

## **Urban Evangelism in Lira**

### **Revd Laurence Pusey**

Concerted evangelism was the plan for an urban parish in Lira in the Diocese of Lango during November 2017. Three distinct teams drew encouragement from one another.

Team One was the 165 strong door-to-door cohort, some of whom put in 7 hour shifts, working out of the five churches in the parish. Their obvious enthusiasm and passion for sharing the gospel of Jesus resulted in 650 salvation decisions. A big surprise for westerners will be that this was below expectations. Some thought the lower response might be due to the urban setting.

Team Two was the market-to-market cohort of thirty preachers who, as the name suggests, visited the various markets to preach from the back of a pick-up. These started at 6 a.m. to catch the crowds waiting for trucks to take them to work. 450 decisions were recorded.

Team Three concentrated on the Open Air campaign in the early evening. These sang in the choir, helped with counselling those coming forward in response to the salvation call and in praying for the sick. 180 salvation decisions were logged but the team just gave up trying to keep track of how many they prayed with for healing. However, reports came back of aches and pains disappearing, stiff legs and hips working freely and those with failing sightseeing clearly. One young couple came on stage to declare that the wife's bleeding had stopped at the Name of Jesus.

My favourite story is of the five year old girl who was devastated to discover that she had arrived too late for the salvation call but, being resourceful, joined the line for healing and was soon led in a prayer of repentance and faith in the Saviour Jesus.

### **Some Observations**

- In Uganda the door is wide open for evangelism; the church must seize this opportunity.
- How long will the door remain open? When I first visited Uganda in 1996 the only mosque I saw outside of Kampala was Idi Amin's abandoned project in Lira; now it seems that every town has a mosque. At the same time modernity is coming; TV, the internet and western ideas will radically change the youth especially.
- The need for Bible teaching and grounding in doctrine remains acute.
- In the healing ministry more balanced training is needed. Why is it that so many women collapse in the ministry times? Surely it can't be that every case is a demon: are they rather showing signs of emotional damage? Asked about this, one experienced midwife replied, 'The Ugandan women are terrorised'. Here the Mothers' Union could have a role to play in providing compassionate care and looking after the younger women.

- One senior priest drew a parallel with the military: a commanding officer wants to keep his troops ready for battle. In the same way the church needs to provide more training and evangelistic campaigns so its members are 'always ready to give an account of the hope that is within them' to the glory of Jesus.

*"Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, they are white already to harvest."*

*Laurence Pusey is one of the Chaplaincy Team covering both Universities in Leeds*

