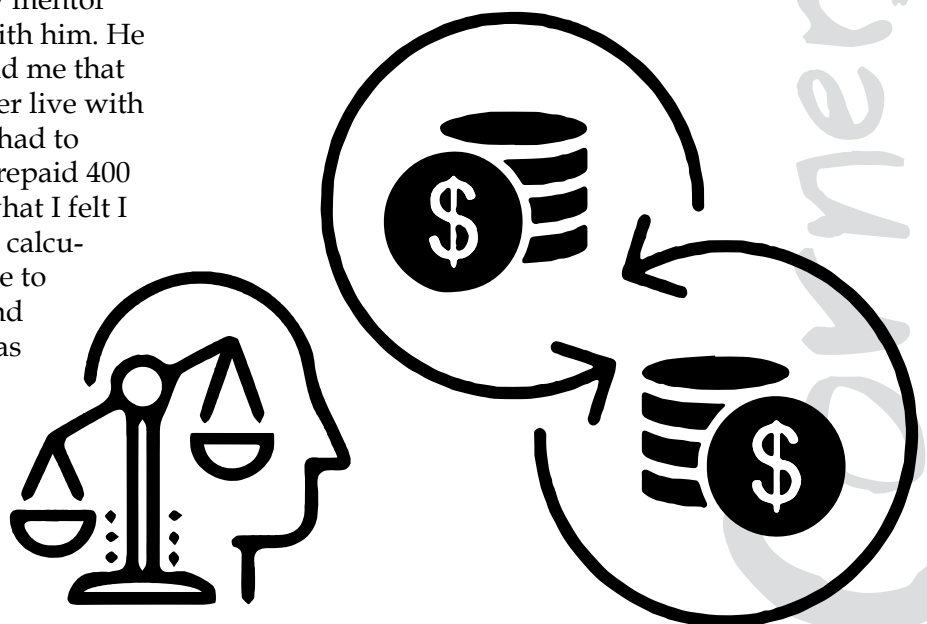
Basically, lack of integrity undermines good stewardship of resources. We ensure good stewardship with integrity by showing receipts that rightfully


reflect the true dealings of any purchases we do. And, where there is no receipt, choose to be truthful about how you transacted. The main point is to offer accountability of how you used whatever cash we withdrew. This accountability should be done as soon as possible to avoid oddities later on when too much time passes and it becomes hard to remember various details of our expenditures.

In the process of writing this article, I had a chat about this topic of financial integrity with a few friends of our Salaam Mentoring work whom I meet with on a bi-weekly basis. One of the key points from the conversation is that even when we find ourselves working in places with systems and people that normalize deceit and corruption, we ought to be the salt and light where we work. We should heed to the conviction of the Holy Spirit to do the right thing even when we are clever enough to work around the good financial systems put in place to protect us and safe guard against abuse.

We can also realize that lack of financial integrity robs us the chance of obtaining the kind of blessed life that is truly LIFE. Corruption gets us trapped in fear and shame of "what if I am found out!" The blessed life that is truly life is one that follows the ways of Jesus. And as we walk in those ways, the spirit of Jesus works in us to overcome the fear and shame that comes with corruption, it empowers us live out the virtue of integrity and be an example for others. We represent Jesus to others when we live a life of integrity, and when we do, we bring the light and salt in a dark and tasteless world.

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:9-10)





CLA-Rwanda's S.4 Class hangs out at Lake Muhazi as they choose their generation name and coordinators

Rwanda

Cornerstone Leadership Academy

In our journey at the Cornerstone Leadership Academy (CLA) of Rwanda this year, we've seen the powerful synergy between integrity and influence, as central to our leadership development program. Echoing Jesus' 'Sermon on the Mount,' where he urged us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, we've embraced these timeless values in every aspect of our program.

Integrity: The Solid Foundation of Leadership

As the salt preserving leadership, the notion of integrity has been the bedrock of our program this year. As we grow and adapt to new trends or demands in our work, we seek to find solutions that remain true to this bedrock value, yet advance our efficacy in the modern world. Some examples of this in the past year are:

- Held Recruitment Online: Embraced technology for wider applicant reach while maintaining ethical recruitment standards.
- Adopted New Dorm Sleeping Arrangements for Students: Redesigned sleeping arrangements into care groups, strengthening community bonds and emphasising integrity within relationships.
- Constructed New Facilities: Invested in new washrooms and a school fence, prioritising hygiene, safety, and well-being, showcasing our commitment to integrity.

