

CHURCH NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

God is on the move and doing a deep work in Uganda, Africa, and I was privileged to be able to be part of a mission trip in June, 2011, through *Alongside International* which is a program of *Crossroads Missions* in Burlington. Alongside International is an organization founded and directed by David Mclash. David and his wife, Linda, have dedicated their lives to ministry in the area of mission work in Liberia, Nigeria and Uganda. I was part of a team of 11 women along with our amazing leader, David. We served in a community outreach by providing medical care and building a school in the rural village of Barlonyo in northern Uganda. I was very encouraged as I witnessed our whole team working together in complete unity and oneness of Christ. God is bringing hope to a suffering people as we are an extension of the love and compassion of God by actively demonstrating the love of Christ to those in need. The struggles of daily life just to survive are evident and in your face every moment. I was overcome throughout the time there with overwhelming emotions at how others have to live in this world. Not only are the people of Barlonyo facing an uphill battle with the issues of poverty, hunger, limited access to clean water, lack of medical care, inadequate education and all the diseases which are prevalent in Africa, but they are also forced to deal with the aftermath of trauma due to a massacre which invaded their village in February of 2004. Barlonyo was attacked by a rebel group called the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Over 300 people were brutally murdered in a matter of hours. I personally spoke with a lady who had been stabbed through the head and left for dead. At the time, she was rescued but had to endure recovery in a hospital for one year. Seven years later, she is still dealing with the emotional effects of what she went through, as well as losing sight in one eye. This is just one story of many.

Our team worked together with the locals and the church in Lira, *Victory Outreach Ministries*, who continue to support the people with their needs physically and spiritually. Over the two-week period, we provided medical care to over 1,600 people. As word spread throughout the communities about our medical outreach, many would walk up to four days to get to our clinic. People were lined up every morning as we arrived on site. Among the most common health issues we treated malaria, parasites/worms and respiratory infections. Many children are orphaned because they have lost their parents due to AIDS and are themselves HIV positive.

Even though the Ugandan people are suffering much, I was so touched by them. They are a loving people, gentle in nature, patient in waiting, so grateful and thankful to us. They are a people who welcomed us so warmly. Back in January, when David and another team built the school which we worked out of, many came to the Lord for salvation. A church service is now being held every Sunday out of the school. We were privileged to participate in their church service, and I could see such a hunger and thirst for God out of the depths of desperation and despair.

God has blessed me by giving me the opportunity to be part of something so special, to share God's love and compassion, to see that hope is being restored. Truly, we must see that God has allowed us to be born in a country of abundance and blessing. Our prayer should be: "Let the blessing You've poured out on my not be spent on me in vain. Let this life be used for change." – *Starfield*.

Isaiah 49:13

For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

Isaiah 6:8

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"