

Spotlight on Jackson Kaguri ~ Author of *The Price of Stones: Building a School for My Village*

(Jackson Kaguri was raised in Uganda, graduated from Makerere University, and was a visiting scholar at Columbia University. He is the associate director of development at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, and the founder and director of the Nyaka and Kutamba AIDS Orphans Schools in Uganda. He will be appearing in the Crazy Wisdom Tea Room on Sunday, April 3rd at 1pm.)

Rachel Pastiva: Your book, *The Price of Stones: Building a School for My Village*, tells of your journey that led to the founding of the Nyaka AIDS Orphans School. Can you speak briefly on the life events that led to your dream of opening the first tuition free school for orphans?

Jackson Kaguri: The turning point was the death of my brother. He died in 1996 leaving three children; then my sister died in 1997, leaving one son. I took over taking care of their children, but each time I took these nieces and nephews of mine to see their grandparents, many grandmothers would bring their orphaned children asking me for a pen, pencil, books, and tuition. I decided I wanted to be an uncle to more than my relatives and save more lives from poverty and systematic deprivation.

“My father educated me and my siblings by selling his chickens, goats, cows, and land. You will have to know that parents send their children to school so that we can take care of them later in life.”

RP: You faced many obstacles, including opposition from your father and other villagers. Can you explain why they did not support a school for AIDS orphans?

Jackson Kaguri: My father educated me and my siblings by selling his chickens, goats, cows, and land. You will have to know that parents send their children to school so that we can take care of them later in life. My dad thought now that I was helping the whole community, his investment was going to everyone.

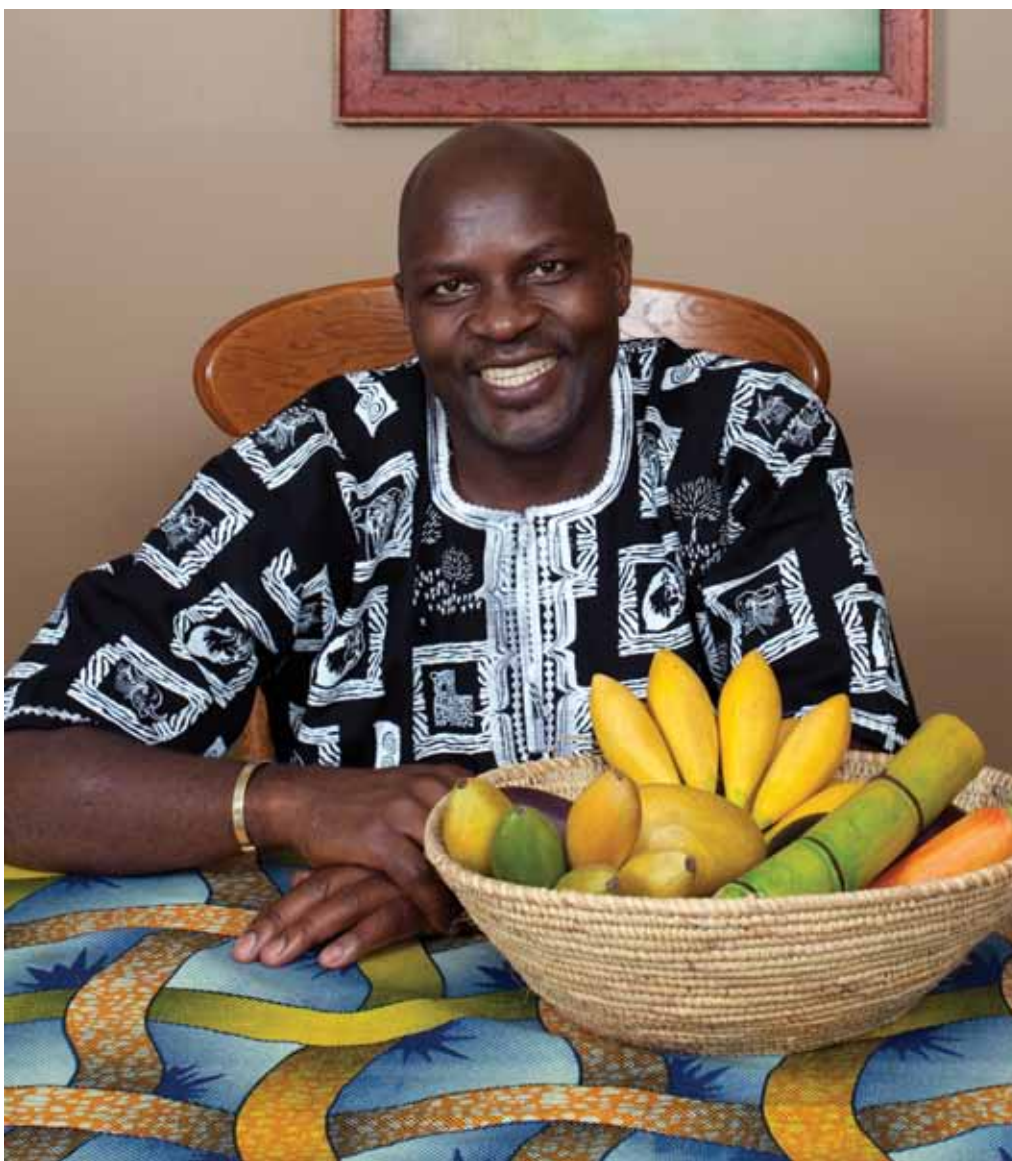
Other people have seen corrupt officials who keep giving them things with a catch. I build a school, you give me a vote. So people thought that I wanted something in return.