Influence: Guiding with a Shining Light

Influence, the light of leadership, guides others toward a shared vision. Our students have become beacons, shining examples before others. Activities contributing to our influence include:

- Field Work and Study Tours: Broadening horizons for arts and science students, aligning with our goal of nurturing leaders who illuminate new paths.
- Participation in Debates and Competitions: Showcasing skills and becoming shining lights in communities, exemplifying our commitment to empower students in various domains.
- ILead Program: Expanding our leadership program with the ILead program, designed to amplify students' influence, reflecting our dedication to nurturing leaders who shine brightly.

Leaders are called to be both the salt and the light, preserving integrity and guiding with influence. Our students have exemplified this balance. In summary, our commitment to nurturing leaders who seamlessly balance integrity and influence is showcased through these activities. We've harnessed the power of integrity as the salt that preserves our leadership, while encouraging students to be the light of the world, guiding others through actions and inspiring with influence. Our overarching theme, "Integrity and Influence: Nurturing Leaders at CLA Rwanda," attests to our unwavering commitment to these core values, shaping the future of our students and our community.

By Peter Nkotanyi

University Programs & Alumni Associations

From the start of one joining our community as a student at CLA-Rwanda, the school moto 'LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE' becomes a constantly seen and heard phrase. The principle of 'shining one's light' as Jesus taught is instilled in our community members right from the beginning of their journeys, ensuring it becomes deeply rooted in their hearts and minds. As a result, we witness our members actively strive to be the 'salt and the light' in their daily lives. This commitment extends to their roles within their families, their careers, and their spiritual endeavours.

Our core belief is that our members should be leaders with integrity and virtue in every aspect of their lives. This means we expect them to add value to the lives of those they lead, much like salt enhances the taste of food. Our members should radiate positivity, wisdom, and a sense of purpose within their communities, ultimately contributing to the betterment of people's lives.

In stage 2 this year, we actively encouraged and supported our members to take up leadership roles at universities. As a result, we've witnessed them bringing about positive changes within their respective institutions. These leadership roles have allowed our members to embody ethical principles and uphold the values of integrity and accountability in their actions. Their influence has not only been evident in what they have managed to accomplish as leaders but in the culture of servant leadership that they have championed in the different institutions they are a part of. Our members may not be many in particular institutions but their small (in numbers) presence brings a difference just like salt and their character quietly but visibly shines just like light.

Our weekly and monthly fellowships have become more than social gathering; they have evolved into avenues for meaningful support where members uplift, encourage, and sharpen each other. Members have absorbed the different learnings and insights, carrying them into their respective spheres of influence. Consequently, the ideas, support, and encouragement, radiate outward, affecting not just the immediate members of Stage 2 but also their wider communities, extending their reach and influence.

The older members of our community in Stage 3 also continued to add flavour and shine their light in their respective spaces of influence. This year was



Stage II members fellowship
at the Gikondo hostel

particularly notable as we gladly witnessed Grace Nelyma, Founder of NYAMPINGA USHOBOYE; an organisation dedicated to assisting teen mothers, train over 700 young people on the principles of servant leadership, making a substantial impact in her community. Additionally, the integrity-driven character of our members like Norman Mugisha has been vividly exemplified through the success of his business, Afri Farmers Market which proudly opened two new branches this year. His influence stretches from the farmers who supply his business to his eighteen employees, three of whom are members of our wider family of friends.

These instances have served as compelling evidence that our members are not just the salt of the world making a difference wherever they are but also are the light through the impact and influence they make in their communities.

This past year we took a deliberate step to enhance the connection between COSA members and students at CLA-Rwanda by having our members regularly visit the school. This significantly eased mentorship relationships, creating a bridge between generations. The visits have not only given an opportunity to stage III members to be reminded of the origin of Cornerstone's core values but have also modelled and portrayed the kind of character of integrity and influence that is expected for the students.

This year has however not left us without learning opportunities. Some of the members that distanced themselves from our community posed new challenges to us. We have learnt that isolation leads to no good path but also been reminded of the tremendous effect of intentionally building relationships with our members. From Jesus' words in Matthew 5:13-16, we are glad that our community has not lost its saltiness; its character continues to be commended by many and its light has and continues to openly shine uphill through the beneficiaries and members of our programs.

