

Calvary Fellowships Minister in Malawi

Story by Carol Savage
Photos by Bob Zuwich

In Malawi, Africa, one of the poorest countries in the world, hope is being poured out to the formerly hopeless. Through an outreach of Calvary Fellowship Southbury, CT, and Adirondack Christian Fellowship (a CC-affiliated church in Wilton, NY), countless widows, orphans, and others in dire need are being given ongoing material assistance and are being told the Good News about Jesus. Hundreds of Malawians have come to Christ by means of the outreach.

Pastor Rick Cohen of Adirondack Christian Fellowship and Pastor John Eastwood of CF Southbury visited Malawi on a mission trip in 2004 and were appalled by what they found there. John said, "On the surface, it looks like a cursed land." He remembered the extremely low average annual incomes, pandemic malaria, rampant AIDS, and over a million orphans in a land of 13 million people as being just some of the conditions

endured by Malawi's citizens. The two pastors resolved to engage their churches in bringing help to the Malawians in obedience to Jesus' command to make disciples of the nations (Matthew 28:19-20).

"Our primary goals are to spread the Gospel and provide training to national pastors; but because of the abject poverty, we also minister to people's material needs,"

John explained. The ministry, Epicenter Solutions, supports a year-round nutrition and Christian education program, as well as twice-yearly incursions into unreached villages to help Malawian pastors bring the Gospel to the people.

Epicenter Solutions oversees four feeding centers: two in Malawi and two in neighboring Mozambique. Throughout the year, 13 national pastors run the centers. Each center provides two daily meals, as well as three weekly classes in Bible, English, reading, and writing to impoverished locals, most of whom are orphans.

Twice a year, groups from CF Southbury and Adirondack Christian Fellowship visit Malawi to assist directly in the work there. The teams bring Bibles for Malawian pastors to distribute, organize conferences to help train Christian nationals in leadership, put in wells to counteract chronic shortages of water, and accompany native missionaries into remote parts of the countryside to spread the Gospel. The groups go hut-to-hut visiting tribal chiefs, widows, and orphans, while doing skits from the Bible, handing out Gospel necklaces, coloring books, and crayons. Then they gather villagers together to hear the Gospel and see *The Jesus Film* in the Malawian national language, Chichewa. Hundreds come to watch, and many hands are raised to receive Christ after each showing.

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Mormons are Taught of God's Grace

Story by Carol Savage

"Mormons frequently leave Mormonism but don't come to Christ," said Terry Paternoster, ministry leader of "Grace Works," an outreach of CC Boise, ID. Grace Works serves Mormons who want to leave the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints" and Christians who desire to share the Gospel with Mormons. The ministry, which was founded by CC Boise Pastor Bob Caldwell and others in 2004, was designed to "present the Gospel in a non-threatening way, help people who have come out of Mormonism, and provide a good foundation in the Scriptures," said Terry. Ministry volunteers provide witnessing classes, "transitioning classes," individual discipleship, conferences, and two informational websites. Numerous people have been led from error to truth as a result.

Grace Works' witnessing classes equip biblical Christians with knowledge to help them "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) to Mormons. Meanwhile, the transitioning classes are intended to strengthen former Mormons' new relationships with Jesus through discipleship core groups, or to introduce them to Him if necessary. And for the past two years, the ministry has organized a conference geared to Christians who desire to share the grace of God with Mormon acquaintances and relatives.

Terry, who came to Christ after a 21-year background as a Mormon, explained that his experience in the religion was one of unrelieved guilt. "I was taught that I had to work in order to receive forgiveness," he said. Unable to obtain inner peace, he started reading the New Testament and asked God to reveal the truth. While reading the Book of Galatians, he was struck by the passage that states in part, "... a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, ... that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified" (Galatians 2:16). In response, Terry said, "I gave up and trusted in Jesus, and God totally changed me." His salvation inspired him to help other Mormons find the freedom he had found in Christ.

The classes teach that the difference between Mormonism and biblical Christianity is that Jesus is not calling you to labor for forgiveness but to rely on what He has done for you—not on what you can do for yourself. If someone doesn't have complete forgiveness from God right now, they don't have Jesus.

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Ruth Kavtala, a volunteer cook for one of Epicenter Solutions' feeding centers in Malawi, finishes preparing a batch of *nsima* (a local specialty made from ground corn) to serve to orphans.



