



December News

Greetings!

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Share the journey with us - the Children of the Earth.

"Spirituality is being myself as part of the Divine, and seeing the Divine light in others, while being the change I want to see in the world."

Sarah Dreyfus

Plan "Bee" for Uganda



The story of Lukwiya Peter Phillips, a WSYC member and Uganda's COE Chapter leader, is an inspiring story about a young man who is actively changing the lives of many who are striving for a better future, one that is now slowly becoming a reality, thanks to Peter's innovative ideas.

Peter grew up in Kitgum, a rural district in Northern Uganda that has been wrecked by decades of civil conflict which has claimed the lives of thousands, including Peter's brother and grandfather, who were kidnapped and later killed in the battle. This ongoing conflict has contributed to entrenched poverty in the region, forcing people to live in over populated camps. Such camps are characterized by lack of food, insecurity, poor social services, inadequate health services, deplorable water and sanitation facilities, and few income generation possibilities, making the people dependent on humanitarian assistance. The impact of this prolonged civil war as well as the HIV/AIDS epidemic have had a dramatic effect on the women of the rural community in Kitgum, many of whom have lost their husbands to war and have been left without livelihood opportunities. These widows, who are often uneducated and of low social status due to the traditional gender roles, have to take care of many family members and are solely responsible for household food production.

In spite of the situation, Peter managed to go to College in the Eastern part of Uganda, where he performed very well and was awarded a government scholarship to study at University. Unfortunately, due to the insecurity in his home region, he was unable to return home and became a refugee in his own country for 2 years.

Peter's father, like most men in Uganda, provided financial support for his family and paid the fees that enabled Peter and his siblings to attend school. In 2000, when Peter's father died, his family lost their only source of income, thus becoming dependent on their small farm plot for survival.

The ongoing suffering of his people led to Peter's growing passion for peace work. He desired to restore hope in the minds of the hopeless and to become the change that he wanted to experience in his own community.

Peter started looking for ways to help and improve the livelihood of the women in his community, so that they could have a source of income to support their families. He came up with a wonderful and creative idea: Beekeeping!!! In 2007, Peter received a grant from The Orskov Foundation, a UK Charity organization, to start the community development project for the eradication of household poverty and the conservation of biodiversity through beekeeping.

He mobilized groups of rural women from 3 villages in Kitgum and gave them the grant to start the beekeeping



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Featured Article

Intercultural Youth Exchange for Peace at the 4th Global Alliance Summit for Ministries and Departments of Peace, Costa Rica 20 September 2009. [Find out more ...](#)

Especially Grateful For ...

The **Peace Revolution** aims to bring about world peace through inner peace, one person at a time. www.peacerevolution2010.org is an online self development program that has 'inner peace time', or meditation as the means to uncovering the peace that lies within each of us. Our true nature. Our true humanity.



Deloitte Street Child World Cup: South Africa 2010

Winning rights for street children all over the world

In March 2010, eight teams, including a team from the Philippines, will represent their countries on the soccer field in an international tournament in South Africa.

But these aren't the highly-paid soccer stars of the FIFA World Cup. This is the first ever Street Child World Cup.

<http://streetchildworldcup.org>



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project. The groups bought 150 beehives, beekeeping equipment and received training in apiary. Thanks to additional financial assistance from his friends in Belgium and from The Foundation for Purposeful Living in North Carolina, the number of project beneficiaries and hives has doubled and the hives are providing the women with a cash income through the sale of honey and other bee products. Peter also initiated the formation of a co-operative for the beekeepers in his region. Through this co-operative, he is soliciting financial resources to establish a micro-credit scheme to provide loans to the farmers, enabling them to expand their entrepreneurial activities.



As an environmentalist, Peter is also conscious about the importance of the conservation of natural resources and the impact of climate change. He is committed to doing everything he can to help protect the environment. In Sept 2008, Peter was awarded a Rufford Small Grant for Nature Conservation, which should help educate and engage his community in the sustainable conservation of the Palabek-Kal Forest Reserve.

Peter's great courage, determination and unconditional love continue to plant seeds of hope in the hearts of those in great need. May his selfless service inspire us to take action and create a positive future not only in our communities but ultimately upon the whole Earth. Let us put the needs of humanity before our own individual needs so that we may become true instruments of peace and love.

Into The Eye of the Storm, Philippines



"It's a disaster!" We use these words far too easily. Sadly on September 26th we discovered the true meaning of this phrase. Typhoon Ondoy struck the area where we live and work with such force that within minutes tens of thousands were homeless and hundreds dead.

Saturday morning is normally busy time, but with the typhoon I was at home studying when mid morning I started to receive panicked phone calls telling me that hundreds of people had fled flood waters and run to Papaya Academy School and the Mango Tree House Childrens Home. The two are next to one another, although at the time Mango had not officially been opened but was occupied by children and staff. The Papaya staff were all off as the school was closed this Saturday and only the caretaker was present. Immediately I knew I had to get to the school as one person could not organise food, accommodation, etc for hundreds. My car is nearing the end of its life and was in the garage so I phoned Mark who drives. But his phone was off! So in the middle of horrendous rain I walked to the house of Mark he was not home but in hospital! He had a stomach infection during the previous night and the keys were with him miles away. Then I made a decision, the wisdom of which I have reflected on many times since, that I would walk to the school many miles away.

