



A Son Brings a Smile by Tom McClenahan

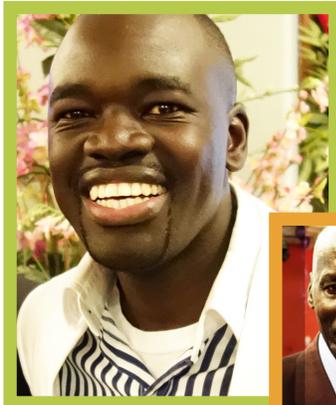
Daniel Albino's smile was as wide as the Nile as he watched his firstborn son, Shadow, graduate from Salt Lake Community College on May 7, 2015. It had been a long wait.

Shadow came to the U.S. in December 2010 for a worship symposium to learn to better serve the Sudanese church in Cairo. 12 years earlier in the midst of the troubles, when authorities illegitimately seized the family's land and means of livelihood, his parents told their 16 year old son to leave home and go where he could get an education. So he traveled north along the Nile landing in Egypt. There he completed high school and dreamed of further study. But the Lord used the socially difficult realities of being a highly visible (dark skinned African) "resident alien" to Egypt to draw him instead to life in Christ.

Following Jesus led to important decisions. Others felt justified by the troubles they had faced at home and in diaspora to construct stories of life-threatening persecution in order to gain refugee status. Yet after being granted that status on the basis of such a tale, Shadow returned to the official and confessed that he had made up the story. He wanted to tell the truth and trust God with his future. Family and friends said he was "crazy" to throw away such an opportunity no matter how it came. But God would not let his conscience rest until he obeyed.

Within days of Shadow's arrival for the worship conference, civil unrest broke out in Cairo. Friends in Egypt counseled him not to return until things calmed

down. "Christians," they said, "especially highly visible, dark-skinned people, are being targeted as 'troublemakers' and you will be detained at the airport." Visiting a Sudanese friend's family in Utah, Shadow prayed to God and spoke of his dilemma to the Sudanese Christian



Shadow Woli



Daniel Albino and Tom McClenahan

community here. This led to an American family's decision to sponsor him in

applying for a student visa to pursue his dream of further education in preparation to serve the Lord. With the help of the Sudanese church and contributions from 25 others through *The Vine Institute's* RICE (Refugee & Immigrant Citizenship & Education) Fund of more than \$25,000 for tuition, God made a way.

Shadow faithfully applied himself to his prayers, studies and serving the diaspora Sudanese Christian community. God blessed — a place to live, means of transportation, the college president's list of academic excellence, opportunities to serve the Lord and encourage his people. Then, 16 years after they had last seen each other, the Lord brought his father across the world to witness God's grace and faithfulness to his son as he graduated. No wonder the smile was so wide as Daniel announced, "My son is your son." 

Take Time to Understand the Problem

by Corky Seevinck

Given the complex issues surrounding ethnic and cultural diversity and immigration in the church, it can be tempting to avoid these subjects entirely. After all, there are so many other efforts that one could focus on. These other efforts, more clearly understood, have ministry benefits that are more demonstrable and immediate. It is difficult to evaluate the potential fruit of an effort that is not clearly understood, and even more difficult if one does not grasp the underlying problem that leads to it.

This avoidance can result in conclusions that do not stand up to a vigorous examination either of the facts or of relevant biblical passages. Through

my association with *The Vine Institute*, I have been privileged to interact with other believers who largely share my history as well as with believers from vastly different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. All of our interactions have explored subjects relating to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the church in Utah and the United States. *The Vine* has provided me with opportunities to question my assumptions and to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities that face the church in the USA. Rather than handing me solutions, the Vine has helped me understand the problem more clearly, enabling me to come to conclusions that I feel comfortable with in my unique situation. 

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

A Time for Risking

by Liz Micka & Paulina Asiamah

This was the title of a seminar at the *Discover Hidden Treasures Summit* in May. Miriam Adeney shared stories and skills for women in leadership, inspiring us with accounts of women pouring out blessings on their communities around the world, sometimes at great cost. As women from Africa, the Pacific Islands, Latin America and the USA, we listened and gained a vision for what can happen when we are willing to take risks as they serve the Lord. It seemed so feasible to do amazing things for God to advance His Kingdom despite obstacles. Yet Biblical principles and practical day-to-day life brought up lots of questions. How can we distinguish God's call from cultural expectations? This can be especially difficult for women from cultures where women's roles may be particularly limited. Also, refugee and immigrant women have to negotiate between expectations of women's roles in their culture and the culture in the USA. As we discussed we realized that the culture which informs our roles as women must be a Kingdom culture.

There were other questions. What can we learn following biblical models like Hannah and Priscilla? How do we prioritize and steward our energies? How do we handle stress? What does it mean to be filled with the love of Jesus and continue to grow? It is like we just started the conversation.

Paulina Asiamah—a missionary from Ghana to the US, lists what she learned from the Time for Risking seminar:

- Know who you are and understand your real interest
- Fill your mind with Godly role models
- Be known for quality
- Develop a network of friends
- Learn to be a team player
- Produce and control economic resources
- Learn when to say no and when to say I "need"
- Choose an egalitarian mission
- Fill your mind with the WORD and the Spirit 



The Vine Institute offers a **Christian Leadership Program**. These courses are small, peer-to-peer, multicultural learning groups with inductive Bible discovery and practical action plans. Course materials were developed in mission context and have been used in 49 countries and are available in 21 languages. Start this Fall.

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