

Generosity Revolution  
*November 14/15 2009*

I'm blessed today to have this opportunity to share with you some great things God is doing in our church family. He's continuing to give New Life church the open door to be used for his glory. As you know, Pastor Steve's in India visiting the Hindustan Bible Institute.

New Life has a long standing partnership with the HBI in India. It's training center for Indian pastors who are planting churches all over India spreading the gospel for the glory of God. Our plan is to continue supporting HBI and other mission efforts around the world.

Here's something you may not know, each week as you give to the general fund through your tithes and offerings 10% of your giving goes directly into our outreach and missions effort, supporting local outreach and ministry partners all over the world. I don't know if you realize this but when you write a check to New Life or put cash in the offering plate each week, from right here in Gahanna Ohio you have a direct impact on church planting in India, and in a variety of other countries around the world where New Life supports missions.

People will be in heaven because they came to know Jesus through a ministry you support with your giving. Our ministry partners do what they do in part because of your generosity as followers of Jesus. People like you who love Jesus generously reaching out to those who don't know him; the result of a Generosity Revolution starting right here at New Life church.

I've been asked to give you an update regarding the Generosity Revolution. The Generosity Revolution is a church wide strategic initiative that Pastor Steve introduced to us in April of this year. There's a planning team working to identify outreach opportunities and today I want to share with you where we are in that process, where we want to go and how you can be part of this revolution.

The Generosity Revolution is driven by our desire to make Jesus look like the treasure that he is; starting with us right here at New Life growing in our personal relationships with him. It then extends to one another here in our family then to central Ohio and finally to the world.

Jesus instructed us to love God with all our hearts and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We can talk about loving God; we can talk about loving others all day long. We can sing great songs about it, preach it from the pulpit, talk about it in small groups, teach it in a variety of classes but until we actually do something to love as a result of transformation that we are becoming all that talk is just that talk. Talking can make us feel like we love Jesus but if we don't engage our behavior shows what we really love, ourselves.

I don't believe any of us want New Life to be a place where we just talk, or come only to receive, or a place where it's okay to be an apathetic follower of Jesus. I think we all want to be part of a church that reaches out in love to the world. We want to be part of something bigger than ourselves. We were designed by God for that purpose and we know it, we feel it, we desire it.

I think if you're a follower of Jesus this morning deep inside you is a desire to display the glorious gift of the gospel to the world; the Gospel, that precious gift of transforming salvation in Jesus that's changed who you are. Don't you want to be part of a family of believers who respond to the commands and love of Jesus with zeal and enthusiasm?

The generosity revolution is one tangible way all of us in this room right now, can express the joyous liberating light of Jesus Christ to a dark and hopeless world.

I'm sure we're familiar with Jesus' words in Matthew 28 and his instruction to the disciples in Acts chapter 1. I know you've heard sermons from these passages so we'll not spend lots of time here but it's important to review these verses because these concepts are foundational to our Generosity Revolution.

Matthew 28 records some of the last words Jesus physically spoke to the disciples. Jesus is leaving; he's going to ascend back to heaven. He shares with the disciples the important thoughts on his mind. I seriously doubt he wasted time talking about the weather, their families, their trip up to Galilee, he probably didn't talk politics or discuss the price of wheat; no he commissioned them, he prepared them for his departure.

This was the last time he would physically be with the disciples on this earth. He was leaving and he was sending them out to carry on the work of the Kingdom. This was important to Jesus that's why it's so important for us to remind ourselves often of these words.

### **DISPLAY ON THE SCREENS MATTHEW 28 VERSES**

Jesus begins by saying "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me..." He ends by saying "...behold, I am with you always to the end of the age."

The Greek word here for authority is the word...This is a word rich in meaning. Jesus is saying I have the ability to handle all the authority of the universe, I have been given the right to possess that authority and most importantly I have the power to execute and enforce that authority.

He is saying to them and to us, I have all the power of the universe, everything you see and everything you don't see is at my disposal. I have all the power and I know how to use it. It's in that authority I'm commissioning you to carry out my plan. I have the authority to create my plan; I'm giving you the authority to execute my plan.

What was this plan that was so important to Jesus..."Go therefore into all the world and make disciples...baptizing them...and teach them to observe all my commandments."

