

# From the Pieratts



**CRI** Children's Relief International

*Taking the light of Christ to the poor*

Alan & Melody

Winter 2020



## “DON'T COME BACK UNTIL YOU HAVE THE MONEY.”

Our letter this month is about pastor Martin and his wife Rita. Martin was one of the original "Lost Boys of the Sudan," that tragic group of about 40,000 children who left the cattle they were tending and started running north to flee death from the war that suddenly engulfed them.

My story today is about his wife Rita.

About ten years ago Rita was kidnapped. The perpetrator was a woman named Sarah James, a prominent witchdoctor in the city of Juba. With the help of her brothers, they held Rita for ransom, asking \$30,000 for her release. When Martin showed up at their house to plead for her freedom, he gave his testimony about being a follower of Jesus Christ. Before he had gone very far, they told him to stop speaking about such things or they would beat him. They threw him out of the house. "Don't come back," they said, "until you have the money."

For the next six months Rita languished as a captive. Then one day, in a moment of depression and desperation, she found a bottle of rat poison in the house and drank it. There was enough in the bottle to make her dangerously sick, but not enough to kill her. The next day, alarmed by the prospect of a dead kidnapped woman on their hands, Sarah James and her brothers told Martin to come pick up his wife. Melody and I sent Martin the bus money for him to travel to Juba and bring her home.

Here is the kicker to this story: Sarah James was Rita's aunt! She had raised Rita since a young girl.

This week, after all these years, Sarah James reached out to Rita. She was deathly sick, and had called to apologize and hear again about Jesus Christ. During their conversation, she prayed with Rita. The next day she died. What a remarkable story of hardship, grace, forgiveness and redemption.

Today Martin, Rita and their children live in Kampala, Uganda. He is a pastor in the Kiryandongo Refugee Camp. CRI supports them and we offer sponsorships for children at the camp to attend school. This year we will start building Green Door homes for needy families living in the camp as well.

Our privilege is to shine the light of Christ into the dark places of our world. Thank you so much for supporting our work.

The photo above is of Rita (green dress) and Martin (blue shirt) with several Sudanese adults and children who landed the night before on their doorstep in Kampala. These new refugees are now settling into life at the Kiryandongo camp.