

It was Sept 11 2001 that my suitcases were packed to go to Uganda. After 4 years working in a youth hostel ministry in Amsterdam, I knew that the next step was to move to Jinja in Uganda.

I started working here within the mission department of a local church, but after 5 months of struggle, it was clear that the church had very different expectations and the job finished. So there I was, in a new 'world', another language and a very different culture, with no job and nothing to write home about. I was very frustrated but knew that God had brought me here. So I decided to wait on Him and take time to find out what He wanted me to do.

It was then that I heard God say: 'Winette, I haven't called you to do My work here, I want you!' That was one of the first lessons I learned while in Uganda. Since I had a lot of time, I started to have a look into my own heart. I had gone through many trials, hurts and losses but had always pushed them away. I had always tried to leave behind the hurts of my youth and the death of precious friends, and look forward to what was to come. But the pain of those things had never died. While I had plenty of time and no busy schedule to push things away, all these memories started to come back. I was like an active volcano waiting to explode.

As all of this started to mount, I bumped into Ingrid on the Main Street in Jinja. She had just come back from a School of Ministry in Canada. We started to get to know each other and she shared a great deal about what she had gone through and all she had learned and received. She threw books and tapes and teachings at me. I knew that the healing she had started to receive, was what I needed. I started to be desperate for it but I had no idea how to receive it. The more I listened to teachings on the Father heart of God and read books on God's desire to heal us from within, the more hungry I was for more of God. I needed Him and I needed Him as a Father. I found out that an International School of Ministry was coming to Kenya. I signed up for it and was very much looking forward to it, although I still feared to give up full control to God.

A few weeks before I went, something happened in my personal life that hit me very hard. It was so hard that it made me feel crushed. Whatever was left whole in my heart broke; it felt like all the life in me died. I was so down that I had no desire to go to a School of Ministry. I needed ministry myself or I would die.

I pushed myself to Kenya, not knowing what else to do, but when I arrived, I felt like running away. I couldn't manage 65 happy Christians around me and when I felt the Presence of God coming down during the first few times of worship, I ran out. My heart was too painful. I couldn't handle God's love. One of the leaders asked me to come back in and encouraged me to sit in the back and let God

minister to me. And so I did. I sat in the back and cried. I allowed God to start to deal with my pain and rejection. I gave Him the control over my life and there seemed to be no end to the tears. Then God started to reveal Himself to me as my Father. He showed me that He was the One Who had celebrated my birthday. He had been waiting for me to be born on that day and He was looking forward to see me live and give me a life of abundance for He knows what I like! I broke, and for the first time in my life I felt accepted, wanted and fully loved. I belonged and there was a bottom in my heart! He truly is my Father!

That was the beginning of a dramatic change. Four weeks later I was back in Uganda. Circumstances were still the same but I was a changed woman. Then Ingrid, who had already started to develop her vision of setting up a retreat centre, asked me whether I would pray about joining her and working together with her in ministry. At first I thought that that was far too much for me. But when I prayed about it and shared it with friends and leaders, it became clear that it was the right step. God told me to start to give out what I had received and then to come back and receive more. That was in August 2003 and our first programme, a transformation week, was being held in September 2003.

God is continuing His sanctifying, transforming and healing work but wants me in the meantime to give out. It is a great privilege to be able to work in this ministry and to see Him at work, transforming lives and bringing healing to broken hearts!

Winette Hubregtse