

In 2004, a member of a Lethbridge CLC moved to Barrie, Ontario, and the Rockies Rep asked the Central Rep to help this person get in contact with a local CLC. The Central Rep drove from Kitchener-Waterloo to welcome this Alberta CLC member. Later, our Central Ecclesial Assistant drove to Barrie to meet the lady and her parish priest. Our E.A. put on an information meeting in the church. As a follow-up, two Toronto CLC members went to Barrie and started guiding this new CLC. The lady who originally had started the inquiry decided not to join, but there were six people willing to make the commitment. The group encouraged one member to become their co-ordinator and they became the Disciples of Prayer. With visits from their guides in Toronto, and frequent phone calls between the guides and the co-ordinator, they successfully made their way through Manual 1. The co-ordinator was from the Maritimes, and she noticed in Update that one of the Atlantic communities, Our Lady's Circle, was in Nackawic, the town where her mother lived, where she had grown up. She knew all the CLC members there, but had never realized that they belonged to CLC. She told her mother about it and her mother joined Our Lady's Circle CLC and is still a member. The Disciples of Prayer went on to work through Manual 2.

In 2006-7, the Disciples joined a Life in the Spirit Seminar in their parish, in which discussion groups were used and the Disciples found themselves broken up among the different groups. At the end of the mission there was a discussion among the participants about where they should go from there. CLC was offered as an option. The Disciples and their guides put on an information meeting and 25 people decided to try CLC. Peter Peloso, from Guelph agreed to help with the guiding. The 25 new members were divided up into 3 groups, one of which became Living Waters. After they had all done Manual 1, in 2008, they were all offered an opportunity to do the Spiritual Exercises in Barrie. Three members, Andree Richard, Suzanne Coulson, and Mark Driediger discerned to do the Exercises, but the rest of the four Barrie CLC members discerned that CLC was not for them. Some of them formed a prayer group which continues to this day. One of them, Mark Driediger, joined the Scarborough Missions Society, which models itself on St. Francis Xavier, and after training he volunteered and was sent to Malawi, one of the poorest countries in Africa for three years. His recent letter is included below. The fourth Barrie CLC, Living Waters, "went underground" for a while, but has resurfaced with some new members and some of the originals, including Suzanne Coulson and Andree Richard, who is now the Rep elect for Central Region.

MARK'S LETTER.

"Dear friends and relatives,

It is Sunday morning. I am at my desk and listening to the birds. There are very many different kinds of birds and so many different sounds. In the morning it can even get noisy. Do you remember the children's Sunday School song about 'birds in the treetops praising God all day long--so why shouldn't I?' All I have to do sometimes to pray is go for a walk--the hills, valleys and trees my temple, and the birds my choir. It is hard not to be grateful and full of praise in a place like this.

Another sound is the sound of the church bell. It rings at various times throughout the day. Always it will ring half an hour and 5 minutes before a church gathering. The bell serves as a

clock since many still go just by the sun. The bell, like the birds, is for me a call to prayer. I remember from history how the bell was replaced. This is too bad. It marks what is really important and in itself is a prayer. The founder of the mission here, John, remarked how in Kerala, India when they heard the bell ring, Christians would say the Angelus. It is a beautiful prayer and our little community includes it every night in our evening prayers. It recalls for me a picture of a couple bowing for prayer in a wheat field. A church steeple can be seen in the distance. My parents hung that picture in my bedroom and it comes back to me now though I can't remember the title or artist.

The singing of Chitumbuka people is also precious. Here at Padre Pio (a rural mission) the singing is not boisterous as it is in some other places. There is no dancing or even much movement. But the singing is still strong and melodic, there is harmony, and always there is call and response. A line or part of a line is sung, then added to or repeated. It is kind of like the parallelism of the psalms and a aid to memory. Only a few have books. These will lead and so 'teach' the song to the group. Songs change from what is written to accomodate parts and new ideas as they arise. It is hard to follow the songbook for this reason. It has been adapted to a tradition far older, and in some respects, better, than our written way. So a song is more group project more than an individual product. I have given up trying to learn the words from the book and now in just enjoying the singing I find I am not only learning the words and feeling behind the words. The word 'Fumu' or 'Lord' for example is always said more quietly and with affection. There is a mix of joy and sadness in the singing. The way of the cross on the wall, the figure of Jesus on the cross at the front makes sense to these people in a very special and intimate way. How good of God to visit us, to become like us, to be humble, to walk our paths, to talk about crops, birds, and how ordinary people behave. And also to suffer with us and for us, to die and through his death, prove a love that is stronger than anything--even death itself.

I want to add a prayer request. The region is predominately Christian but witchcraft is still present even among Christians. It seems to have come among our students. One girl was crying hysterically and having 'dreams'. Others are sick in different ways. Some are medical problems, but others seem to be more than that. The mission is investigating each case, praying over those who request prayer, consulting with parents and others, and also teaching and counseling. The students as a whole have been affected. Some are talking about quitting, many are sad, confused, and afraid. Please pray for those students who are suffering. Pray for all students that their faith in Jesus will become stronger and purer. Pray for our mission that we remain and become more so a safe haven, place of peace and joy.

Sincerely,

Mark