Team members and tribal chiefs discuss winter uses for farmlands.



In Bangula, Malawi, a widow receives prayer.



A local boat pilot guides a dugout canoe across the Shire River to reach a feeding center along the Malawi and Mozambique border.

SHARE YOUR GOOD NEWS:

Ministry Submission Guide:
Send us a summary of your local outreach, mission trip, or other fruitful ministry in Microsoft Word format, 300 words or less. Email or send original JPEG or TIFF files at least 2.0 megabytes in size.

Next issue deadline—June 1, 2009
Following deadline—Sept. 1, 2009

Please email your submission or send it to:

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“Thy Kingdom Come” Party at CC Joplin

Story by Carol Savage
Photos by Cheryl Franklin, Travis Franklin, & Violet Presley



Shannon Shewmake, leader of CC Joplin's children's ministry, speaks to the crowd at the Harvest Party.

Exploding in size since 1994, the annual Harvest Party hosted by CC Joplin, MO, has grown from a small church get-together to an event attended this past fall by over 1,600 people.

It has been an ongoing testimony through its growth and message of hope. With the theme “Thy Kingdom Come,” the event, held last October 31st on their 17-acre property, provided a Christian alternative to Halloween activities. In addition to traditional harvest festival attractions such as food, games, candy, and prizes, CC Joplin believers set up

“strategic ministry points,” booths designed specifically for sharing the Good News with passersby. The Gospel was also presented through live music and a symbolic demonstration of God's generous grace.

Jeff Kingery, CC Joplin's senior pastor, commented, “Everything about the Harvest Party was free ... the price was paid in full. Even so, Jesus paid in full the price for our sins.” He added, “As I was handing out pizza vouchers, I was sharing that all they had to do was receive them freely from my hands; in the same way, salvation was available to them if they received it freely from God's hands.” Others, including CC Joplin's



Bethany Goad paints the face of a Harvest Party participant.

Shannon Shewmake, overseer of the children's ministry, also told people about the Lord as he handed out prizes.

Throughout the festival, worship teams from CC Joplin and CC Lake Ozarks provided live praise music from an open-sided tent that faced the grounds, allowing everyone nearby to hear the name of Jesus being magnified. Additionally, a video screen placed on another side of the area showed a recorded CC Joplin church service. A gigantic open Bible, prominently displayed at the center of the festival, featured evangelistic verses for attendees to read.

Jeff summed up the outreach: “It's been incredible to watch God bless and multiply the event over the years. On a day that is typically set aside to draw attention to evil, people come to church where they hear the Gospel, learn about the love of God, and receive the seed of God's Word implanted in their hearts.”

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CC Joplin believers pray with a Harvest Party attendee who has just received Christ at one of the ministry stations.

CC Boston Ministry Makes Impact for Eternity

Story by Carol Savage
Photos courtesy of CC Boston



Joshua Everett gives a large-print Bible to a woman who has just prayed to receive Jesus.

“Getting older is tough. Seeing their faces as God opens their ears and their hearts to His Word is simply amazing and beautiful to see and be a part of,” said CC Boston's Associate Pastor Gary Stewart, who leads an outreach to seven nursing homes in the area. The Bible-teaching ministry, which has been running since late 2001, has been effective, with over 500 people coming to Christ during the past eight years.

Gary said, “Right after September 11, 2001, the Lord put it on my heart to bring His Word to nursing homes. Many

times, the residents' family members don't even come to see them, and many don't have any close family at all. They really look forward to our coming.”

The nursing homes are each visited in a rotation, so that all are visited once monthly. Gary and six other Christians start each hour-long outreach with a time of singing praise music and hymns, followed by a 30-minute Scripture message. Then there is “individual prayer time with the residents: holding their hands, talking with them, and just loving them,” he explained. “Some respond, ‘You mean all I have to do is believe?’ They weep when they realize that God loves and cares for them personally.” He added that, in addition to the over 500 elderly residents who have professed to receive Christ, many visiting family members have heard the Word and come to the Lord.



Gary Stewart, associate pastor at CC Boston, teaches from the Word to nursing home residents.

Gary said of those who have professed Christ through the ministry, “Many of them seem to be asleep during the study. However, when I give the invitation to come to Jesus—Bing! Their eyes are wide open and they do indeed hear and ask Jesus into their hearts.”

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