By Jackie Mbabazi

Cornerstone

Newsletter Pictorial



Group photo of the 2023 Jesus:Issa Gathering in Mombasa



CLA Tanzania welcomes back Timmis and Cavins in style in Arusha



Students playing volleyball at CLA Boys Uganda



Baking lessons at the Stage 2 ladies activity day, Kigali



CDA Office fellowship, Goma



Construction crew on site at the new student hostel being built in Dar es Salaam



YIM coordinators during a weekly small group session in Bujumbura



South Sudanese university students celebrating graduation!



Friends re-uniting at the professionals' dinner in Kigali



AYLF regional conference, eastern DRC



The Deputy governor of North Kivu cutting the ribbon at the opening of CLA - DRC in Goma



Students enjoying their new library at the Ekitangaala Transformation High School

A Family of Friends!



COSA members from Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania at the recent COSA retreat in Arusha

Tanzania

University Programs & Alumni Associations

In our leadership development programs we often use the phrase “Being Salt and Light.” To us, this means embodying positive influence, providing guidance, setting exemplary standards, and illuminating the path for others to follow.

At Stage 2 of our work (with CLA grads at University), we have achieved significant milestones this year, ranging from enhanced educational support for members to increased alumni engagement. A focus on professional development through seminars has empowered alumni in their career growth and skill enhancement. Gathering feedback has allowed us to tailor the program to better meet the evolving needs of our members, and tracking success stories showcases the profound impact of our initiatives.

Moving forward, key insights to enhance the program include recognizing the importance of: active engagement, tailoring programs to diverse needs, learning from member feedback, fostering connections through networking opportunities, acknowledging ongoing support post-graduation, tracking program impact, and embracing adaptability through technological integration.

In regards to integrity and influence, our members act as ambassadors, embodying institutional values in their personal and professional lives. Those who demonstrate integrity become influential figures, setting examples for others. Contributions to society, whether

through philanthropy or professional excellence, showcase positive influence. Mentorship and guidance from our members instill ethical values in the next generation, creating a ripple effect of integrity within our community.

At Stage 3 (with older alumni focusing on career and family), our ownership approach has evolved, with activities driven by cost-sharing and voluntary participation. This approach has cultivated a strong sense of vision ownership among our members, paving the way for future sustainability. The collective vision for Stage 3 work is to witness transformed lives and foster economic and social liberation within our community.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, we are poised to embark on a future illuminated by leadership, integrity, and the continued pursuit of positive impact. Our commitment to visionary progress remains steadfast, guiding us toward even greater achievements in the years to come.

By Elly Johnson

AYLF small group meeting in Dar es Salaam



Cornerstone Leadership Academy

This past year we have continued with an emphasis of learning how to equip our students with 21st century skills, alongside the deeper transformative work on their leadership and character development. It is a two-pronged approach to both personal spiritual growth, AND relevance in the modern world that we believe is the essence of Jesus' desire that his followers be 'in the world' but not 'of the world' (John 17:11). This endeavour included a series of activities that not only strengthened our bonds but also improved the impact of our work.

Among other highlights of this year, one that exemplifies this effort, is our students' participation in the Discovery Bible Study (DBS) program. This workshop was designed to strengthen the spiritual foundations of our students but also clarify their sense of purpose in the world. Notably, we had the privilege of hosting two distinguished figures: Dr. Ipyana, a renowned gospel artist in Tanzania, and Dr. Arnold, a scholar with a PhD in Theology. Their presence was marked by inspiring testimonies, uplifting melodies, and profound discussions, all of which underscored the importance of keeping a spiritual fervour serving Jesus, and commitment to being both the salt and the light in our world.

The notion of integrity and influence however extends far beyond just spiritual growth. In a bid to foster intellectual growth and critical thinking, a couple of staff from CLA-Tz organised the East African Debate Championships, hosted at the Turkish Maarif School in Arusha. This event united schools not only from Tanzania but also from Congo and Rwanda. The Grand finale of this competition took place at the East African Community Legislative Assembly chambers as graced by the Rt. Hon. Speaker of the Assembly and CLA-Tz emerged as Champions! Debate is a pursuit that sharpens research and oratory skills, and by participating in such events, we expand our influence beyond national borders.

Another pivotal event that contributed to our theme of integrity and influence was the Career Day hosted by CLA-Tz but organised by the Girls Livelihood and Mentorship Initiative (GLAMI). Three schools from Arusha, including Longido Secondary School, Mlangarini Secondary School, and Cornerstone, came together for this event. During Career Day, students from different schools showcased creativity in their desired professions and capabilities in various fields of interest. Once again, CLA-Tz students distinguished themselves by emerging as



CLA Tanzania students lifting up their debate championship trophy!

