

# Peggy's Perspective

Let us not grow weary of doing good... especially to those who are in the household of faith.

By Peggy Noll

The First Lady of Uganda earns a Masters Degree from Uganda Christian University (UCU) and is pictured at the October 30 ceremony on the front page of the national newspaper the next morning...the overall top woman graduate is a UCU Partners scholarship recipient...a new classroom building is unveiled as the Stephen and Peggy Noll Lecture Block...all in the final week of October 2015 in Mukono, Uganda, and I was there to see all this, and more.

In the vein of the weekly "Peggy's Perspectives" I posted online during my husband Steve's tenure as the Vice Chancellor from 2000-2010, I am reflecting on our recent visit to UCU. My goal is the same, to put a human face on the university to complement the reports of educational and infrastructure developments. Just who are the people UCU Partners is supporting, and how does our support change their lives?

Let me tell you a story from this visit that captures the essence of who we are supporting and why our support is so significant to individual students and to UCU who teaches, nurtures and equips the students for the personal and professional challenges they will face.



On Tuesday night I had attended the first of a series of Writing Center Workshops developed by a visiting missionary named Patty. The emphasis of this workshop was academic writing for research projects at undergraduate and postgraduate level. As one of the original editors of the UCU Writing and Study Skills course, I had a particular interest in Patty's role and her story, so we exchanged email addresses that evening.

Patty and her husband had timed their presence at UCU to coincide with the graduation on Friday, in which two students whom they had sponsored with UCU Partners' scholarships were receiving their degrees. One of them was Sarah who received the award for being the top overall female graduate in her class.

On Thursday after the Commissioning service (Baccalaureate to most Americans), I glimpsed Patty with her sponsored student, Sarah, and hurried over to take a photo of the two. Up came an exuberant young man, a classmate of Sarah's, so I took a photo of them as well as one with Patty.

Here is where the story takes a turn that deserves an epigraph from the book of Job: "the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." The next day, halfway through the graduation, a woman under the parents' and visitors' tent at the far end of the field was taken off in the UCU ambulance. Sadly, we heard later that the woman had died on the way to the hospital. Later still, I learned that she was the mother of



the smiling young man whose photo I had taken hours before.

Because I had exchanged contacts with Patty, I was able to email my photos to Sarah. This is her reply: "I am grateful for the photos. He is one of my best friends. Your pictures captured his sense of profound joy before his life took a tragic turn a few hours later. He lost his mother on our graduation. Our hearts broke, but he is more broken. I trust though that our good Lord will hold him steady and comfort him through this trying time. He is a wonderful young man who will do great things for this land."

This is only one of 1600 stories from the October 2015 graduation, but it is a poignant reminder that each of those graduates, from First Lady Janet Museveni to Sarah and her friend, has a face and a story that includes UCU as a significant chapter of their lives.

Steve and I, like you, are now on the U.S. side of supporting UCU through UCU Partners after returning in 2010. Will you join me by continuing or even increasing your support and passing the word (including this newsletter) on to your church, work colleagues, and friends?

Reading Sarah's email reminded me that our partnership with UCU is based on a biblical mandate, "Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." (Gal 6:9-10) UCU Partners provides a real and practical way to do good to others in the household of faith at Uganda Christian University.

## Uganda Christian University Partners

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University Prayer ALMIGHTY GOD, in whom we live and move and have our being, make this University a real community, and may whatever is just, pure, lovable and gracious abound here. Keep for the University an unspoiled name; develop it for wider usefulness; and may we value it as an instrument for bringing glory to your name: through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

## Word from the Executive Director



As we enter the Advent season, we are reminded of the mystery of "already but not yet," celebrating Christ's birth but also awaiting his second coming.

I can't help but feel that way as we celebrate the first fifteen years but also look forward in anticipation and hope of celebrating many more years of supporting Uganda Christian University.

I asked Steve and Peggy to share in this edition because they seemed fitting representatives of the last fifteen years—in their role at UCU, as scholarship sponsors and even in their current roles: Steve has joined the board of UCU Partners and Peggy will be coordinating our prayer partners.

