

# When a Friend Calls...

By Debbie Moss | Minister of Health and Wellness

**M**y relationship with the people of Kajo Keji, South Sudan began in 2009 with a medical mission project to a small village located 7 miles from the South Sudan/Uganda border. Over the years my relationships grew in both depth and quantity as Dawson continued to send medical mission teams to help care for the spiritual and physical needs of the people. As a result of these projects, churches were planted, pastors were trained, and women's ministries were implemented. Some of the first people we partnered with were Pastor Edward Dima and his wife, Rose. Pastor Edward was the spiritual leader of the community who helped equip Sudanese local pastors through training and discipleship. At that time, he also

served as the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Kajo Keji. Although there have been traumatic changes in South Sudan, Pastor Edward and his wife continue to be committed people who love the Lord.

When the war between North and South Sudan spilled into the villages surrounding Kajo Keji in January 2017, many people that our Dawson teams had served and had gotten to know personally were being beaten and killed. The little village we had grown so fond of was no longer safe for the Sudanese, and the majority of those who remained were forced to quickly flee across the border into Uganda. So, when I heard that someone was trying to contact me at Dawson from inside a Ugandan refugee camp, I knew it had to be our friends from South Sudan. Pastor Edward and the others needed our help.

## Project 1 | Easter 2017

### Food Distribution

#### Food:

925 kg - Rice

3750 kg – Phoso (maize corn flour)

1400 kg – Beans

5 kg – Onions

**Total Food weight = 13,376 lbs.**

#### Additional items:

1500 bars of soap

100 Bibles for the camp churches

30 tarps (4 x 5 meters) for the 30 pastors starting churches in the Refugee Camps to give the churches a shade during worship.



When the residents of Kajo Keji fled their villages, they left with only what they could carry. In the confusion of the exodus, some were even separated from their families as they ran across the border. Many of them had to settle in United Nations refugee camps seven miles from the South Sudan border in Uganda. Today, Pastor Edward, a refugee himself, is still doing God's work among his people. During the day he serves as the President of the Uganda Baptist Seminary and spends time training, teaching classes, and encouraging the pastors throughout multiple refugee camps. In fact, he serves more than 30 of our South Sudanese pastor friends who are also refugees in the camps. Even during these difficult days, the pastors knew the people needed more than just food and shelter. Each pastor has been able to start church groups within the camps as they continue to obey God's call on their lives to lead the churches.

As good friends often do when times are tough, our South Sudan partners reached out to Dawson to see if we might be able to help meet some of their many needs in the refugee camps.

Initially, after speaking with Pastor Edward, we discovered the biggest immediate need was for food. The international food aid was not reaching the people, so Dawson's first refugee project was to distribute much needed food. Our team flew into Uganda the week before Easter in 2017. When we arrived we rented two lorries (trucks for hauling) and purchased the food from several outdoor markets in Uganda. The need was so great that we purchased more than thirteen thousand pounds of food, which our team delivered straight to our

30 pastor friends in the camps. These pastors knew who had the greatest need. The widowed, orphaned, and the elderly within their own camp churches were a top priority, so plans were made for fair distribution. As the emergency food was distributed, people were also fed spiritually. Our team just happened to be there on Easter Sunday, and that day became one that I will never forget. God provided translators, and every person who attended the worship services heard



Pastor Edward Dima, Dawson's ministry partner, leads a network of South Sudanese pastors and churches in Ugandan refugee camps.



## Project 2 | Sept. 2017

### Medical/Dental Team

718 patients seen  
195 teeth pulled  
90 Professions of Faith

## Project 3 | Sept. 2018

### Medical/Dental Team

924 patients seen  
140 teeth pulled  
43 women were trained at the Woman's Leadership Conference in:  
*"Preventive Health Care" and  
"Sharing Their Faith"*

*[ The women who attended this training made a pledge to share their lessons with others within one week. We saw them teaching the next day throughout the camps. ]*

129 Professions of Faith



Cyndi Cortes, Dawson mission volunteer, provides triage at Refugee Medical Clinic.

the Gospel in their own language. There were 30 professions of faith that day in the churches and the celebration of our risen Savior was extraordinary.

During the Easter project we connected with a young pastor that a previous Dawson team had impacted. In 2012, Julius Kajawuya attended a Dawson-led Pastor's Training Conference in Kajo Keji. Following that conference, he served as a translator for other Dawson teams. When the civil war started Julius, too, was forced to leave Kajo Keji on his motorcycle to cross the border in search of safety. On the way, he was shot, robbed, and left for dead on the side of the road.

Fortunately, there were other people hiding in the bushes nearby waiting for the attackers to leave. Once they had left and saw that Julius was still alive, they picked him up and carried him across the border into Uganda to a local hospital. Julius recovered and is now living in the refugee camp. When he heard his friends from Dawson were coming to the camp, he was anxious to see us. I told him we had been praying for his recovery. He replied, "My arm doesn't work well, but I can still preach." Julius has now started a new church within the camp.



Refugee pastor praying with new believers during Easter worship service in 2017.





Debbie Moss, Dawson's mission team leader for Kajo Keji, coordinates the purchase of emergency food relief in local Ugandan markets.

After the food relief project, our Kajo Keji friends desired to become self-sustaining regarding their food needs. They asked their Dawson friends for funds to purchase garden seeds, plants, tools, and supplies to plant a garden. Dawson did indeed answer the call, and with the money that was given by our church family, they were able to purchase 20 acres of land, seasonal plants and seeds, and garden tools. They were also able to purchase a used motorcycle with an attached cart to carry supplies and produce. Now everyone belonging to the camp churches — from the pastors to the children — all work in the garden and share the produce. It is a beautiful community effort.

After living as refugees in the camps for months, health issues began to arise. Dawson sent a medical and dental mission team in September 2017, and then a third team went a year later in September 2018. With each of these projects, the Dawson team set up a basecamp and went out each day to preplanned sites within the refugee camp to conduct mobile medical clinics. The refugee pastors went with us, and they shared the Gospel message in their local language with every person we treated. There are many more stories to tell about how God is working among these displaced people living in a foreign country. In the midst of



Christopher McCullers, Dawson mission volunteer, and others share their faith stories as a part of each medical clinic in the camps.

tragic circumstances, they are now able to hold their heads high and sing praises as they work in their own gardens. Their message to Dawson is “Thank you” for your years of prayers and support.

I would like to personally invite you to join the next Dawson mission team as we return in September of 2019 for a Medical/Dental Clinic. There will be opportunities to follow up last year's Women's Conference with additional training. Would you consider being a part of this team? Both medical and non-medical participants are needed. You will work hard, get dirty, and end each day with a feeling of great satisfaction, knowing you will be rewarded beyond measure. If you would like information on the 2019 project, please contact me at [dmoss@dawsonchurch.org](mailto:dmoss@dawsonchurch.org).



**DEBBIE MOSS** is a registered nurse and has served as Dawson's Health and Wellness Minister since 2001. She has long held a passion for helping people of all ages achieve optimal health, both physically and spiritually. With a strong clinical background in critical care, trauma, and cardiology, Debbie has been uniquely equipped to direct multiple medical mission initiatives that began in 1981. Since that time, she has traveled to more than 35 countries assisting people by providing quality healthcare while sharing the Gospel message.