Jesus gave the church (that's you and me) one mission make disciples... first baptizing and then teaching. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit to help them become believers and as they believe baptize them as a sign of their belief. Then train them to be committed followers of Jesus. That's his plan for us.

Who are we to baptize and train? (All nations the entire world) Jesus was even more specific in Acts chapter 1 verse 8.

### **DISPLAY ON THE SCREENS ACTS 1:8**

He said Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Jesus said you will be my witnesses when you receive the power of the Holy Spirit. There's no way around it, when the transforming power of the Holy Spirit is inside you, you will speak of it. What you love you will witness to. Jesus said you'll be so different from this world that you'll be my witnesses.

He said start in your local town, spread out to your region and then, to the ends of the earth. The go command in Matthew 28 and the three focus areas in Acts 1 weren't suggestions we can take or leave...they're commands for us today. Our Generosity Revolution efforts are patterned after Jesus' instruction. Generosity Revolution has specific local, regional, and global goals. God's desire is for us to go to the world; the world begins in this room, spreads to our city, then to the nations.

I feel compelled to mention another passage from Psalm 46. I love Psalm 46; it describes God as my security, my source of supply and my life. He is our fortress, our strong tower, our place of refuge in time of trouble. In the tough times we're living families are losing jobs, homes, security, many of you here today know exactly what I'm talking about because that's you. Let me assure you that Jesus knows what's going on and even in the midst of these troubles he is our peace, our life, our hope. I don't know how people without Jesus are surviving these days.

### **DISPLAY ON THE SCREENS PSALMS 46:10**

Psalm 46:10 has a familiar phrase you've probably heard "Be still and know that I am God." I saw that phrase on a really cool picture the other day. That phrase is familiar but we forget to complete the verse. God says "Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth!"

God displays himself to us through what he has made, through creation we can know he exists and is mighty.

**DISPLAY ON THE SCREENS PHOTO #1 ANDROMEDA (I WILL COMMENT ON SO HOLD IT TILL I MOVE ON)**

But he also uses us as his hands and feet demonstrating his grace and mercy through our personal involvement in the lives of people.

**DISPLAY ON THE SCREENS PHOTO #2 CRISTEN AND BABY – (I WILL NOT COMMENT ON SO DISPLAY AND THEN MOVE ON)**

That he might be exalted among the nations.

What a glorious mission we've been given to exalt God, to proclaim his name, his character, his love, to all people, to spread his fame throughout the earth, to live in his authority and power among the peoples of the world. We've been created by God to worship and exalt him through our holy living, our passion for him, proclaiming his name to the world.

If you want to know the meaning of life that's it, that's why you are here. Nothing you will ever do in your life can compare to the joy, prestige, and value that is loving people through the Spirit of God so that they will know and exalt Jesus. That's why he created you. That's why we do what we do. That's why we want a Generosity Revolution to sweep through New Life like a wild fire that starts burning here and spreads to the world.

In April Pastor Steve shared that the Generosity Revolution is focused on three specific ministry goals; local, regional and global, targeting our Jerusalem, our Judea/Samaria and our ends of the earth.

James 1:27 being a key verse

**DISPLAY ON THE SCREEN JAMES 1:27**

Widows and orphans refer to those in society who need help because they're unable to help themselves. In that male driven culture through which property and wealth were distributed, a woman without a husband or a child without a father had very little chance of providing or supporting themselves. James says you serve God by serving those who are struggling to survive.

Our local ministry goal, our Jerusalem, is to serve single parents in our church family here at New Life. Being a single parent is a tough job. To be mom and dad, provider, caregiver, mentor, disciplinarian, nurse, coach and everything else is an almost impossible task. Through the Generosity Revolution we want to affirm and support single parent families in our church. Single parents, we want you to know you are not alone.

Along with the Great Food for all program, and the care closet; we've held two events to support the single parents at New Life. Our men's ministry expertly executed an oil change event. Another event was a clothing swap and breakfast bar just before the school season started.

There's a team that will be planning events for single parents over the next several months. If you're a single parent watch for these events, let us serve you. If you're not a single parent, come and serve these precious families. We want a revolution of generosity right here at New Life supporting single parents in our family.

