

## BORN A MUSLIM... BORN AGAIN AS A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST!

### MEET PATRICK MUGENYI

His name wasn't always Patrick. At birth he was given a Muslim name, Muhammed. His childhood was anything but pretty. His mother left when he was just an infant. Patrick's father was a truck driver and moved from place to place and married often. He had multiple wives and some were told to care for Patrick while he was on the road.

The step-mothers had no love for this young child. In fact, Patrick was deeply resented. After all he was an inconvenience to them and, like some of the fairy tales you read as a child, he was badly mistreated. The step-mothers only wish was that somehow he would simply disappear.

Meanwhile, Patrick's father was imprisoned during the reign of Uganda's leader at that time, Milton Obote. Because Patrick was a very young, unwanted child, there was nowhere for him to go. His father's wives then did the unthinkable. They left for parts unknown leaving the frightened child in an abandoned rented house all alone with nothing to eat and no one to care for him.

After several days sleeping alone, desperately hungry and no one to help him, Patrick began to wonder what it would be like to die at such an early age. But God had other plans.

A neighbor came by one day and was certain she heard a whimper from inside the rented house that everyone nearby thought had been totally abandoned. Curious and moved by the Holy Spirit, this kindly woman managed to enter the house and found the young boy huddled in the corner of one of the rooms, tears streaming down his face and obviously very frightened.



This kind neighbor went over to this tearful young lad, picked him up and hugged him. She then took Patrick home, cleaned him up a bit, gave him some food and then took him to an orphanage run by an African foundation whose sole mission was to care for street children and orphans of which there were many.

While staying at the overcrowded orphanage, Patrick met a number of street children who found shelter at this place of refuge. Because of the crowded conditions at the orphanage along with a shortage of food due to the civil war and insufficient funding, his newly found friends from the streets decided to go out on their own in order to survive. During this time Patrick learned to steal, take drugs and was introduced to other ways of the world in order to somehow stay alive.



Fortunately this rag-tag group found a place to sleep in an abandoned house. The house was sparsely furnished with some beds which the boys sold in order to buy some food. Sleeping on the floor was somewhat difficult with no blankets or other coverings but this run-down house provided a form of shelter. It was certainly better than sleeping in abandoned vehicles left to rot on the side of the road as the war continued to wreak havoc around the country.

Sometime later Patrick was snatched from his life in the streets and brought back to the orphanage where he had been earlier. By God's grace, mercy and love, a sponsor from the Netherlands was found for Patrick and he was transferred to a better home.

While at his new home he was able to receive a basic education. However, during this time, Patrick became emotionally disturbed. He wanted to know his biological parents and relatives. Patrick states that, "I cried often because I felt so alone even in this different orphanage. Because of the war we were unable to get most of the basic necessities for living. Life was hard."

A small crack of light entered Patrick's life when the orphanage invited different pastors to come and speak to those residing in the shelter for homeless victims. Patrick listened carefully to what the pastors shared. He was introduced to the Bible and before long he was winning prizes when they held Bible quizzes even though at this point he was not a believer. As Patrick continued to grow up, the gnawing of wanting to belong to a family would not go away. In 1997, Patrick pleaded with God to help him find his parents. He told the Lord he would get saved if God would help him. Then in a dream that night Patrick was given instructions as to how he might find his family.



A short time later, following the instructions he received in his dream, he located his mother and some of his relatives but could not find his father. Patrick's relatives told him that his father was "bewitched and was a homeless wanderer". They also told Patrick that during the war his father was kidnapped during Obate's reign of terror and was carried away by some soldiers in a military truck.

As Patrick continued his search for his father he discovered that in the year 2000 he was seen in Rwanda and then in 2002 another person claimed to see him in Sudan. However, several people stated that whenever his father spotted a relative or someone he knew, he quickly disappeared.

In spite of not being able to locate his father, Patrick states that every time this "gap" in his life overwhelms him, he gives thanks to the Lord that God is his father and has promised to "Never leave him or forsake him". He also gives thanks to the Lord that he was able to find his mother and sister which Patrick says brought him "great joy."

