

Jim Gash – Biography

Author of *Divine Collision: An African Boy, An American Lawyer, and their Remarkable Battle for Freedom*



JIM GASH graduated first in his law school class at Pepperdine in 1993. Over the course of his career, he has clerked with a federal judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, worked at one of the top law firms in the country, and served as Pepperdine Law's Dean of Students. He currently is a Professor of Law at Pepperdine University School of Law, teaching Torts, Evidence, and Legal Ethics. He also serves as the Director of the Global Justice Program in Pepperdine's Nootbaar Institute for Law, Religion, and Ethics.

In his new book *Divine Collision: An African Boy, An American Lawyer, and their Remarkable Battle for Freedom*, Gash chronicles his experiences in Uganda working to free children who had been trapped in that country's slow-moving justice system. The book focuses on the relationship that he developed with one of his clients. Henry was a brave, young Ugandan boy unjustly imprisoned on two separate murder charges who became

Gash's translator during his initial visit. They first met in early 2010 when Gash traveled to Uganda for two weeks on a juvenile justice project. Since then, he has returned to Uganda sixteen times. In 2012, Jim Gash moved to Uganda for six months to become the Specialist Advisor to the High Court of Uganda, and in 2013 became the first American ever to appear as an attorney in Ugandan Court.

The International Law Section of the State Bar of California honored Gash with the Warren M. Christopher International Lawyer of the Year Award in 2013. The award is presented annually to a California lawyer for achievement in international law. In response to his award, Gash said, "I'm just a law professor who became involved in a project that got really big unintentionally. I'm honored and humbled to be recognized by my peers as doing something valuable. It's interesting that if you're willing to show up and advocate for change and develop relationships necessary to allow people to trust you to implement change, you can have an impact."

Gash was initially inspired by a keynote speech presented by author and lawyer Bob Goff at the annual conference of the Christian Legal Society. "Goff challenged us to use our legal skills for the poor and the oppressed, especially our most vulnerable—the world's youth." This began a relationship with Goff, and trips together to Uganda where Goff has founded a boarding school, The Restore Leadership Academy.

When Gash travels to Uganda, he often brings along practicing attorneys and law students, offering them an opportunity to work with Ugandan lawyers and law students to give prisoners an opportunity to have their cases heard. Gash explains, "The effort is broadening and deepening as more attorneys and students seek opportunities to use their legal training to serve those in prison."

"Remand," a documentary film by Revolution Pictures, features Jim and Henry's story as part of the larger narrative about how Gash and Pepperdine law students have shaped criminal justice in Uganda, is currently in post-production for release in early 2016. Viewers will follow

twelve students as they travel to Uganda to work with High Court judges--and come face to face with the prisoners they are trying to help.

David Nammo, Executive director and CEO of the Christian Legal Society says Jim's story is powerful and important to know, especially for those who think God cannot use them to make a difference in the world. Nammo comments: "Jim Gash did a simple thing—he followed where God called him. And in the end, Jim was a part of God's plan for justice in lives stretching from California to Uganda."

Andrew K. Benton, President of Pepperdine University, stated that Jim's remarkable story cannot help but restore faith in the nobility of the law and its humble, respectful practitioners. Says Benton: "This is a story about nothing less than a hero's journey in service to justice."

Jim is married with three children and lives in Malibu, California. You can read more information about Jim at: www.throwingstarfish.com or follow him on Twitter @jim_gash.

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***Divine Collision: An African Boy, An American Lawyer, and
Their Remarkable Battle for Freedom***

By Jim Gash

Available from: Worthy Publishing

Release date: January 26, 2016

Price: U.S. \$21.99

Format: Hardcover with dust jacket and 8-page photo section

Pages: 300

ISBN-13: 978-1-6179-5671-3

BISAC category: Religion / Christian Life / Inspirational

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