

Motorcycle-Riding, Gun-Dealing Cop-Turned-Pastor Marvels at International Miracles

Churchgoers outside the eight Rocky Mountain States might raise an eyebrow or two at the idea of a tough motorcycle-riding ex-cop turned federally-sanctioned gun dealer becoming senior pastor of their church.

Odd though it may seem, this same tent-making pastor, working as a property manager alongside his wife in the small mountain town of Estes Park, Colorado, is also perfectly and precisely equipped by his Lord and Savior to be a highly-fruitful missionary to some of the darkest regions of Africa. After hearing several second-hand accounts of miraculous crusades, healings and even reported deliverance from death in Uganda this past December, I felt compelled to visit Pastors Steve and Lorna Ferrante at their small home near Park Fellowship Church in Estes Park.

In 27 trips to Uganda, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and others in that region of Southeastern Africa over the past two decades, Pastor Steve has laid hands on hundreds of people—watching and marveling as person after person receives instant healing from deafness, blindness, the ravages of malaria and other diseases of all varieties.

All of this occurs openly, in public crusades at the heart of Muslim communities riven with scores of witch doctors and witches invoking magical practices—cultures of death that only tough, committed and fully Spirit-driven missionaries such as Pastor Steve could endure and survive. Time after time, day after day, he finds people writhing on the ground and, on

occasion, vomiting vile buckets of demonic filth. Five people in a row were cured of deafness, followed by two who were healed of malaria.

Pastor Steve's favorite stories involve a fiery Ugandan pastor nicknamed "Smart." This supercharged, Spirit-filled leader of Uganda Christian Outreach Ministries occupies outdoor platforms in Muslim neighborhoods with the courage of a Caleb. As he speaks, members of his team move about the crowd, laying hands on everyone and praying. Many healings and other manifestations result—every time.

This writer can only ask: How many pastors of far more traditional and much larger American churches have experienced such manifestations of God's power? Very few, I would suggest. This is why I felt compelled to go visit him after hearing second-hand reports of nonstop miracles resulting from two recent missions to Uganda.

Pastor Steve was speaking with a uniformed sheriff's deputy as we pulled into the church parking lot, engaged in an intense conversation we chose not to interrupt. A bit later, Pastor Steve apologized, explaining there was need of his assistance from a family whose relative had died, leaving several firearms for them to deal with.

What a way to start a conversation with a superbly qualified and uniquely anointed man of God.

Pastor Steve's story is long, complicated and somewhat unbelievable while fully credible. As a child in California, he suffered from a degeneration of the brain's sight center which, doctors said, would render him blind by the age of 12. His believing parents would not accept this medical verdict, and their prayers bore good fruit. Also during childhood, severe ear infections rupturing his ear drums on numerous occasions left him completely deaf. Yet again, his faithful parents prayed him back to full good health. And all of this

was merely the beginning of a truly miraculous life.

He grew up in a Holy Spirit-filled church but did not initially feel a strong urge to minister. He subsequently went into law enforcement and spent 20 years as a cop in California and Florida. In the process, he married another believer, his high school sweetheart, Lorna. Together, they had four children, leading now to eight grandchildren and counting. Throughout their marriage, they stayed active in church work, including special interest in teen ministries. Lorna also worked as a preschool teacher for 10 years and made missions trips with her husband to Swaziland and Zambia

In looking back on the Florida years, Pastor Steve recalls they had always felt a special 'pull' to deliverance and missionary programs. So it was that he found himself one day serving as associate pastor at Calvary Christian Center in Inverness, Florida, where the doors to African missions opened widely before him. Nearly 15 quick years passed, but the pull to foreign missions work and deliverance outreaches only grew stronger. God forcefully came into the picture, and a subsequent series of events, many of them wildly humorous, led to a linkage via friends, in Centennial, Colorado, south of Denver, to a further friendship linkage in 7,522-high elevation Estes Park.

"Basically," Pastor Steve laughed, "I was invited to co-pastor a church in this mountain town. But not long after, the head pastor, who spent 10 years building up and solidifying Park Fellowship Church (AOG), resigned to take a new position in another city. He remains a close friend and business associate of ours."

Packed tightly within a grouping of several 14,000-foot elevation mountains in the High Rockies, Estes Park seemed an unlikely spot from which to spark numerous missions projects aimed at Uganda and beyond. But despite a severe lack of funding, the outreaches led by Pastor Steve have resulted in

helping to establish three churches in the heart of Islamic regions of Uganda, along with the beginnings of plans for schooling Christian and, God willing, Muslim youth.

It seems Islamic schools in the region are very well equipped, while alternative offerings are severely wanting. Even Christian converts send their kids to the Muslim schools because of superior facilities and supplies. Steve and Lorna have made this problem a No. 1 priority. At the January 2019 dedication of their third church in the region, the Colorado group began actual construction on a formal school connected to the Ugandan Christian movement.

"The excitement of the crusades is heady stuff. The ardor and commitment of the Ugandan people goes beyond most of what I've seen in the U.S.," Steve explains. "They usually are held outdoors, and draw in many curious Muslims who stand at the perimeters watching and listening. As the miracles, the deliverances and the joyfully loud worshipping gains momentum, they get caught up and are drawn in. The healings quickly follow. I have personally seen scores of Muslims brought into the kingdom, and this goes on nearly every week of the year.

"Events foreign missionaries and local Ugandan pastors initiated 30 years ago have taken root and are now primarily indigenous in nature. Most needed is funding for schools and the building of more churches," he continued. "These needs are what drive us. How the needs will be met, God alone knows. Lorna and I will just keep on doing what we do for as long we are breathing. The schools will be built. It's all in the hands of God!"

*Since retirement 19 years ago from executive communications positions with hi-tech international corporations, **Ronald D. Mallett** directed two Christian ministry outreaches and served in various capacities as a jail and prison chaplain, missionary, group leader and prayer warrior, all activities he carries on to this day. He is a senior member of Resurrection*

Fellowship of Loveland, Colorado, where he also served as a volunteer press relations writer and adviser. He and wife Pat reside in Milliken, Colorado.