

The Standard

Interview Interview Interview Interview Interview Interview Interview

Windows into a life

Thomas Froese is an award-winning journalist from Canada who helped create *THE STANDARD* 30 months ago. He recently wrote his first book: *NINETY-NINE WINDOWS: REFLECTIONS OF A REPORTER FROM ARABIA TO AFRICA AND OTHER ROADS LESS TRAVELLED*. Reporter *JULIUS ABOKO* had these questions for him.



The New Vision just reviewed *Ninety-Nine Windows*. Tell me about it.
It's a 2009 release, 99 columns previously published in various papers on my experiences in the Mideast and Africa. It covers news, travel and life. Besides educating readers on issues like politics, culture and spirituality, it marks a 20-year season in my writing life; so it's also a memoir, something for my children.

tragic terrorist murders of our American friends. Maybe my best memory, though, is when my little girl asked for my book and said, "Daddy, you sign it the same as for everyone." So I did ... "Joy on your journey."

How does your faith impact your work?
Journalists who are Christian are called to have a prophetic voice: light to awaken the broader culture to Christ and salt to keep the Church from spoiling.

Where is it available?
My front door, Aristoc Books or Amazon.com. Excerpts are on www.thomasfroese.com

Why did you go into journalism?
I planned to study theology but prayer and circumstances redirected me to Journalism School.

Where have you worked?
From 1989 to 2001, I was a reporter at *The Times-Journal*, a small daily paper in St. Thomas, Canada; then for some years I was an editor at *The Yemen Times*; and since living overseas, I've been an international freelance columnist for various papers, including *The Spectator*, a sizable paper in Hamilton, Canada.

What's your most memorable experience?
I have fond memories of travel, public speaking and awards. In Yemen, I reported the

There's a wonderful motto: "A good journalist comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable." That's very Christ-like.

How can others use their work for God's glory?
Find joy in who you are. Being a baker can be as holy as being a cleric. Both are needed. It's a heart issue. God wires each of us differently for His purposes. As Luther said "Love God and do what you want."

How did you get to Uganda?
We were invited to launch Save the Mothers here at UCU.

Tell me about your wife Jean.
Jean is the best thing that's happened to me, a unique woman and my best friend. We have Liz, 6, Jon, 4 and Hannah, 3, a Ugandan we're adopting.

What do you do for Save the Mothers?
Various things, especially with print and marketing material. We've recently rebranded our material, like at www.savethemothers.org Worldwide, more than

celebrated like never before. With UCU's development, this has been a Golden Era for this community. Newsroom leadership has made it look easy, but producing a campus paper in Uganda is actually very difficult. That's why no other university can do it.

What do you see for 2010?
Due to a policy issue, sometime in the new year administration might seek new newsroom leadership. I don't think anyone knows the outcome. I do know that without *The Standard*, UCU would be left with a big hole in its heart: as a shadow of itself, a place with no voice and no mirror. People may want to pray about this need for leadership.

What else do you do?
I'm starting a Masters in Fiction Writing through Seattle Pacific University. I'm attracted by the power of storytelling to explore and heal our broken world. Jesus is the God who told stories.

Compare Ugandans and Yemenis.
Like Yemenis, Ugandans are warm. And religious.

Is this a problem?
It can be, to the extent religion can be a distraction. Religion tends to major on the minors, burden us with yokes and lead us to mistreat each other. Jesus spoke strongly against this. Jesus was, in fact, very irreligious. He offers us much more, an encounter with the Living God.

What are UCU's strengths?
Its people. Its sense of community. Its visionary leadership that has brought so much development.

Stories have been shared, issues debated and successes celebrated like never before. With UCU's development, this has been a Golden Era for this community.

And its challenges?
Well, what if, unbeknownst to us, John the Baptist, Mary and Jesus were attending UCU? One ignores the dress-code, another is unwed and pregnant, and the other is known as a drunkard and friend of prostitutes. How would we respond? As Frederick Buechner said, "One of the blunders of religious people is they try to be more spiritual than God." UCU's challenge, then, is to let God out of the various boxes we put Him in.

Do you have any heroes?
Buechner articulated God in the midst of everyday human nature and foibles and hardships. Rich Mullins - the late singer-songwriter, poet-philosopher - hungered for the real Jesus like few of us do.

Do you have any mottos?
I've always believed that "We're more sinful than we realize, and more loved than we imagine." I like Luther's "If you want to change the world, pick up a pen." And also "Risk more, reflect more and do more to leave something behind." Because when your life ends, you'll regret more the things you did not do, than those you did.

99 Windows
"Formidable and intriguing ... Froese takes the reader on an emotional journey through his power of description."
The New Vision
"A remarkable journey."
The Hamilton Spectator

