

March 2012 Mali, Malawi, Riga

This Sunday's *Bible Companion* readings include Luke 17 and there's an MP3 about this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/lk17.mp3>

MALAWI

A couple of years ago we reported the baptism of brother Esau, a Malawian on extended study leave in Norway. Our brother returned to his homeland where he is in charge of fishing operations in Lake Malawi. He shared the Gospel with his former church, and the pastor of that church [brother Leonard] accepted the teaching and was baptized. Since then, our brethren have been spreading the true understanding of the Lord Jesus not only to their former Christian associates but to Moslems, animists and unbelievers in Christ. Regularly we have received news of individuals and small groups who have become persuaded of the Truth as our brethren walk, cycle and hitch-hike in the spreading of the Gospel.

Such was the number of people prepared for baptism that brothers John and Greg from New Zealand made an extensive visit to our brethren, resulting in the baptism of 24 people. Such response to the Gospel is rare in our days, but arose at this time from many candidates building up to this over the last year or two.

Brother John reports:

Brothers John Aldersley and Greg McIver from New Zealand were in Malawi for 16 days visiting the brothers & sisters there. They started in Nkhotakota where a group has been established in the truth already. Brother Leonard is absolutely convicted of the truth, having resigned from his position as Pastor and consequently lost his salary, house, and subsidised school education for his children. One of the common issues in Malawi is money; the lack of it as well as the attraction to it. Sometimes some are attracted to the gospel because of the fringe benefits of the food, or monetary support that is offered. This is however not the case for Bro Leonard but rather the opposite. He has counted the truth more valuable. While John and Greg were in Malawi, they were involved in not only teaching the ecclesias in Nkhotakota, but were invited to teach around 50 other church Pastors as well as more than 100 other Christians the true doctrine. It is a contrast to our Western society, where the truth is maligned and we who teach it are branded as a cult. One Pastor who is a spokesman for a group of around 20 Pastors in his area commented as follows after an afternoon of teaching on the oneness of God, the kingdom of God on earth, and the true nature of the devil: "You have given us an appetiser and we are now hungry for more".



The traditional churches have had much influence in Malawi, but their converts are sent out to preach and Pastor their communities with very little Bible knowledge and at times not even a Bible. One important issue that John and Greg identified was for Bibles to be supplied; both to the brethren and to others keen to listen to the truth. While there, more than 100 Chichewa Bibles were purchased and distributed, and an ongoing commitment has been made to fund further Bibles and copies of *Bible Basics*.

Malawi, like much of Africa, can be a difficult place in which to preach to the gospel - malaria is rife, 14% of the population are estimated to have Aids, the infrastructure is poor and not maintained; and access to remote villages often requires travel by "local transport" (the back of

a pushbike) or by foot. John and Greg on 1 day walked 14 kms in and out to a small village to teach the truth to a group of about 10 who cycle 20 kms to attend the Linga group in Nkhotakota. Other days they travelled by bicycle:



One local brother cycles 20 km. each way on a very uncomfortable, delapidated bicycle to attend the meetings. You can see a copy of *Bible Basics* strapped to the rack; and thus the Truth spreads and takes a grip on peoples' lives in the dusty villages of Central Africa:



However, unlike our Western culture, the deceitfulness of riches has not dulled the desire for the hope of the kingdom. While travelling in the overcrowded mini buses, or walking the dirt tracks, many people asked about the gospel and were given introductory tracts about the Truth.



13 people were baptised in Lake Malawi; brothers LEN, JOHN, WALLE, ENOKE, RONARD and sisters LATE, ESTER, JANET, BETHER, MEJA, RUTH, ANITA and JUDITH.

Further South in Salima, Bros George Mayimba and Austin Nyirenda were visited and encouraged in fellowship, although they have been baptized many years already; and Austin travelled with them as well as brothers from Nkhotakota during their last week in Lilongwe. Two days was spent here going over the true doctrines of scripture and around 50 people came to learn. One of the highlights of these meetings was meeting a gentleman called George. He has been very influential in funding training for church pastors and setting up many small churches in a number of villages in the outlying areas. He was so excited about the truth he heard, that he is wanting his pastors to be taught the truth! He took away a copy of *Bible Basics*, and has already checked our websites and is very impressed. Pray for this gentleman as he has much influence and could be a great representative and influence for the truth.

The ecclesia in the Dzaleka refugee camp, of which Carelinks have had much association, was also visited. Brother Bernard was assisted there with the baptism of 10 people: Brothers SHIMOLO OMARI , OLOMWENE JUMA , MWIBELECHA MKANGYA , BODOUIN PASCHAL and EMEDI THEOPHILE; and Sisters SAFI CHENGA , ETO JUMAPILI , BIKYEOMBE MKANGYA , BADEE KASHINDI and NAMWENGE LOSOMBO.

The interest is great in Malawi for God's truth and the true hope of Christ's kingdom. Ongoing support for Chichewa Bibles and *Bible Basics* is planned, and we pray God will continue to bless and strengthen the believers in this country.

We reflect back on the Carelink message which reported the baptism of brother Esau. It concluded: "*It's just amazing the connections which God is making worldwide. We just seek to follow where He leads through the hands of providence*". Indeed God has lead us on from that point of baptizing a man one evening in Norway, to many more baptisms throughout Central

Africa and the establishment of highly active ecclesias:



MALI

Readers may have heard of the coup in Mali and fighting on the streets of Bamako. A few months ago we reported the first baptisms there. We've contacted our brethren and they are OK and nobody was hurt in their area of the city, but brother Luc sent a text message to sister Astrid that all shops are closed until Tuesday at least. Pray they have enough food to last. Usually they buy as need be, and have no reserves at all. Internet is down and communication is only possible by phone/text message- let us know if you'd like their mobile number so you can send a text message of support, preferably in French.

RIGA

We're pleased to tell you of the baptisms of ELENA and LUDMILA at the **Riga Bible Center**. Elena has worked out that she first attended our meetings nine months ago, and she perceives the word has worked within her to bring forth this re-birth. Our sisters aren't from the night shelters and are retired medical professionals. It's amazing how the appeal of the Gospel is to "all people", and perhaps this means "all types of people", from right across the social and educational spectrum, all personality types and human situations, as well as geographically across the globe. Elena has searched for God and read the Bible for many years, passing through various Pentecostal churches as well as Russian Orthodoxy. She was especially attracted by our view of Satan, which fitted in exactly with her own thoughts about the root of human problems. She recounted how she read Hebrews 2:14-18 as if she had never read it before, and suddenly realized that what she was being taught about the nature of Jesus and "the devil" made such good sense about those verses.



With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks