

# ISMAIL KATENDE

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My name is Ismail Katende. In September 2008 I celebrated my 30<sup>th</sup> birthday in the United States of America. I go to Trinity Covenant Church in Lexington, Massachusetts, a partnering church with Jesus Power Church in Kampala, Uganda where I serve as a junior pastor and administrator.

My life almost hit rock bottom as I had given up hope of ever making it in life. There I was in Uganda, nearly 29 years of age, without a job, a house, a wife or children. I did not even have friends because they had deserted me, for to them I was a sinking boat and they did not want to associate with me.

My only hope rested not in my previous achievements but in the power of God to change my situation. Every day, as other adult men went to work, I locked myself in the house because I could not stand being ridiculed by the onlookers. With no job to do, I turned to the walls in my room and I prayed. In the wee hours of the night when the world was sleeping, I stayed awake with tears gushing out of my eyes thinking about how my future was going to be. All sorts of thoughts cut across my mind and I could not help but think that probably I was cursed by a magic spell. I was tired of depending upon my

parents who would soon be depending upon me instead. Nevertheless I continued to pray to the God who hears and answers prayers.

On my prayer list, I prayed especially for four things that I really wanted and needed in my life. I prayed that God would give me strength to stay with Him always even amidst tough times, I prayed for a job, I prayed for further education, and most important I prayed for a woman I could call my own who would love me unconditionally and bless me with a multitude of children.

Little did I know that God was already orchestrating something which was about to be unveiled to me. In June 2007, three white wise men from the USA visited Jesus Power Church following an invitation from Pastor Frank Mukiliza, the senior pastor. They came with gifts that they presented to church members. I did not get any gift, and to be honest I was not thrilled by the visit of these white folks because I thought that they were just like other white folks who had promised heaven on earth to the poor in my country and then went back to their countries with a memory loss.

After the wise men had left Uganda, I began exchanging e-mails with them. They expressed their desire to sponsor me for further studies. I was overwhelmed with joy and shared my joy with my beautiful mother (who recently passed away on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2008). God had heard my prayers and He sent me a gift of education through the humble servants of Trinity Covenant Church in Lexington. Since January 2008 I have been pursuing a Master of Arts in Educational Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston. With limited resources, they have been able to touch lives of many. God willing, the seed that TCC has sown in me will grow to produce much fruit through the services I will render my nation when I return.

If God has given me the education, I know He will provide the rest on my prayer list. I am thankful to all the people who have given a hand and those who are willing to support the noble cause of helping the poor, orphans, widows and the elderly. May God bless you.

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