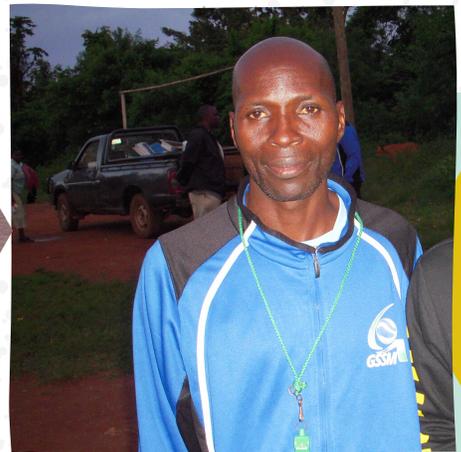


In the year 2000, Patrick was sleeping at a church with no job and struggling somehow to survive. Then one night he had a dream about preaching the Good News to others. A kind woman at the church taught Patrick how to play the piano. Further brightening his life was another dear woman from the same church who taught this passionate young man how to play the guitar. Then, as to put some frosting on the cake, Patrick was taken to a music teacher who introduced him to additional techniques and more professional ways to play the guitar and piano.

At this point in his dawning new life, Patrick met Sam Kibedi who saw Patrick moving along in the village with his borrowed guitar. Sam invited Patrick to a sports fellowship meeting and when there, they asked him to play the guitar for them. He did so and the group was impressed. Patrick was then invited to have an interview for a position with Sports Outreach.

The individual who interviewed Patrick was none other than Barnabas Mwesiga, currently GSSM's Director of Sports Ministry in Africa and former national soccer coach of Uganda.

Barnabas, in turn, highly recommended Patrick and soon became, as Patrick puts it, "my father, coach and friend." Patrick goes on to say that "Barnabas always encourages me in crises that arise and helps me whenever questions come up. He also taught me how to play football (soccer) even though I was not a great player."



After Barnabas left Sports Outreach and joined Global School of Sports Ministry, Patrick further states, "I continued to run after him and he always gave me his attention and support. I also disturbed Barnabas with many other problems and needs and he never failed to help me. May the Lord richly bless this dear man."

Later Barnabas called Patrick to tell him that they were going to form a group that would help and support one another and would develop sports outreach programs to reach many with the Good News. Fourteen potential members showed up at the first meeting. However, since this was to be a volunteer effort with no pay involved, most lost interest and left. The only ones that remained included Patrick, David, Jimmy and shortly afterwards, Isaac.

As Team Ebenezer began to gell, numerous doors to minister in a variety of ways began to open. Scores of people responded to the Gospel as this quartet of men felt called to go into the harvest fields that surrounded them in order to proclaim Christ's love and share how those without hope could become members of God's family and have the assurance of spending eternity in the kingdom of the Lord.

Finally, on behalf of Team Ebenezer, Patrick wanted to thank GSSM and those who support Global for their help in assisting them by facilitating their ministry in so many ways.

Then in closing, Patrick wanted to pay tribute to Barnabas Mwesiga once again, Barnabas has become a father to them all, meets with them regularly and is truly an encourager as the name Barnabas implies.

In conclusion Patrick uttered one last thought. "May all the praise honor and glory go to God who has, in His mercy, love and grace, invited us to be part of the most incredible family of all....."

And now you know the "rest of the story". Four young men rescued from our sin infected world, washed clean by the blood of Jesus and robed in the King's righteousness. Four men, not perfect (and none of us are), but willing to put on the full armor of God and enter the battle for those who are lost and floating in the sea of despair. How I praise God for each of these men and their courage to become true followers of Christ.



## Will You Pray With Us?

Would you please take a moment out of your very busy lives to pray for Team Ebenezer....David, Isaac, Patrick, Jimmy and their leader Barnabas.

Thanks for caring. Thank you for praying. Thank you for your support.

With much gratitude. Russ 

### Correction

In a previous News-Brief concerning Jimmy Kalyango, I stated that Jimmy is now feeding 500 children each day in the 3 slums where he is working. Jimmy did not say that in his report. He simply stated we are now feeding 500 children (each month). For some of the children that means a few times each month. For others in greater need he feeds them more often as he is able. For those identified as receiving no meals each day Jimmy attempts to feed them each day if he has enough funds to do so. Nevertheless over a monthly period he feeds 500 children. My apologies for not stating this correctly. My fault, not Jimmy's. Russ Carr