

'THE LEAST OF THESE BROTHERS OF MINE'

PASTOR'S WORK HAS INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

Island Community Church's Pastor Tony Hammon opened the doors of Island Christian School in August 1974. Having recently explored his faith, the biology and marine science teacher departed Coral Shores High School to pursue the vision of opening a new Christian school. Since then, Hammon's impact hasn't only been felt in the community – it's reached other continents.

What was your best subject growing up? Lunch and P.E. That is, until I had two teachers at Coral Shores who believed in me and challenged me to aspire to greater things (Roger Allen and Mark Gillett). The life-sciences always seemed to come easiest; thus, my teaching of biology and marine science.

Which subject required more prayer? Foreign language! (It didn't help! ... Prayer, that is.)

Which parable is your favorite? It's like asking, "What is the most important thing Jesus had to say?" But, I guess I would say, based on my work in Uganda and now Haiti it would be Matthew 25:31-40. Specifically, where Jesus says, "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

Have any summer reading recommendations? "A Hole in Our Gospel," by Richard Stearns; "Love Does," by Bob Goff; "Too Small to Ignore," by Wess Stafford.

For some years now you've been a part of helping Ugandan children in some extraordinary circumstances. What's been the most eye-opening part of the process? The average income is about \$85/ month. The government will educate two children in each family. The problem is that most families have six or more children. If the orphanages and faith-based schools did not step in, there would be very little hope for these children. It is estimated that there are around 2.5 million orphans in Uganda. The task of educating and feeding these children lies primarily with churches and faith-based organizations.

Who has served as inspiration for undertaking a large effort like the one in Uganda? I was challenged at the Global Leadership Summit in 2011 to make a bold commitment to something, "a tough calling," and trust God to do the rest. Just before that challenge at the Summit, I had been asked by Dr. Dino Pedrone, president of Davis College, to consider accepting the presidency of International Association of Christian Colleges and Schools. I felt pretty strongly that God's hand was in the midst of it all.

How did you think up the idea of donating a milk cow as a way to help? The idea actually came from an orphan girl named Damallie, who was now grown and taking care of orphan babies that no one else would care for. When we asked her how we could help her, she responded with: "A cow." We found that you can get a cow in Uganda for about 1,000 U.S. dollars. When I got back to the States I told Pete Reynolds, one of the men at a men's breakfast that meets each week, about the conversation. He said, "I'll buy a cow." So, the next year we were able to present Damallie with her cow. We have given away 30 cows to different orphanages and 5 calves have been born. This year our goal is to give away at least another 15 cows. The milk is cut 3:1 with water and each baby gets about ½ liter of milk per day. If my math is correct, that is 102 babies per day! That's a big deal.

What is the main goal of the adjustable shoe initiative?

My good friend, and Ugandan traveling partner, Mike Forster, came across these amazing shoes and started his own campaign through a website. They are a very well made leather sandal that will expand into six different sizes. The shoes come in two sizes, so a child could be in sandals from early childhood to adulthood. It is very common for us to give flip-flops to kids who have never had a shoe on their foot their entire life. These sandals that we are taking this year weigh exactly one pound. Fifty of them come in a virtually weightless nylon red bag. Each of the six-people traveling with us this year will carry one of these bags, so we can give away 300 pairs.

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