Champions. This event not only showcased our students' exceptional abilities but also fostered a positive influence in the region.

Recognizing the importance of embracing technology in today's rapidly advancing world, CLA-Tz introduced the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) program, targeting both teachers and students. This program equipped our teachers with essential computer skills, thereby enhancing their capabilities in an increasingly digital landscape. Furthermore, we extended this program to our students, ensuring they acquired the 21st-century skills necessary to thrive in today's world. The skills acquired through the ICDL program have equipped both our teachers and students to create a positive impact in their academics and skill set. The ability to navigate the digital world effectively opens up countless opportunities for collaboration, communication, and innovation.

In conclusion, the theme of 'Integrity and Influence' has been intricately woven into CLA-Tz throughout this year. From spiritually enriching workshops to our resounding success in debate championships, from inspiring Career Day events to the practical skills gained through the ICDL program, we have taken significant strides toward fostering integrity and influence within our school and beyond. May this be an encouragement to us all for our continued growth and positive influence in the future. It is through our collective efforts, dedication and teamwork that we can leave a lasting impact on the world around us.

By Julius Ejalam



Headmaster Vincent and Baraka addressing pioneer students at CLA DRC

D.R. Congo

One of the biggest milestones for our work in eastern D.R. Congo in the second half of this year has been the official launch of the Cornerstone Leadership Academy (CLA) of D.R. Congo. With successfully recruiting 30 brilliant students set to join the CLA family, the official launch of our academy was November 6, 2023, in Goma. The CLA DRC program aspires to nurture a generation of Jesus-centered leaders who will impact not only Congo but also the global community. The program aims to impact leaders with the spirit of Jesus, fostering a generation of self-driven individuals poised to bring positive change to the region and globally.

While we currently do not have an official COSA program yet, plans are underway to initiate one as soon as conditions permit at the academy, further solidifying our commitment to comprehensive leadership development.

In addition, as we pursue Cornerstone's overarching vision, and programmatic strategy, we have successfully formed several small groups for the High School Leadership Development (HLD) program, nurturing emerging student leaders and fostering a culture of transformational servant leadership at a grassroots level in this country. These will be key aspects of our outreach program both at the Cornerstone Leadership Academy, and with the Africa Youth Leadership Forum.

In recent months, African Youth Leadership Forum (AYLF) of DRC organized two impactful conferences for young leaders, emphasizing the values embodied in Jesus. Four youth leaders in our AYLF program now serve as guild presidents in their universities, actively extending these values to inspire others.

With gratitude, we acknowledge the maintenance of 19 small groups across different universities and the creation of three new small groups this year in our AYLF program.

The ONE (Outreach Network Exchange) program surpassed expectations by connecting with outreach programs beyond national borders. More than 60 individuals from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, and Tanzania came together, fostering cultural exchange, idea sharing, and building lasting connections.

Cornerstone Congo's commitment to holistic development extends to married couples through the Couples Fellowship. This year we witnessed two family retreats and impactful couple fellowships, fostering a community committed to shared values. These monthly gatherings, held at the Cornerstone office or other preferred locations, have aimed at strengthening bonds and extending positive influences in our communities and beyond.

In addition to the aforementioned activities, we've had consistent weekly office team fellowships and have established four weekly alumni small groups geared at establishing the vision of our family of friends following Jesus in this land.

As we reflect on the year gone by, Cornerstone Congo remains steadfast in its commitment to youth leadership development through influence, integrity, and transformative programs. With a Jesus-centered approach, the organization looks forward to shaping a brighter future for Congo and the world beyond its borders.

By Emmanuel Baraka

Burundi

"A leader is a dealer in hope."

- Napoleon Bonaparte

This statement resonates profoundly with our commitment as leaders to influence and impact the lives of those we lead. We aspire to be the salt and light of the world, as Jesus convicted us, radiating positivity and brilliance to transform our world.

Our journey in Burundi began small, with a few people believing in the power of our collective vision and working hard to see it take root. Through our first Vision Conference and grassroots work in high schools, the tide began turning. People witnessed the potential for transformation and rallied behind our cause. What started as a temporary initiative for CLA students during vacation evolved into a dynamic outreach with 41 active small groups and countless others inspired by our message.

As old students who underwent discipleship at the Leadership Academy in Rwanda, we took to heart the school motto, "Let your light shine." This led to the birth of Youth Impact Mission (YIM) Burundi in 2014, initially a holiday initiative that expanded to become a force for change. From an attendance of 80 at our very first vision conference in 2015, the present statistics boast over 800 attendees and a reach of over 10,000 young people in Burundi.

