



MALAWI MISSION PARTNER COMMUNIQUE

By Missionary John Holtz



February 2020

Christ for All, Great News for Africa.

Christ for All,
Great News for Africa.

Seven words.
One passion.



A core focus of the One Africa Team (OAT) that burns like fire in the belly.

That Godly desire.
That Christ-like obsession.
That Spirit-driven yearn of the heart.

I could sense the hunger in the room: a resolve to know Christ and to make Him known.¹

How can we do that in the most effective, God-pleasing way in our little corner of the world into which God has placed us? Especially considering that THAT “little corner” happens to be the size of AFRICA! Or better said, it *is* Africa. Whew. That question hung intimidatingly over us like Malawi’s January clouds.

To figure out the answer to that question, the One Africa Team gathered in Lilongwe, Malawi² for its annual meeting. The 4-day pow wow was a call to



arms of sorts, a raising of the flag “Christ for All, Great News for Africa.”



Five men from Malawi,³ four men from Zambia⁴ and three from the States.⁵ A dirty dozen washed clean in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.⁶

It rang true then as it does every day: the better we know Christ, the greater the passion God fuels in us to be His disciples, His workers in His harvest fields.

Or as John Hartmann reminded us in his opening sermon based on Titus 1:1-9,

“We are Slaves of the Trustworthy Message.”

An appropriate theme and a timely reminder for the One Africa Team. A slave serves. In our case – and in yours dear Mission Partner – when the One whom we are serving is the Savior Jesus who gave us the trustworthy message – wow – that really helps craft and shape our niche in both life and ministry.

It did for us as the One Africa Team:



OAT with BWM, ACA and PSI Leaders

“Through theological education and coordination of WELS resources, we, the One Africa Team, assist our partners in Africa to grow as independent, healthy church bodies.”

Our partners in Africa? The Sister Synods who are located in these countries...

- Malawi
- Zambia
- Cameroon
- Nigeria
- Kenya
- Ethiopia.

These are the ones with whom we have an official fellowship relationship and standing. But there's more. *Much* more.

By God's grace the list of *potential* sister synods in Africa is growing longer. The Holy Spirit is on the move.

OAT is, too.

OAT is following up with contacts and/or groups in Rwanda, Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda, Liberia, Congo, Burundi, Zimbabwe...

The task is as **BIG** as it sounds.

Understanding that it is, Missionary Hartmann succinctly summarized the sermon text in a nutshell: 1) we are entrusted with the truth and 2) we are sent to train others.

Are we up for such a task? Nope, not in our own power! But as the Word of God impresses upon us, it's a mission given and empowered by God Himself.

He's behind it all.

And out in front of us all! We sang...



In your promise firm we stand;
None can take us from your hand.
Speak we hear at your command,
We will follow YOU!

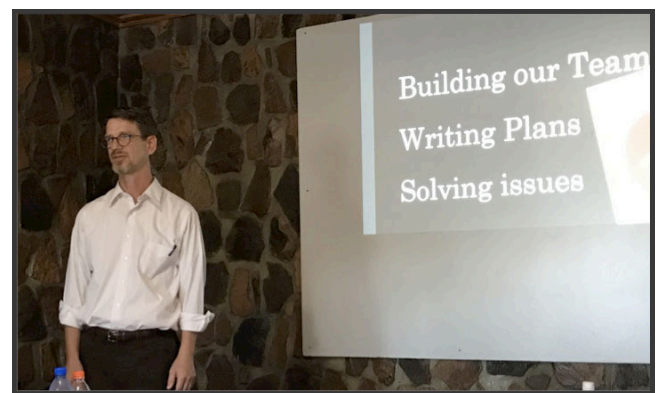
By your blood our souls were bought;
By your life salvation wrought;
By your light our feet are taught,
Lord, to follow YOU!

He is a Good One to follow. Yes, Jesus is both behind it all and out in front. A Lamb who laid down His life for His sheep. (Already happened!) A Shepherd who still leads His sheep. (Still happening!) But he's not so distant ahead that we can't follow Him. Not so far beyond reach that He's out of touch.

What an impassioned desire He has for us!
To seek and to save is His focused obsession!
Oh, the deep yearn of Christ's heart for you and me!

Christ for All. Great News for Africa.

Paul Nitz, the One Africa Team Integrator, set up an agenda that rallied us around that passion.



We participated in some team building exercises, evaluated our strengths and reconfirmed our core

values. We set down some long-range goals, worked through some thorny issues and readjusted some structure. We rethought, rehashed and revisited what needed attention.

Though the “plans of mice and men”⁷ and even OAT for that matter, may not turn out the way we might think or expect, we have a God who certainly knows what He’s doing and knows what is best. He’s in control and – make no mistake about it – He makes no mistakes about it.

Even on a continent the size of Africa.



Christ for All.
Great News for Africa.



Missionary John Holtz,
Your Mission Partner in Malawi

-
1. 1 Corinthians 2:2-5; Psalm 89:1
 2. Kortasia Lodge, Lilongwe
 3. From Malawi: Dan Kroll, Paul Nitz, Mark Panning, John Roebke, John Holtz.
 4. From Zambia: Phil Birner, Stefan Felgenhauer, John Hartmann, Ernie Wendland, Dan Witte.
 5. From the States: Jon Bare member of the Pastoral Studies Institute of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Director of the Confession Lutheran Institute. David Bivens (Chairman of the Administrative Committee for Africa) Larry Schlomer (WELS Administrator of the Board for World Missions).
 6. 1 Corinthians 6:11

7. The saying is adapted from a line in “To a Mouse,” by Robert Burns. No matter how carefully a project is planned, something may still go wrong with: “The best laid **schemes o' mice an' men...**”



*Worship Service prior to
OAT Annual Meeting*