The last group was the religious people. Uganda has many religious divisions; people thought that I was building a Seventh-Day Adventist school. If I had done that, many people would have even stopped sending their children to this school. Our schools are non-denominational and therefore every child who meets requirements can attend.

RP: Can you describe what the Nyaka AIDS Orphans Project offers to students?

Jackson Kaguri: Peace, love, and care. On top of that we provide education, uniforms, pens, pencils, two meals a day, healthcare, clean water, housing with grannies and guardians, and a library -- to the whole community.

RP: On the Nyaka AIDS Orphans Project website, nyakaschool.org, it states: “The SCHOOLS program is now supported by the HEALTH, GRANDMOTHERS and COMMUNITY programs.” Can you discuss what these programs are and how they benefit the schools program?



Jackson Kaguri’s book tells of the journey that led to his founding of the Nyaka AIDS Orphans School in Uganda.

Jackson Kaguri: All this is a holistic approach to address children’s lives and enrich their educational experiences.

RP: What are some future goals of the Nyaka AIDS Orphans Project, and what are some ways that people can help reach them?

Jackson Kaguri: We are building a secondary school next year. People can give money, time in volunteering, talents in helping us with many tasks, or organize Nyaka friends in their communities. Please consider adding our children in your will. Follow me at <http://twitter.com/twejaka>

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Spiritual Development

Help and Healing on the Spiritual Path through the Teachings of Bruno Groening with Cathy DeLauter • Jan. 29, Mar. 12, April 16; 11 a.m. • Learn how to harness the divine energy that surrounds us through the teachings of Bruno Groening. This event will serve as introduction to our community. After attending, you will be invited to join our Community Hours which occur every three weeks on Monday evenings. All are welcome. Donations appreciated. Call 994-8847; cathy@delauter.com.

Ongoing Spiritual Discovery Group Based on the Works of Eckhart Tolle with Melanie Fuscaldo • Ongoing • Discussion and skill building based on the work of Eckhart Tolle. Practice releasing the ego and pain body. Experience silence, spaciousness, and the joy body. Awaken to your inner purpose. \$10 per session. For dates and times, contact melaniefuscaldo.com.

Learn and Practice The Work of Byron Katie with Melanie Fuscaldo • Feb. 8, Noon-1:30 • Learn how four questions can transform your life. Release stressful thoughts and emotions and live with more peace and joy. \$10. Contact melaniefuscaldo.com.

Experiencing God Seminar with Revered Lela Iduna • Jan. 27, 7:30 p.m. • Meet those who have healed the wounds of the past, forgiven all, and given all to develop a real relationship in which they can hear and see God. You can have this experience, too. \$25 donation. Bring a friend for free. Call 363-8201; revlela@centersofflight.org or annarbor.centersofflight.org.

Creating Your Life Using the Laws of the Universe with Revered Lela Iduna • Monthly, Jan.-April • Come experience how to take control of your life, use for your highest good the laws of the universe, and make a connection to the divine that will bring the contentment you have been seeking. \$10 donation. Call 363-8201; revlela@centersofflight.org or annarbor.centersofflight.org.

Eucharistic Celebration with Rev. Thomas Lumpkin and Rev. Charles Morris of Visitation • First Wednesday of Feb., Mar., and April; 7 p.m. • Come and share fellowship and spiritual nourishment in these monthly celebrations of the Eucharist. Free. Call 734-240-5494; riverhouse@ihmsisters.org or ihmsisters.org.

Moving into Your Ascension Process with Karlta Zarley • June 18-22 at Mt. Shasta • We will be healing ourselves and the Earth during this retreat, using the energies of the mountain, the solstice, and the eclipses to assist us. \$400. Call 433-9333; kzarley@att.net or karltazarley.com.