Personal integrity has played a pivotal role in working on being the salt and light in our community here. It demands a high level of commitment and belief in a new era ushered in by being the salt and light, bringing light to darkness and hope to the hopeless. It requires starting with what we have, no matter how small, knowing that even the smallest actions can have a profound impact on those around us.



A mentorship session with girls in women session at the office in Bujumbura

Actions, we've discovered, speak louder than words. Our lifestyle and deeds become a source of inspiration to the community. This year we have witnessed remarkable growth in all spheres of our work in Burundi. The AYLIF team at the university level has seen newfound light, reaching campuses beyond the economic capital, Bujumbura, and touching the northern part of the country and the political capital, Gitega.

Our high school outreach program (YIM), designed to nurture future leaders at a grassroots level, has exceeded expectations. The vision conference, now engages over 800 participants per event. These students leave inspired to illuminate their communities, contributing to an ever-expanding movement of transformational servant leaders in Burundi.

In conclusion, being the 'salt and light of the world' isn't just a religious idea; it's a leadership commitment to creating a better tomorrow through personal transformation and integrity. Our journey in Burundi has taught us that even the smallest light can dispel great darkness, and it only takes a few people to start a meaningful movement.

By Don de Dieu

Sam Birondwa teaching at the Vision conference in Burundi





A house fellowship of Campus Small Group Co-ordinators in Nairobi

Kenya

In the past couple of months, a lot has happened, with new campus small groups being launched pushing us to now 48 campus small groups across Kenya. Each small group has between 10 to 30 members with a few going beyond 30. In addition to regular weekly meetings on 'Leadership', 'Friendship', and 'Jesus', our small groups have done various engagements from caring for the least of these, tree planting, handovers, and leadership summits, among others as a way to influence their sphere.

Our Student Leadership Development Program (SLDP), has had the highest number of participants and the most committed and dedicated group of young people doing amazing projects to transform their communities. These 33 students have been taken through 8 months of leadership training, mentorship, and community engagement. We also have secured a partner who has helped us roll out the Ajibika Leadership Program. This Program targeted 30 young leaders with a focus on policy and accountability actions in government and civil engagement. Our friends from Parliament also helped us host a University Vice Chancellors (VCs) breakfast this year. This expanded our ability to attract many student leaders to our activities as some of the VCs finally could understand who we are and what we are trying to do. For the first time, we have got the parliament of Kenya accepting to cover a direct budget line for our annual gathering. We have gotten the highest number of deans of students coming to be part of our events so they can fully appreciate our work.

The High School Outreach work has swept several schools attracting so much interest from schools that want us to do something. We need to enhance more capacity for this if we are going to deliver on what is ahead of us. During the Kenya National Prayer

Breakfast 2023, it was such a great honour to have Salaam's work showcased by the coordinator being given a platform to share the reconciliation work they have been doing. This was such an amazing opportunity. We have in many ways found ourselves in spaces where ordinarily we would not.

At the centre of planning this year was the Jesus: Issa Gathering 2023 in July. We were stretched to our full capacity but I'm glad we managed to deliver on this. It was our joy to see everyone happy and the objective of the gathering achieved. Various partners and stakeholders have reached out wanting to learn more about us and wanting to partner.

With all the interests coming, our greatest challenge has been to tell some people NO, we can't do that or we can't work with you. The perception out there is that we are this big organisation that should be able to do a lot more than we are currently doing. but, we don't see it that way. We deal with many cases where people don't understand our work and often need to explain ourselves over and over again. We have a unique vision of personal transformation using the principles, precepts, and person of Jesus - staying true to the methods of this is what integrity is all about.

We are learning to be true to our vision and DNA. To say NO to some things, and be good stewards of our core vision as a community. This has been a test of our integrity in this work. It's also been great learning to try as much as we can to not plan with someone's promise until they honor it. This is a tough balance because sometimes there might be a lot of dynamics at play. Through it all, we continue to empower young people who can be influencers in their various spheres and live lives that are congruent with the values we talk about!

By Gabriel Odhiambo

South Sudan

In a world where values and principles often shift with circumstance, the timeless call to be the salt and the light resonates more than ever. These symbols, as highlighted in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, serve as powerful reminders of our role in shaping a better world.

Salt, a preservative of integrity, signifies the importance of maintaining values even in adversity. Just as salt prevents food spoilage, embodying integrity counteracts the decay of moral values. Standing true to principles, being honest, and upholding what is right contribute to building a foundation of trust and transparent communities.