The regional ministry goal, our Judea and Samaria, is to partner closely with the Redeemed Community Church of Franklinton. Redeemed Community is a church plant in our cities near west side, planted out of Ekklesia the New Life church in the short North. Six weeks ago Redeemed Community held its first service.

Franklinton is a broken community. As we go home today to our nice homes, good schools, stable families, with a veneer of civility and promise, just 10 minutes away from here is an area of our city where people live hopeless and desperate lives. It's a harsh, troubled, community where addiction, prostitution, crime, violence, broken homes are common place. There's no real evidence of Jesus Christ in Franklinton.

Lasting hope only comes through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Through his work in the hearts of people and loving outreach on our part we believe Redeemed can be a catalyst for change in Franklinton. The ministry pan at Redeemed is to preach

the gospel in a clear biblical way and live out the gospel by providing a free Laundromat, food pantry, clothing pantry and community center.

Redeemed is still in the start up phase so right now there's not a lot we here at New Life can physically do to help. But as time goes on our desire is that many of you will participate along with the Redeemed church body directly ministering to the lost and needy people just west of downtown Columbus.

The global outreach goal, our ends of the earth, is an attempt to do something we've never done, create a sister church partnership with an international church body. We will continue to support a variety of mission outreach efforts, India, China, Costa Rica, France, Haiti and others and this sister church opportunity is in Uganda.

In September of this year a New Life team of 13 people travelled to Uganda to, among other things, explore the possibility of adopting a church. Uganda is roughly the size of Ohio and Indiana put together. Kampala is the capital city of Uganda. There's a community outside of Kampala called Gaba.

In Gaba there's a church much like New Life Gahanna called Gaba Community Church. This church is an awesome body of believers who love Jesus, believe the Bible and preach the gospel. One of Gaba's primary ministry efforts is to plant churches throughout Uganda. They're planting churches in Uganda much as New Life is planting churches in Columbus.

But here's their challenge, most Uganda's live on about \$30 a month. Gaba Community church can hardly support itself so when they plant a church, rarely can they support it. They're desire is to connect international church partners with their church plants to minister alongside their church plants with all types of resources so that these church plants can survive.

One such church plant is in the district of Mukono; The Mukono Community church. We visited this church and the ladies on our team held a wonderful two day women's conference at Mukono.

The ladies of Mukono were thoroughly uplifted and blessed by the New Life women who ministered to them. Our team ministered to Pastor Davis Kigozi, his wife Betty and their three small children.

**(I WILL NOT COMMENT ON THESESSO DISPLAY AND THEN MOVE ON)**

**DISPLAY PHOTO #3 WOMENS CONFERENCE 1**

**DISPLAY PHOTO #4 WOMENS CONFERENCE 2**

**DISPLAY PHOTO #5 WOMENS CONFERENCE 3**

Our goal is to become a sister church partner for the Mukono Community Church. There's a church in Texas, Cornerstone Rockwell that has begun working in Mukono. We want to work alongside Rockwell and join their efforts in Mukono. I think there's a very strategic reason God has led us to Mukono.

The Mukono district in Uganda is known for the practice and spread of witchcraft. In Uganda if you tell someone you're from Mukono they assume you practice witchcraft because it's from Mukono that the practice of witchcraft is "evangelized" throughout the entire country.

Child sacrifices and cannibalism is wide spread in Mukono and even throughout Uganda because of the dark evil forces of witchcraft that are prevalent in that district. The head witch doctor for all of Uganda lived just 11/2 miles from Mukono church until last year when he died. Pastor Davis said his death was an answer to their prayers because they had been praying daily against his power and influence.

The church often finds evidence on Sunday morning of satanic rituals occurring around the outside of their property line. On Saturday nights various witch doctors will practice their rituals to bring curses upon the church. The darkness and evil, that grips Mukono, leads directly to children of every age being slaughtered for evil ritualistic purposes.

Mukono is a stronghold of evil spiritual forces; Mukono Community Church is right on the frontlines of that war. We know that the light of the gospel can break that evil power down.

Mukono Church is there to do just that but the work has been very hard. Even though the work is grueling New Life can make a difference. Let me share one story from our trip to give you some perspective.

