



MALAWI MISSION PARTNER COMMUNIQUE

By Missionary John Holtz

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“A Woman Who Fears The Lord Is To Be praised”

41

That’s the number of LCCA pastor’s wives who attended the *first-ever* Bible Study Retreat specifically designed for them. Only one person who had been invited was unable to join the group!



Coming from all areas of Malawi, the women gathered at the LBI in Lilongwe and participated in the retreat from the 3rd – 7th July 2017.

Comments like this one were made at the end of the retreat:

“Next year may we stay and study for 2 weeks?!”

Hmmm...they either want to be away from their husbands, the kitchen and the kids an extra week or they must have found it beneficial!

Or was it something else that is drawing them back for more?

The food?

Could be, because it was both abundant and tasty and they didn’t have to prepare it themselves!

The fellowship?

Could be, because this was a rare treat for them all to be together!

The games?

Could be because it certainly looked – and sounded - like they were having fun!

Maybe it is a bit of everything pulling them back! According to them, the experience was a real blessing. Some had kids on their backs, others were widows; some have husbands who have been in the public ministry less than 5 years and others more than 20.

Despite the vast range of ages and experience, the comments and sentiments were the same:

- “We really enjoyed the studies.”
- “We have learned a lot at this retreat.”
- “We thank all those in WELS who have made this possible.”

Pastor Kumchulesi and I couldn't promise that there could even be another Bible Study Retreat next year, but it is certainly worth discussing. It actually took a special gift from WELS in order to hold this special retreat for the ladies. All the transport, food and material costs were covered.



Small Group Discussions

Professor Alfred Kumchulesi and I taught two subjects each day:

- 1) A Pastor's Wife: “A Suitable Helper for a Pastor” On an African Perspective
- 2) Evangelism

A Pastor's Wife: “A Suitable Helper for a Pastor” On an African Perspective

Like an active African bee hive, there was a constant “buzz” in the room with good discussion and lots of questions about practical life of a pastor's wife. The questions raised were relevant to everyone in the room...

- What's the role of a Pastor's Wife?
- How does the role of a pastor's wife in the village differ from that in the city?
- Does the pastor's wife have a responsibility in the Synod? If so, what?

- What challenges are greatest for the pastor's wife in Malawi?
- How can a pastor's wife be a blessing to her husband and the congregation?

A lot of questions came from the ladies. And one that came from Solomon:

*“A wife of noble character who can find?”
(Proverbs 31:10)*

Or to put it in the context of the class: A pastor's wife of noble character...who can find?

Well, each of the 41 husbands to these Christian ladies can say he did!

Not because each one is perfect in and of herself. Each of these ladies, like the rest of us, has a sinful nature, but each one has also been washed in the blood of the Lamb of God! They have faith in Jesus and peace with the Lord through the forgiveness of sins. Through their Savior they have eternal life and a heavenly home. And in a unique way - brought about by God Himself - each is what Solomon wondered if such a one could even be found...

A wife of noble character.

With appreciation for the blessings of God in their lives, these women of noble character want to bring others the Good News of Jesus, too. And that's why we also talked about another important topic:

Evangelism.

- Scary subject?*
- Better left for the pastor and elders?*
- Save it for another time?*
- Not really cut out for it?*

These may be some common reaction to it. Maybe even from yourself. But as a group we looked at it seriously.

We noted that the Scriptures are full of encouragements and examples. We contemplated the command and discussed the challenges. We

learned some methods and memorized some verses.

And then it happened...

All the ladies walked out of class!

No, they weren't angry; nor were they boycotting the lessons. They were simply sent on a mission. Part of the class was to get out of the classroom and into the community. We didn't just talk *about* evangelism, we *evangelized!*



Exiting the LBI campus gate and entering the mission field!

The ladies left the campus with a few jitters. But came back excited. They returned back to the classroom with many stories to tell. One group enthusiastically explained how they were able to witness to *eight* different people!

Like Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman at the well, these ladies offered spiritually parched people a cool refreshing drink: the water of life.

They soon discovered that far too many people believe that the reason they would be going to heaven is because of their good works:

- *I keep the commandments!*
- *I'm a pretty good guy!*
- *I try my best!*
- *I'm not as bad as others!*
- *I go to church!*
- *I pray a lot!*

Each one a leaky bucket. None of the reasons hold water.

The ladies eyes were opened. They realized first hand that day that many people do not know the one and only way to salvation: faith in Jesus.

In class we had talked about a number of ways to evangelize. The one that the ladies really tried to memorize and put to heart was the gospel presentation called **God's Great Exchange** (*New Life In Christ, pages 77-80; F. Bivens and D. Valleskey*).

What does it take to present the gospel using this approach?

A few pictures.
A few questions.
A few Scripture verses.
A few minutes, and...

A heart full of love for God, His Word and His people! And when you have that, you are in living color what God has already called you to be:

- ✚ a disciple,
- ✚ a light in a dark world,
- ✚ an ambassador of Christ,
- ✚ salt of the earth
- ✚ a fisher of men.

There are 41 such people scattered in parsonages throughout Malawi. Maybe, just maybe, we'll find them again next year gathered on the LBI campus for more Bible Study.

By the way, the same wise man who asked that thought-provoking question about a wife of noble character also had this to say about her in Proverbs 31:30: "*Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting; but...*

a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

Sincerely,

John Holtz
Your Malawi Mission Partner



Lunch is ready!