Light, symbolizing influence, dispels darkness and guides the way. To be the "light" means leading by example, demonstrating kindness, compassion, and empathy. This positive influence inspires others to emulate such actions, creating a ripple effect that fosters growth and impact. The synergy between integrity and influence magnifies their impact. Examining personal values and principles is the starting point. Integrity involves consistent actions and decisions, building resilience. Being the light requires selflessness, finding ways to serve the community and uplift those in need. Using influence to inspire and mentor fosters guidance and encouragement.

In leadership, personal integrity forms the foundation. Leaders must reflect on their values, commit to unwavering principles, and remain self-aware. Leaders embodying both the preserving quality of salt (integrity) and the guiding influence of light leave a lasting impact on organizations and society. Navigating complexities with honor and grace, these leaders make the world a better place, defining the essence of leadership in the Jesus way through the principles of integrity and influence.

This Jesus-centred approach is the model of leadership that we advance in our lives and work with alumni of the Leadership Academy of South Sudan. Here are some significant points we've reached to this end this past year:

We are thrilled to announce that 48 LASS alumni have enrolled in various universities, furthering their education and contributing to their respective fields of study. Additionally, 18 LAOSA members have secured external scholarships in countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Canada, Italy, and Japan, expanding their horizons and bringing diverse perspectives to their academic pursuits.

Over the past few months, the AYLF chapter at the University of Juba has been experiencing a consistent upswing in momentum. By the end of the year, we held six AYLF meetings, fostering a vibrant community that engages in meaningful discussions and activities.

In recognition of outstanding alumni, we celebrate Ms. Yaar Mary, who actively engaged in a Leadership and Business fellowship organized by MIL-EAD Fellowship in Ghana. Her participation is a shining example of our alumni's commitment to continuous learning and personal development.

We take great pride in celebrating the achievements of 15 of our LAOSA members who successfully graduated from various universities. Their academic accomplishments stand as a testament to the dedication and hard work of our members.

Lastly, we take pride in our commitment to community outreach. In Yei, two impactful community outreaches were conducted by our dedicated alumni, showcasing our ongoing dedication to making a positive impact beyond academic pursuits.

By Khemis Zakaria

Members of AYLF in Juba, S. Sudan



Light of the World

6. The big plan is that we, as children of light, become collectively “built up together into a dwelling place of God’s spirit,” anchoring more divine light on to our planet. We are like cells forming one body or bricks that make up one building. “In Him the whole building is fitted together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord...a dwelling place for God in His Spirit. (Eph 2:22) Jesus said, “May they be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I am in You. May they also be in us.” Jn. 17:21

Much as the darkness in the world seems to have increased, there is a corresponding increase in an unaffiliated network of righteous people with loving hearts, one in spirit with Christ, who function as points of divine light, all over the world. We often fail to recognize this as we are frequently only aware of those of our same creed or group. And, such was the case in Jesus’ time when he had to remind his disciples ‘I have other sheep who are not of this fold,’ Jn. 10:16

However, the scriptures repeatedly portray a vast divine effort going on down through the millennia, creating a new kind of humanity, a redeemed humanity on a new earth. “His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity.” (Eph. 2:14) “The creation waits in eager expectation for the revelation of the children of God.... the whole of creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” Rom. 12:19-22. This, is what is unstoppably ahead of us despite the many discouraging events we see taking place in our world now. And it’s vital we get aligned and live by faith in service to this outcome that “the gates of hell cannot prevail against,” rather than living with pessimism and despair, which will only paralyze us.

7. Our current process of spiritual transformation and the way we are living our life now, is preparing us for what we will experience in the next chapter of existence after this one. Jesus said: “those who are considered worthy to share in the age to come ...are like the angels... children of the resurrection... children of God.” Luke 20:35-36

I would like to expand further on this last point. Over 30 years ago I came across this brief, clear summary from a book called the Dawn of World Redemption by Erich Sauer. It gives a set of considerations by which our lives will be evaluated at the end of our days on this planet or, we could say, at the end of the game. Up to today it has remained a kind of life guideline for me. It goes like this:

uct of our development: Not only our deeds but also our possibilities. Not only what we were but we might have become. Not only our actions but also our omissions - not the number but the weight of our deeds.”

Not just the work but the worker. Not only what we attained but what we strove after.

- Of our works, sacrifice counts the most.
- Of our disposition and motive, only selfless love.
- Of our possessions, only what we have employed in service.

