

Robert Gideon of the CFCM Committee writes

Dear Brethren,

In Genesis 48:11 we read of what Israel said to Joseph, **"I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too."**

This was after Joseph had come with his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to see his father who was sick. Israel did not expect to see Joseph's face again, because his brothers reported to him that he had been killed by an animal, while in fact they had sold him to the Ishmaelites (Genesis 37:20,33). But the most interesting thing is that Israel did not only see Joseph's face, but his children too. It was God who had allowed that to happen.

The God whom we serve makes the impossible possible. As Children for Christ Ministry, we did not expect we would reach this far: reach out to so many Sunday School teachers with the trainings, and so many children in primary schools and community bible clubs with the Gospel. God allowed that to happen. And He should be glorified for His mercy, grace, provision and faithfulness.

May God bless you. Amen!

PRAYER POINTS

- Praise God for a successful Christmas party at Chimembe School, attended by 350 children. Although it had rained the day before, it stayed dry overnight and the road was passable. It also remained dry all morning, so that all activities could continue outside. God is good!

- Praise God for the commitment of CFCM to persevere through the rains to reach the children and teach them the Gospel. Pray for safety as they travel, and for continued good health.
- Praise God for the new bible clubs in Phalombe. Pray that they will grow and that many children will come to Christ.
- Thank God that the new Sunday school material is complete, and pray that it will be a great help to teachers who have nothing else to guide them.
- A new Administrative Officer was appointed in December. Pray for Lackson Makawa as he gets to know the job, and for the team as they start to work together this year.
- Pray for our seminars in Dedza (11th Feb), Malosa (11th March), and 2-day seminars in Mchinji (7-8th April) and Muona (28-29th April). The 2-day seminars are to allow more time for modelling and practical assessment.



zambesi mission
Serving Jesus and His church in Malawi and northern Mozambique



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**CHILDREN FOR
CHRIST MINISTRY
Feb – April 2017**



RAIN, RESPONSE AND RESOURCES

Drought, leading to poor harvest, hunger, water shortages, extensive power outages – this is what Malawi experienced in 2016. So, to see the rains starting to fall last November was a huge relief. All parts of the country were well watered by December, with crops starting to grow.

The rainy season brings relief – but also problems for those involved in children's ministry. The rains affect transport, communication, school attendance and health in ways that are hard to imagine in the UK.

We also report in this bulletin on an excellent response to our seminars in Phalombe, and the launch of our new Chichewa Sunday school materials.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY IN THE RAIN

There are many untarred roads in Malawi, even close to the city centre. Many of CFCM's bible clubs are reached by dirt roads, which start to get washed away and dangerous when the rain is heavy. Even if a road is passable, and we reach the school, sometimes we find there are no children. Maybe the children have been sent home early before the afternoon rains, so that they get home dry, or before rivers they need to cross start to flood. Or maybe it is simply because the school teachers want to get their planting done in their fields, so they cancel lessons and send the children home!

Sometimes we set out in sunshine, but while we are teaching the rain starts to fall and, as it hammers on the tin roof of the school, we cannot make ourselves heard. If it is a small group, as at Mphemba reformatory centre, we can gather the children closer so they can hear. But many of our school clubs have 100-200 children, and we have no option but to stop teaching. We may wait to see if the rain stops, but sometimes we must travel home by bicycle taxi, minibus or on foot, in the rain, getting soaked to the skin, and everything in our bags gets soaked too.

During the rainy season, we deliberately plan our seminars in the city, or in places close to the tarred roads. This ensures that we can get there. However, the teachers who wish to attend the seminars gather from several kilometres around; and if they anticipate rain they often will not attend.

With the rains come more mosquitos, and more instances of malaria. Many children will be affected, and our own team members are more vulnerable to illness during this season.

But the work goes on. Every opportunity to bring the Gospel to the children of Malawi is precious, and the commitment of CFCM – come rain or shine – never waivers.



ENTHUSIASM IN PHALOMBE

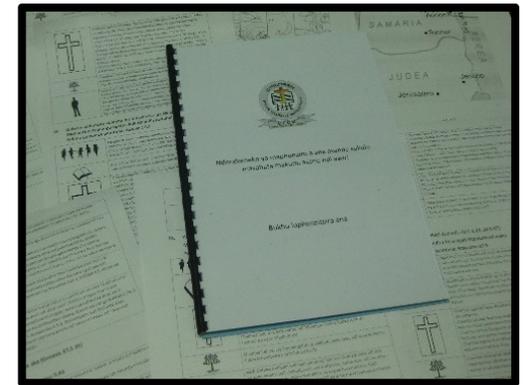
We are so encouraged by the enthusiasm for children's ministry in Phalombe. Since our seminar there in August 2016, at least 3 bible clubs have been established. We returned in November for a further seminar and, of the 60 participating Sunday school teachers, 38 were returning for level 2. A total of 21 churches were represented. One teacher who could not attend promised to travel to Blantyre for training in January, such was his concern not to get left behind!

So far we have only managed to visit one of the new clubs, at Chilayani, where we encouraged the pastor's son, who is single-handedly

teaching a group of 70 children in his community every week. We hope this year we will have the opportunity to visit the others.

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS

One of the most frequent complaints we receive from teachers at our seminars is that they have no materials or resources in Chichewa to help them prepare Sunday school lessons. Another comment we often hear after the training is: "Now we realize we have just been telling stories – we had no idea how to explain the gospel message to children".



Last year we created a 52-week lesson plan which teachers were very thankful for, as it at least gave them a structure to work to. However, we realized some teachers need more help in bringing their lessons to life, so they can explain the Gospel clearly to the unsaved and help the saved to apply biblical teaching to their daily lives. So, we have now developed the 52-week lesson plan - available in Chichewa and English - into a teacher's book, which we have produced as cheaply as possible, and we hope this will be of further help to teachers.