

## **NAMAZZI MAGRET – A Widow’s Testimony of the Faithfulness of God**



This is Magret Namazzi – she lives in Mukono, about 15 miles east of Kampala, which takes an hour to drive by car and longer from taxi. Magret is 89 years old, is Muganda by tribe, and has been a widow now for 17 years. This is her story of how she has found God to be totally trustworthy. Uganda became independent of Great Britain in 1962, which means Magret lived through the tumultuous and murderous times of dictators such as Milton Obote and Idi Amin but she doesn’t go into those stories. What she does share will cause you to be overwhelmed in a really good way and amazed at the awesome goodness of our God.

Magret grew up in a polygamous family with 14 biological siblings. She became blind at three years of age; she doesn’t know why – just says it was a “natural” cause. She lived with her parents until her father died when she was six years old. Thereafter, life went from bad to worse for the little girl. Oftentimes, her mother would brutally mistreat her. Magret assumes it was because she was a “misfortune” to her family, which automatically kept her isolated. She lived a very hard and lonely life until her mother died when Magret was 14 years old.

At age 15 Magret was forced to marry a man called David and had three children who all died. In her 20’s she separated from David. It was just a short time later when God brought Peter into her life. They married and Magret says he was loving and caring in spite of her disability; he was very good to guide her along. Magret and Peter worked hard to get by in life. He was a carpenter and Magret would do a few activities for herself, earning a small income by weaving mats and baskets while she was at home.

The couple lived in a very remote area and were extremely poor. This, and the fact that she was blind, prevented her from being able to access proper birthing facilities. So she became her own midwife and gave birth to 17 children! She delivered each child herself, without the aid of a nurse or midwife. It’s sad to say of the 17 children only 6 are still living. Some died at birth, other deaths were due to natural causes and HIV/AIDS.

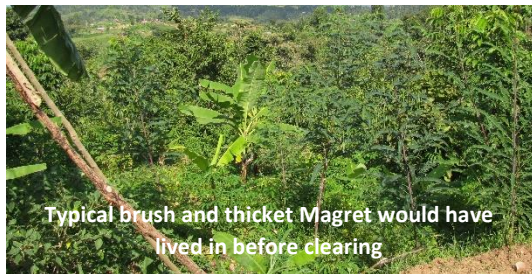
Magret and Peter spent many good years together before Peter died in 2004. Magret remained in the village and it was just a few months later when she confessed salvation after hearing the Gospel presented to her by door-to-door evangelists. From that time forward she began living for God. She devoted all her heart and mind towards God and testifies that Jesus would manifest before her. She heard the voice of Jesus telling her He would always be with her; He would be her eyes. Jesus promised her nothing would take advantage of her or hurt her anymore because of blindness.

Magret began believing God for her healing; she even tried visiting some of the well-known pastors seeking prayer and healing. However, many disruptions and/or obstacles kept her from reaching the pastors – each attempt was in vain. She would make the journey with her companion leading the way but they either got lost or something else would happen. When she returned home she heard the voice of the Lord say “I want you like how you are.” She continued

hearing God talk to her. Several times He would alert her of the dangers and would tell her what to do and not to do.

Prior to her husband's death they had managed to save 1,200,000 shillings (equivalent to about \$340 USD in today's economy). They had intended to purchase land so they wouldn't have to rent anymore. After Peter's death she asked God where she should go and He directed her to settle in Mukono. Upon arriving in Mukono she immediately looked for a plot of land. God directed her and her young granddaughter, Joyce – age 4, to a still remote location in Mukono with a high crime rate and wild animals – can you imagine that?!

With the help of a friend, she was led to purchase a piece of land full of bushes and thickets and



Typical brush and thicket Magret would have lived in before clearing

right away began to stay in this place. This blind woman remained in hope and fully believed her life was in God's hands. She would tell God all her cares and He would faithfully answer. Magret asked God how she was to survive the snakes and cannibals, but God told her He was with her. God said He was the one who sent her to that place and that place was His church. She heard the voice of God telling her He

would always provide for her needs. He said people would come who will be her children and would care for her (other than her biological children). She was at peace with what God told her.

People in the area actually thought she was a sorcerer or insane for living in the wild like she was, without shelter of any kind. After some months, there came some good Samaritans who mobilized themselves and put up a small grass thatched shelter for Magret and Joyce. The two of them would cultivate simple crops in order to have something to eat. In 2013 a group of people from a church heard about Magret and her living condition. After meeting her, their hearts were touched and they raised enough resources to put up a better structure for Margret, which she still lives in today.

Magret says she continues to see God's hand of help. She has never walked away from her home looking for food or support of any kind from the neighborhood. God told her to never “cry before people.” He promised everything she needed would find her right at her home!

Remember God told Magret her home would be a church? Well, about four years ago a man (presumably a pastor) was looking around her village for space to begin a church. In his search he met Magret. When the pastor told her what he was looking for, Magret immediately felt it was God who brought him to her home. She gave him permission to set up his church in front of her house without paying her rent. Today there is a bit of a structure, if you can call poles with torn tarps a structure, where people congregate on Sunday.



The “church” in front of Magret's home

By now you might be wondering about Magret's remaining six children. Well they have all abandoned her; to them she was useless because of her disability. But now, these very children have failed in their marriages; some have even abandoned their own kids, dropping them off to the “blind, disabled, old woman” who they considered “useless.” Magret says because she has been helped by Jesus throughout her life, she cannot reject the grandchildren who are being brought to her. Even her granddaughter, Joyce, who she went with to Mukono has left her children with Magret.

Recently one of Magret's grown grandsons, Peter Segujja, who she took care of when he was young, has agreed with his wife to stay with Magret and take care of her. He said he was uncomfortable knowing his grandmother did not have someone helping her in case of an emergency or other need. So he is there now with her, doing a great job growing crops to feed the family. Since he has no other income he must do what they call "casual work" (aka heavy manual labor) when he can find it. It also means he needs to be at the right place at the right time!

Other than Peter, Magret currently has four great grandchildren staying with her. The parents have either died or abandoned them because they say they have no way to care for them.

Magret has been blessed with the food supplies she has received over the past year or so during the epidemic (thanks to Say Yes). She testifies this is exactly what God promised her! She has been able to feed her family.



Magret recognizes there are endless human needs, too many to count. As for her, she says while her challenges are many her medical needs is high on the list. She struggles to get treatment when she falls ill and ends up using local herbal treatment as best she can or she tries to go to a cheap health clinic for assistance. Sometimes her neighbors help her out. She has ongoing back pain and her bones are too weak for her to stand for very long or take too many steps, so she crawls around her home. Doctors have told her to eat cow's legs at least twice a month to strengthen her bones and to eat more fruit. (A bit unusual for us Westerners, eh?) We had thought a wheelchair would be good for Magret to use but there isn't enough room in the house and she would need someone to always push her. The better idea is to get her a comfy, cushioned chair as she currently rests on a mat on the floor. We are certain she could use a new mattress to sleep on, too! We would be so grateful for anyone who would like to help us make this happen.

Magret is often bored since she is unable to easily move around the neighborhood. When we tasked Paul with these interviews we asked him to find out if there was one or two little things the ladies desired but couldn't get for themselves. Magret said she would like a radio so she could listen to preaching and gospel music. It would help with the boredom in the home. She also worries about her grandchildren not getting an education.

All in all, Magret says her whole life is a testimony, especially after losing her husband. God is good all the time. All the time God is good. She gives Him thanks for the continuous provision provided to her. We are delighted to be God's hand extended to His daughter. And we thank you for helping us make that happen!

*Virgil & Joy*

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