Salvation depends on faith but reward depends on faithfulness. All believers will shine but with different degrees of “glory and splendor.”

Those last two lines have always stuck with me as I think about how I should best invest my life now, from the point of view of eternity. I find them fully consistent with the teachings of Jesus and our scriptures.

However, in my observation, many believers are approaching life with a simple “pass/fail” mindset in regards to what comes after this life. In other words, they just are thinking we either go to heaven or we go to hell and that’s the end of the story. So, they are not really trying to live in ways that maximize their eternal rewards, neither are they trying to develop themselves to their full spiritual potential.

This is completely different from how people pursue excellence in every other field of life - whether it is in education, business, civil society, sports, arts, etc.

Much religious messaging has laid emphasis purely on what it takes to go to heaven and avoid hell. But, not much is said about the rewards for faithful service. So most people are really not living with the understanding that there will be a wide range of possible rewards available for us and a wide range of ‘degrees of light’ radiating from our ‘next-life’ bodies - in the chapter of life that follows this one.

Yet, Jesus talked about the concept of reward around 40 times as recorded in the Gospels. In some verses he explicitly uses the word ‘reward.’ In other places he talks about gaining treasure or being repaid multiple times for what we give; or being called great in the kingdom; or by being rewarded to rule with Him.

All these instances are part of his teachings on the rewards for faithful stewardship and service. In Matthew 5:8, Jesus said: “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.” (On this note, let me add that ‘joy’, one of the fruits of the spirit, should be a defining quality of our nature as believers. Sacrificial service should not be done with a sense that we have given up much but with a glad realization that we are gaining much.)

Also, consider this passage from Scriptures on how things will be in the kingdom of heaven in regards to the degrees of radiance we will have: "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, will shine like the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 12:3

This passage brings out a similar perspective as to believers shining with different degrees of light: "Someone might ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come? There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. But the splendor of the heavenly bodies is of one degree, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is of another. The sun has one degree of splendor, the moon another, and the stars another; and stars differs from star to star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead." I.Cor. 15 v.35-42

So, why should we bother to incorporate this perspective into the way we live our lives at present? Well, in my opinion it creates a very different mindset in regards to our motivation - as to how we play the game of life.

It is wired into the human spirit to have a good reason or a strong motivation that keeps them moving forward against all challenges. We have to have a strong "Why?" to overcome laxity and apathy. As in: Why should I push myself? Why should I bother to fight for my goals?

Just like a small fire cannot give much heat, a weak motivation cannot produce great results. Maybe this is why we don't see people pushing themselves to win gold in the game of life, in the spiritual race we are all running. It's like we don't really believe it's worth giving it our best. I believe we play the game of life quite differently when we are convinced that there is a range of rewards ahead of us and a range of degrees of light that we can embody.

The simple "pass/fail" scenario (we go to heaven or we go to hell) is like telling a student to just focus on merely passing their exams - rather than encouraging them to get an "A" on them. We all know, in any school setup, the best students, are never content with simply passing. They want to pass with distinction, they want to get an "A", they want to get a first-class degree.

I am of the view that planet Earth serves as a kind of big school designed for the development of souls. The difficulties we encounter here allow us to develop qualities like courage, unconditional love, walking by faith and resilience in a way that we would have never been able to do - had we not come here. As we master

these lessons, these trials are designed to turn into gold, spiritual gold, that gets built into our nature and radiate out of our very being.

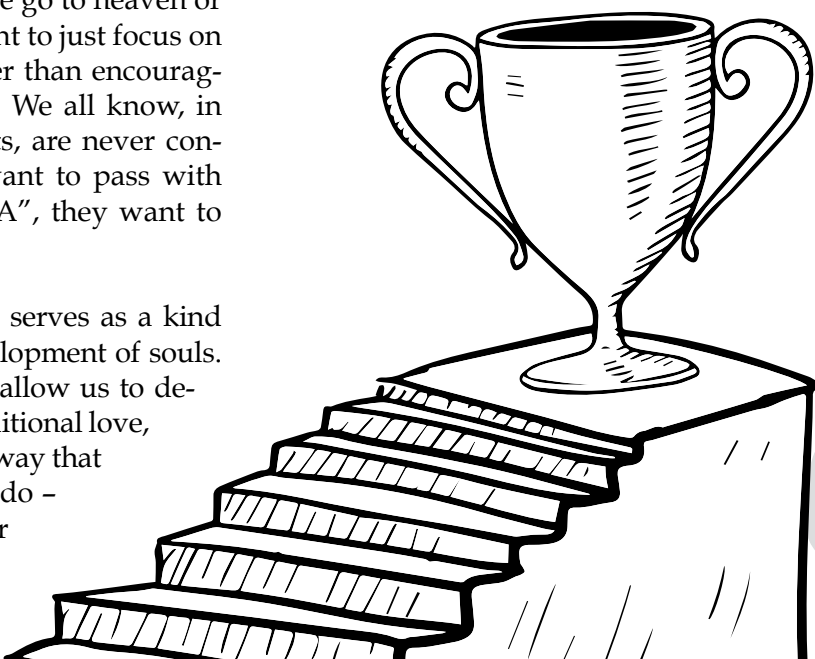
Also, like in a school, we have assignments to complete, course works to fulfil - in other words, God-given missions that we are to accomplish. And, the scriptures are clear, we will be rewarded according to how we have done.

