

## The Battle



*"We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm."*  
Ephesians 6:12-13

The battle for the hearts of people is

real and it is intense. We have faced serious battles this past month in our outreach to Malawi and Ethiopia. The challenges we have faced include: two deaths of family members, Bishop's nephew, and Pam's mom; four visits to the hospital; a pilot's strike; money transfer problems; delay in printing; lost luggage; and illness. All of these are normal challenges of life, but when they all come at the same time, it is obvious that the battle is against spiritual forces in the heavenlies. I am grateful that our call is to stand firm using the armor of God. Jesus is the one that fights these unseen battles.

Facing intense assault can be overwhelming and discouraging, but Paul experienced those same attacks, and he reminds us that our battle is ultimately with spiritual forces not physical ones. He reminds us that we are not alone in the battle. I am grateful that Jesus is interceding on our behalf and that we stand together with all of you as ministry partners.

Finances are another area of struggle, dependence, and answered prayer. Support-based missions is a place where the ministry is forced to depend on the Lord for its daily supply and it is a place where Jesus continues to show us His faithfulness. I marvel at the ministry expansion from just this past year in Malawi and Ethiopia. We have partnered with four ministries in Malawi to cover much of the two-year curriculum. Ethiopia has received the introduction to the Orality Strategy of education. Pray for IOI as we consider what the Lord has planned for us in 2023.

## The Victory



*"Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel... Pray that I may declare it fearlessly."* Ephesians 6:19-20

Paul desired that he would be faithful to proclaim the gospel and do it fearlessly. Success in missions needs to be measured from that same heavenly perspective.

This month we have been faithful to proclaim the gospel in both Malawi and Ethiopia. The Tabor Evangelical College, in Hawassa, Ethiopia has 100 students enrolled in their missiology program. They were excited to learn how to share the gospel using an oral strategy. This is the third Bible college that we have introduced to this oral method of education and each one of them intends to use the training in different ways.

In Malawi, we held separate trainings in the north, the center, and in the south. There were 65 people who attended the 28 lessons presented by our Ugandan missionaries. They proclaimed the Word of God fearlessly and lives were touched. Beyond hearing the Word, those 65 people now have 28 more stories from scripture that they can use to boldly proclaim with this simple oral communication tool.

We marvel at the testimonies of the students because it is obvious that the Lord has been at work. They tell us that they will be using this method personally, with their families, their churches, and for evangelism. They recognize that this has brought the Bible alive as they communicate with their voice, body, and images. The Bible becomes engaging and now they can recall those stories from their heart, which means that they have a training for all levels of people, educated and uneducated alike.