This would be a difficult walk in the best of circumstances but in the middle of a typhoon it is at best foolhardy. Reaching a flooded river I decided to wade across it, not knowing that same river would kill over 40 people only a few hundred metres from me. The people living at the rubbish dump, next to the water's edge begged me not to cross it but it was the only way. With a prayer and a singular purpose I made it to the other side, but not without almost being swept away! If I had tried to drive it would have been futile as the road was blocked with landslides, floods and broken vehicles, never was I more pleased that a friend was in hospital! Over four hours past before I made it to the school. Here is a photo of me as I arrived:



At almost exactly six am the next morning without sleep I shared a short devotion with the evacuees before the brave ones went to see that they had lost everything in the flooding. It should have been the hardest message of my life yet the Creator gave me the words and

Innertainment

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Now, more than ever, the time is right for the world to focus on compassion.

Learn.
Share.
Act.



Children of the Earth by Julia Butterfly Hill

"Sing Your Songs"

Sing your songs,
Children of the Earth...
You, whose voices
have been shut down,
silenced.

Sing your songs,
Children of the Earth...
You, who have lost hope,
given up on a world
that has given up on you.

Sing your songs,
Children of the Earth...
Sing the world awake
from its terrible slumber.
Sing the world
into healing,
re-weaving the threads
of a torn fabric.

Sing your songs,
Children of the Earth...
sing at the top of your lungs,
from the roof-tops
as we plant gardens
and dance rhythms
only you know...
inviting others to remember.

Sing your songs,
Children of the Earth...
Sing loudly,
Sing proudly,
Hold your heads high
and your hearts wide open.

Sing your songs,
Children of the Earth...
and teach us all to sing
the song...
of healing...



the people responded by praising and thanks giving that they were alive, I was humbled.

It would be easy to go on about the horror of that day and those that followed but I want you to know the incredible feats of cooperation and compassion that were happened. We had the joy of seeing thousands around the world including many of you responding to reach a "Rope of Hope" out to the victims. Charities who had never worked together in the past joined forces! A packing centre and kitchen was established in the business district where the community proved how much they cared by packing food bags, cooking meals (many areas were under water and people had no cooking facilities). Some volunteers even travelled at the end of their work day up to two hours to help us distribute. In total we had the honor of feeding roughly 35,000 people, and providing medical assistance to thousands. Hundreds of lives were saved and the Good News was preached in word and action! We (all the charities and individuals involved) are now planning to start a new charity called "Rope of Hope" so we are prepared for the next disaster as sadly the Philippines suffers more than any other nation.

For any of you who are interested photos and my daily newsletters during the first few days are on the British Women's Association website: <http://bwamanila.com/photos.html> Please note they are abbreviated and these were rushed but I knew that information needed to get out.

For me the high point was that children in Mango, all abandoned, neglected or abused could not be stopped from packing bags, cooking food and helping in anyway they could. Then one night at devotions I heard them talk about all their lives how they had been victims and now they were the ones responsible for helping the victims. As I write these words I have tears of joy in my eyes remembering. We have so many stories, some incredibly positive but not enough space to share here.

Some of my photos were used by the BBC and other web sites and a front page story was written about our efforts in the Philippines largest newspaper: <http://goodnewspilipinas.com/?p=8998> but what is exciting is the phase we have just entered. On the night of the typhoon a man asked me for my torch, as I did not know him I asked why and he told me the water had subsided enough and he thought he could walk to his house and see the damage, thus in the middle of the night we walked to his house, everything was in ruins, he just took it in his stride until he saw this, his Bible open at Job (I took this photo that minute):



Tears welled up in his eyes and I promised I would replace it. But we are distributing so many Bibles now it will take days! We are also giving out the Philip Yancey book "Where is God when it Hurts", we hope these will witness to the community and bring about **revival as they saw just how many people cared**. We are also working with those of many other faiths to support them in their beliefs but the Philippines is mainly Catholic so please forgive the Christocentric message here.

The amazing thing is the different charities that responded as one were like so many different threads coming together. Alone we could not have achieved much, but together we saw miracles. Now we are determined to use this as a starting point for us all to work closer together in the future, here we can build structural change as well as preparing for the next disaster. We are all interconnected and the closer we work together as one the more we can achieve, we need this Rope of Hope to grow strong enough to meet needs and change lives.

We cannot thank you enough for how you responded, if only you could look into the eyes of those you helped I know you would hear Jesus whisper in your ear "well done my good and faithful servant". This may have been the most horrendous time of my life, but it was also the most blessed and you have been blessings.

Craig.

Thank you.

In case you were wondering:

- WSYC stands for World Spirit Youth Council;
- Hubs are groups of youngsters and elders in World Spirit Youth Council dedicated to spiritual activism;
- Chapters are groups of youngsters and elders dedicated to humanitarian action.

SpiritYouth

Are you passionate about Spirituality and what it can do transform our world for the better? Then apply to be one of our volunteer resident writers and manage a section on SpiritYouth. [Click here to read more](#)

We invite you to find out more on the Children of the Earth Website
- www.children-of-the-earth.org.

Sincerely,
Children of The Earth

Coming Up Next Issue

- We were present at the World Parliament of Religions and we look forward to letting you know how it went.
- Featuring a Hub and a Chapter.

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