This perspective is brought out powerfully in my favorite parable of Jesus, called "The parable of the talents" which brings together the concept of faithful service and reward in a dramatic way. It's the story about a wealthy man who went on a long journey and he gave his servants money to invest. When the wealthy man returns, he rewards them according to the returns they had made on investing what he had left them.

In this 'Parable of the Talents' - the consequences of their actions are shockingly massive: The one who had multiplied the money by ten times was told by the Master: 'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.' The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.' His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.' Lk.19:17-19

This clearly teaches that there are large gradations or degrees of reward ahead of us. And, the lesson of the parable is obvious. Jesus was teaching us, the way we use our time, treasure and talents now determine our rewards in the life to come.

This parable of Jesus gives me the motivation (and I hope for you as well) to "Go for Gold" in the Game of Life - to become the best version of myself and to give "My utmost for His highest." Become the brightest light that you can be!



You are the *Light* of the World!

Reflections From Tim



One of the most challenging statements of Jesus is where he said to his followers: "You are the light of the world." In that phrase: "You are the light" – we can see that there is both, a bold affirmation and a profound responsibility.

It is easy for us to proclaim that Jesus is the light of the world because it relieves us of our responsibility to embody a Christ-like nature and to act in Christ-like ways. But the truth is: we are the only Bible some people will ever read. We are the only example of Jesus some people will ever see. So, we are the light of the world.

Here are 7 thoughts that I have chosen to expand on, in relation to this whole concept:

1. We all carry divine light within us. Jesus says: "You are the light of the world." Mt.5:14 This comes by virtue of being created in 'the image of God'. A spark of the divine is at the core of every human soul as the scriptures say, "He has placed eternity in their hearts." (Ecc. 3:11)

2. We are tasked to radiate that light into the world around us. Jesus says: "Let your light shine." Mt. 5:16 We are to become that bright person for others, through our acts: of kindness, unconditional love, joy, peace and sharing, teachings of enlightened knowledge about the true nature of reality.

3. As we shine brightly we help orient others towards God and his ways. Jesus says: "That they may see...and glorify the Father." Mt. 5:16 The more we light up, others are lit up the way one candle lights another.

4. A human being can progressively increase the amount of light within them. Jesus says: "If your eye is single your whole body will be full of light." Mt. 6:22 The word "full" implies that there are degrees of our capacity to

hold the divine light within us. As we are progressively sanctified (spiritually purified) internally, we become a temple of the Spirit to a greater degree.

And the ultimate goal here is for us to "...mature into the full measure of the stature of Christ." (Eph. 4:13) Following Jesus is not just a matter of believing something but rather we are challenged to become something.

2 Cor. 3:18 says: "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory (from glory to glory), which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

In this verse, we find a great principle, which is: 'We who contemplate . . . are being transformed.'

There is a transforming power for the perfecting of our characters in looking upon Jesus as our role model and pattern. Our loving gaze of admiration, which wants to be like him – gradually molds us towards the likeness of his beautiful nature.

5. Our own individual transformation and our behavior is affecting the entire collective, the whole of humanity. Jesus says: "Whatever you do to the least of these you have done it unto me." Mt.25:40 There is a way we are all spiritually inter-connected and we are affecting each other. People are being influenced by what we do and even by the kind of person we

are, as our attitudes and disposition radiate out of us impacting others. Kindness is contagious and so is mean-ness. So, there is a 'ripple effect' that gets passed on from one person to the next, whether good or bad.

The conclusion is that we must accept the responsibility and carry the realization that we are influencing everyone around us, even if they may be unaware of the effect that our actions or our spirit has on them. Jesus says: "I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. Mt. 12:36