Many of you have had long histories of supporting UCU through UCU Partners. Many of you have visited, prayed, given, and advocated for UCU in this last 15 years.

We're praying that those who have been faithful will remain faithful and those that are joining us now in this new season will support UCU Partners with anticipation and hope—empowering Uganda Christian University in its vision to be a center of excellence in the heart of Africa.



'The birth of Jesus', by Malunda Charles  
Oil on canvas, 50 x 80 cm, 2015, UCU Art Student

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# Uganda Christian University Partners

"Thankful for your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now." Philippians 1:3-5



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[www.UgandaPartners.org](http://www.UgandaPartners.org)

## UCU 15 Years On: Looking Back, Looking Forward by Rev. Dr. Stephen Noll

In October 2000, I was installed as the first Vice Chancellor of Uganda Christian University at the first graduation of 350 students. Just last month Peggy and I returned to be see our name affixed to a four-story classroom block and to attend the 16th graduation of over 1,600 students, including the First Lady of Uganda!

So what can we say, looking backward and looking ahead about the progress and future of UCU?

The first five years I would describe as preparing the soil for growth. My first priority was establishing the Christian identity of the University as part of the Anglican Church of Uganda. We did this through formulating a clear statement of faith for all faculty and staff, by adding a set of "foundation courses" in the Bible, Christian worldview and ethics, and by founding a dynamic chaplaincy, headed by the scholar-evangelist the Rev. Dr. John Senyonyi.

Furthermore, by God's providence I was able to use my experience at Trinity School for Ministry to prepare the University for accreditation, the first private university in the country to be "chartered." This approval cleared the way for hundreds and then thousands of Ugandans to send us their sons and daughters as students.



2000: UCU's first graduation



2015: Dedication of the new lecture block

The second five years was one of developing the beautiful campus at Mukono with classrooms, residence halls, and playing fields, serviced by central water, power, sewerage and internet. This development climaxed with the opening of a main University gate by Archbishop George Carey in 2007 and the hosting of the Ugandan University Games on our new sports fields, as well as last year hosting the East African University Games.

This period saw the growth of partnerships between UCU and other ministries, resulting in academic programs in nursing, maternal health, children's work, radio broadcasting, and leadership development, with many overseas students and faculty from Christian universities and from the Fulbright Scholars program.

In 2010, I was overjoyed to pass the baton to John Senyonyi, who had worked alongside me for the entire ten years. John has carried on the tradition of UCU and expanded it, adopting the University theme: "A Complete Education for a Complete Person." John oversaw the completion of the magnificent central library and science buildings and a regional campus in eastern Uganda with 2000 students. As a sign of UCU's reputation, John was elected chairman of the central accrediting body. Through all this, he has kept his passion for the Gospel, preaching frequently at University missions and elsewhere in Uganda and Africa.

What of the future? John has been reappointed for the next five years. He is concerned to assist faculty to integrate faith and learning in their teaching. There is serious discussion of a medical school in the future. At the end of twenty years, UCU will be established on a firm foundation of faith, excellence and vision.

And so we can truly say: "The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad" (Psalm 126:3).

# 2000 - 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

View UCU's complete photo album at  
[http://www.facebook.com/  
UgandaChristianUniversity/photos\\_stream](http://www.facebook.com/UgandaChristianUniversity/photos_stream).



Diane Stanton (recently retired as Executive Director of UCU Partners) with UCU graduate



CCCU Vice President opens Kivengeri Classroom block



Sherman White, UCU Partners Board Chairman, has recently retired after 15 years



Archbishop Carey opens the main gate at UCU



All Nations housing built by partner churches



UCU Charter in hand!



The Rev Dr. John Senyonyi, the Vice Chancellor of UCU



UCU holds two open-air missions each year for students and staff

*I have had the privilege to visit institutions of Christian higher education all across North America and around the globe. Uganda Christian University represents the kind of distinctive education one hopes to find among the best of Christian institutions.*

David S. Dockery, President

Trinity International University/Trinity Evangelical Divinity School