

The Standard

UCU COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

The Standard is published bi-monthly by the UCU Department of Mass Communication

Our view Let's shoot for Number 1

Well done to all those who tirelessly contributed to UCU's attainment of the second position in the recent university rankings released by New Vision. The Standard regards you highly for the good fight you have fought.

University rankings have never been more important than they are in this day and age, especially with the world becoming a global village.

More and more students are crossing borders to study in other countries. Rankings help prospective students in making the best choices for reputable universities.

A highly-ranked university secures high quality students, faculty and partnerships, all of which work to reinforce its ranking over time.

Most emerging universities struggle to feature well in classifications like these because they are unable to compete with well-established, better-funded institutions. This, however, did not stop UCU from standing unique.

As global competition for students, faculty and partnerships with well established international institutions increases, Ugandan top universities are left with the uphill task of securing a stronger place in the local rankings.

Being a top scorer is not a bed of roses. It calls for more effort for the university to either maintain its high position or improve in areas it was found lacking.

UCU needs to focus more on research to shoot to the top, because research does much to ensure a university's continued success.

Research is a major investment and to improve, we should double research spending to see better results in ranking.

Commitment to improving research may conservatively require additional annual operating expenditure for over 10-15 years incorporated in our strategic plans.

We must go find a place in international rankings. This demands an increase in the number of international students and international exchange programmes.

Most degree programmes are uniform across the globe. So is the value of the degree in terms of securing a good job or career that will eventually repay the degree investment.

Good marketing and articulation of UCU's products will ensure an international reputation.

Good rankings blow the trumpet on what we are good at as a university.

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Opinion Opinion Opinion Opinion Opinion Opinion Opinion



When Jesus made breakfast for his disciples during a post-resurrection appearance, he left another lasting reminder of the power of mystery and forgiveness, both integral parts of the Easter narrative.

Mysterious and foolish things

THOMAS FROESE



As a boy I hoped for, and believed in, small and foolish things that at the time seemed big and sensible enough. Now I hope for things that are big and sensible enough to my children, even if they seem small and foolish to me.

Once I hoped for rabbits to go to heaven. (And who's to say they don't?) This was after a neighbour accidentally killed our pet rabbit. The young boy found that, unlike a cat, a rabbit doesn't land on its feet when you spin it in the air.

Hannah, our adopted Ugandan child, owned that rabbit. She wasn't there. My young son, Jonathan, was. He summarized it with plain precision when he said 'I knew it was dead and there was nothing that anyone could do to change that.'

We then buried the young rabbit behind our UCU home, before we sang and read the Word and let Hannah pray, 'Dear Jesus, please take care of my rabbit.'

So we hoped that foolish hope, as foolish, I suppose, as Easter itself: Easter, when fools of the best kind and fools of any age turn their back on the wisdom of the world and say, no, death, you won't have the final word on all this. Forgiveness will. Mystery will too. Yes, mystery.

For example, what exactly happened when those bodies rose from opened graves during that violent Good Friday earthquake?

Can you imagine Pius, your dearly-departed husband buried years ago returning to sit at the dining table and ask what might be for supper?

And what exactly might have happened to the appearance of the resurrected Christ? At the tomb, Mary thought he was the gardener. The two gentlemen on the road to Emmaus thought he was just a fellow traveller.

When he cooked a fish breakfast on an open fire, when he was, according to Saint John's account, hungry enough to eat some of it (something a ghost would never do), Christ also appeared somehow different to his disciples, yet still all knew who he was.

Children can forgive easily enough and Hannah was no exception when she quickly forgave our neighbour. She forgave him more easily than he forgave himself.

"Just shoot me now!" is what the boy had yelled when running away and up the hill from that dead rabbit.

Peter found it hard to forgive himself too. Peter, that man of largeness who, while outside of Jesus' kangaroo trial, denied he even knew the man. Three times. Three denials. Some friend.

Then, later, at that fish breakfast on the beach, that question, the one that ripped into Peter, so awful yet gentle.

"Do you love me?" Jesus asked. Then again, "Do you love me?" And again, "Do you love me?" Three times so Peter's forgiveness was unique to him in size and measure. So when Jesus commissioned Peter – three times – Peter could go with all he needed.

On Easter morning, with the monkeys often clanking around our tin-roofed house, I like to read the story of that beachside breakfast to my three children. I hope they remember it as much as they remember Hannah's rabbit. Even more.

Because sooner or later each of my children, like any of us, will need to extend great, even foolish forgiveness to someone. Even as any of us needs to be forgiven by others. Forgiveness. If it's the real deal, it will cost everything you have. And even that won't be enough.

Easter says as much. This is where that mystery enters: that Dead-Man-Walking, that Dead-Man-Eating, that God-Man who cries, and laughs with us too, as he looks into the eyes of those who are his and says, "Come and follow me to the ends of the earth. And then some."

Only a real fool wouldn't go.

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