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Uganda: I Gave Him 19 Children

16 OCTOBER 2012

Samuel and Solomy Nakabale are residents of Kitala village near Entebbe town and have been married for 49 years.

Samuel is a lecturer at Makerere University School of Statistics, while Solomy is a businesswoman in Kitala. Gladys Kalibbala talked to them about marriage

Solomy:

I first saw Samuel in the village in 1959. At that time, he was living with his elder brother, Kezekia Bisaso, a neighbour. He was a smart young man, who wore a tie and rode a very clean bicycle to his workplace in Entebbe town every morning.

I was a 14-year-old pupil of Namate Primary School in Entebbe. Once in a while, when he passed by me walking to school, he would carry me on his bicycle. Beyond the greetings, there was not much we talked about.

The school was about three miles away and I would walk with children from the neighbourhood. But, September 12, 1959 was a different day. As I walked home, I met him waiting for me by the roadside.

I knelt down as he handed me two letters and asked me to help him deliver them to the 'owner'. By the time I realised they were addressed to me, he had disappeared.

I took the letters to my elder brother so that we could read them together. One letter talked about love and how he was a Born-again Christian, while the other stated that he had seen a perfect future wife in me and advised me to talk to my mother about it. My brother replied on my behalf, telling him to pray to God so that He could guide us.

The following day, I met him at the same spot, waiting for a reply. I pulled the letter out of my bag, handed it to him and ran off to tell my mother what had happened.

Later, he gave me a parcel, containing powder and other items. However, mom advised me to keep it. She said in case 'things did not work out' between us, he could demand to have his gifts back. "And you might have already used them," she said. This revelation forced me to keep Samuel's gift for two years.

From that time, he started dropping me at school and would pick me in the evening. He later paid my school fees for two years, from 1961 to 1962, at Matala School in Kyaggwe.

Since my father, Musa Senoga, had passed on, my mother, Norah Nassanga, was the one meeting our needs. However, during those two years, she could not afford to pay my school fees.

I wanted to continue to higher education levels, but Samuel surprised me with a letter, stating that he had been awarded a scholarship for further studies in the UK.

He, therefore, wanted to marry me before leaving for his studies.

The independence celebrations on October 9, 1962 were approaching. He bought me a beautiful skirt, blouse and matching shoes and requested me to escort him to Kololo for the function.

Our introduction ceremony took place on December 16, 1962 and we walked down the aisle on January 19, 1963, at Namirembe Cathedral.

The Rev. Yowasi Senoga presided over the ceremony. My maid-of-honour was the wife of Canon Sebadduka, while the best man was Ernest Nsubuga. All of them have since passed on. Kewerimide salon in Katwe attended to me and my four maids.

Our entourage had three vehicles, including a Volkswagen. At the reception at Mengo Hospital Gardens, our guests were served cake and soda.

When I was eight months pregnant, Samuel left for the UK. Unfortunately, I got a miscarriage a week later. I joined him in the UK in September 1964 and on June 24, 1965, we got our first child. The second came in August 1966, before I returned home a month later. I gave birth to 19 children.

Of those, 10 sons and four girls are still alive.

Samuel:

She was not only a beautiful girl, but also a God-fearing person. When I first saw her, I prayed to God for guidance. At that time, I was living with my brother, Kezekia Bisaso.

She is hardworking, loving and very understanding. I never regretted marrying her.

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