



What would lead a 26-year-old young woman to risk her promising career and future? Why would you or I risk our future?

This question was much on our minds at Starcross for 12 days in late May. Here is why. The fleeing director of Uganda's Internal Security Organization sent a letter to the press alleging an assassination plot against those opposing the plan to have the son of President Museveni, who has ruled since 1986, assume the presidency in 2016. Newspapers and radio stations reporting on the letter were shut down, premises occupied and locked, cameras and equipment destroyed, and some journalists arrested. The court or-

dered the police to end the siege. The order was ignored. A peaceful protest was organized by concerned journalists. Teargas, rubber bullets and batons were used against the journalists.

Late May is a time when we here are focused on planting and mowing. Why were we so concerned about what was going on 10,000 miles away? Because we were pretty sure that our Teddy Namayanja would be involved!

Before Teddy was born, the social safety nets in Uganda were the large extended families. The AIDS pandemic had made giant holes in those nets. Teddy was about 10 years old when our paths crossed. She had no extended family. Also, her parents had died. A neighbor was doing what she could. I personally promised Teddy that we would care for her and would be with her until she was launched in life. When I finished talking I saw her relax for the first time. If you have been following our activities in the past you have heard of Teddy. She said she wanted to be a bank manager but she had never been in a bank. I took her to a Barclays branch in Kampala. She said it didn't look too hard.

When Teddy was 14 we got her into a boarding school where she did well until she got in trouble for associating with a girl the Headmaster did not think was "a good influence." When I talked to Teddy about this it turns out that the girl was an abandoned child we were also helping who came from a very difficult and deprived background. Teddy quite respectfully told me that she would understand being disciplined but she was not going to turn her back on this girl. Well, she wasn't punished and the incident led us to in-

investigate the appropriateness of the school where the Headmaster immediately told me that neither Teddy nor the other girl had “any future.” They both have done very well — and the school has not.

In time, Teddy graduated in journalism at Makerere University — the most prestigious college in East Africa. She went on to become a television reporter and was promoted to Senior Parliamentary Reporter and Weekend Editor on a national TV station. But she never forgot her background. On our recent trip Sister Julie took her to her father’s grave. Teddy collapsed in Julie's arms and thanked her for being family and not leaving her to be alone in the world. Now Teddy herself is a “big sister” to many children in need.

Well, we soon learned that indeed Teddy had been in those demonstrations and was giving all the support she could to her fellow journalists. On the 12th day of the lockout the government, under domestic and international pressure, backed down. But I am sure that many of those participating in the protests are on someone's watch list. As I write, Uganda’s Security Minister reveals government plans to build a social media monitoring center “to weed out those who use it to damage the government.”

So the question remains, why would a 26-year-old with such a promising career risk it all by taking on the power elite of her country? Just as Teddy answered when she was 14, she was not going to turn her back on what was right and just. No matter what the cost.

Many of my fellow citizens believe our country is the preferred

model for the world. However, I think it is good to occasionally ask ourselves that difficult question, “Under what circumstances would I place my future at risk?” Somehow I feel it is a fundamental question that matters in shaping the future of our planet.

I am proud of Teddy.

***Brother Toby***

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Teddy is the protester in the green dress