You'll notice the white chairs in that picture, chairs much like this one. The day we arrived in Mukono to begin the planning for the women's conference the church had 25 white plastic chairs. These are the types of chairs you see all over the third world.

Pastor Davis had no options to provide chairs for the conference; no money to buy chairs and no way to get them even if he did. With some of the ministry money we took with us and some of our own personal money we set out to provide chairs for the church. The women coming to the conference needed something other than the dirt floor to sit on.

**DISPLAY PHOTO #6 MUKONO CHURCH BEFORE  
(I WILL COMMENT ON SO HOLD IT TILL I MOVE ON)**

Getting the chairs was an adventure; I don't have time to go into it but it was an all day ordeal. At the end of the day we were able to provide 150 additional chairs. The chairs were \$7 each but for people who live on less than \$30 per month these chairs might as well have been \$10,000 each.

You might look at this chair and say it's just a cheap plastic chair. But when we were leaving Mukono that first day Pastor Davis came to me with tears in his eyes and said Claude this has been the best day of my life. White plastic chairs the best day in his life.

These chairs meant the world to Davis because Jesus means the world to Davis. He loves Jesus and wants his countrymen to know and love Jesus. He said you don't understand what you've done. The people in our community have wooden benches and dirt floors to sit. When I invite them to church and all I have is wooden benches or dirt floors they won't come. They won't come to hear the gospel message. Remember their hearts are given to witchcraft.

He said if I have these, they will come to sit in these comfortable chairs. They will come and I can share the gospel with them. Up to that point Mukono church had an attendance of around 40, the Sunday after we gave 150 white plastic chairs to the church 120 people attended the service and Pastor Davis preached the gospel. **DISPLAY PHOTO #7 MUKONO SUNDAY MORNING  
(I WILL COMMENT ON SO HOLD IT TILL I MOVE ON)**

You can be part of what God is doing in Uganda to break the spirit of witchcraft, to protect children who otherwise would be sacrificed for demonic purposes; to transform a community by cooperating with the Holy Spirit and his work at Mukono Community Church.

We're letting Gaba church direct our efforts along with those of Rockwell Church in Texas. Some of the physical projects being discussed are completing their church building, buying the land they are using, sponsoring 300 children to go to school, building a medical clinic, running water lines and other things. We can help in many ways.

The relationship is still forming since we were just there in September. Our goal is to provide money to fund their efforts, send teams multiple times a year to provide medical help, business training, physical labor, VBS, bible training, women's conferences, all types of activities. If you're willing we'll put you to work in Uganda on a short term mission trip.

The Generosity Revolution is a strategic initiative to help single families in our church, serve alongside Redeemed Community Church of Franklinton, partner with Mukono Community Church in Uganda to proclaim the gospel and exalt Jesus.

You may be thinking Claude I hear what you're saying but what exactly am I suppose to do with it. You've been up there droning on about people I don't know and people I don't really care about.

Jesus expressed his love to us by doing. Aren't you glad he loved you enough to step out of heaven and do for you what you could

not do for yourself? In response to his sacrifice for us, how can we do anything less but give ourselves away for him. The Generosity Revolution is not about us but it's about Jesus.

There'll be lots of opportunities for you to serve but the response today is two things you can do. First and most importantly you can pray. Nothing we do has any lasting effect without prayer. John Bunyan the author of the classic work "Pilgrims Progress" said you can do more than pray after you've prayed but you can do nothing more than pray until you've prayed.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will speak to you about where to engage. Pray for our church family, pray for our single parents, pray for the lost and hopeless families in Franklinton and pray for Mukono, pray for our other ministry partners around the world. Pray that God's glory shines through you using you to expand his kingdom.

Then give. Every year we collect a special Christmas offering thanking God for the gift of Jesus. The Christmas offering is used for a variety of ministry projects throughout the world. The Generosity Revolution will be part of that Christmas offering this year. You can begin now praying about what you'll give to that special offering. We talk about being a brother's keeper; one way to be a brother's keeper is through your gift to that Christmas offering be radically generous.

Through praying for each other, supporting each other and through projects like the Generosity Revolution you can be a brother's keeper. Pastor Brian is coming now to share a special word on another important brothers' keeper opportunity.