

# Guest Speaker Brook Seekins

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Preacher: Brooke Seekins

[ 0 : 00 ] One of the things that we might do, and I think we talked about this, Brooke, but hopefully I'm not springing this on you, is have a time of questions and answers at the end. So as Brooke is talking and sharing her ministry with us, take some opportunity to write down any questions you might have or comments or whatever.

And after she's done, maybe we can have some time where you can ask those questions and get some answers from her. But everybody, if you'd welcome Brooke up to Grace Bible Church here. Thanks, Brooke. All right. Can you hear me yet? Did I get it?

It's good? Okay. Okay. Always technical difficulties no matter. Oh, they can't hear? Am I coming through? Okay. Some of these ladies up here are not hearing it very well.

Yep, that's good. Thank you. All right. Good morning, everybody. It's good to be back. Boy, you guys, you'd sink the boat if the back end of the boat was.

[ 1 : 17 ] He'd be really riding high on these waves. Like he said, my name is Brooke Seekins, and I am a missionary with Grace Ministries International based out of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

And it's really good to be here. I bring you greetings from my folks. My dad's a pastor over there in Tip City at the Grace Church. And he said, make sure you say hi to everybody that's over there that I know.

And it's good to be here and see some of you guys. Some of you, I'm sorry, I can't remember names always, but I'm working on it. But I still see a lot of familiar faces.

I think it's been about five years since I've been here. And COVID kind of messed it up. We were trying to figure out how I could come and speak to you. And then COVID kind of changed everybody for the good or the bad during that time.

Even though I was in America, my speaking engagements all got messed up. And so, but it's really good to be back. Before I go on too far, on that table, there's a whole bunch of these.

[ 2 : 23 ] And there's more in the suitcase below. These are my prayer cards. Please take them home. Take one or two, put them in your Bible, on your fridge, whatever. Missionaries, we like to print prayer cards.

Why? Because we covet your prayers. We want you to take these, put it where you can remember, and that way you will pray. Okay. Now, do you know what to pray for?

You're going to learn a few things today. But how many of you get my email updates? So those of you that raised your hand, you actually know better what to pray for.

Is that true? When an event comes up, hey, there's a seminar coming up. Will you please pray for this seminar? Pray for this situation. And so please, there's a clipboard out there.

Please take time and sign up on the clipboard so that you get the updates. I send, like, regular mail post office maybe twice a year.

[ 3 : 22 ] Maybe. But emails I send quite frequently based on events. And so within the next month, I'm sure an email will be going out saying, hey, pray. Here's my departure date. Pray for this and this and this.

So please, I would like you to pray for me, but I want you to be an educated prayer warrior. So sign up. Put your email especially on there so that you know how you can better pray.

Okay. It's not like I'm selling your information and you're going to get all these spam calls or anything like that. It's just so that you know how to pray and so you can get on the email update list. Because I do covet your prayers. So before I get too much further into this, I do have to tell you why I carry around a yield sign that I did not steal.

Don't steal a yield sign. It was donated by the Michigan Road Department. It had been retired. Starting to rust on the back a little bit. But I carry it around because it's a prayer reminder.

[ 4 : 18 ] When you see a yield sign, let that be a reminder to pray for the ministries going on in Malawi. And this has been something even when I was in Tanzania before I moved to Malawi, I was still carrying around a yield sign.

It focuses on my ministry and I'll share more about that later. But let this be a reminder. Now, I was asking some people. It looks like probably in your area the main yield signs are going to be on and off the interstate.

Is that true? No roundabouts. But there's a few roads that have yield signs. So kids, you guys got kids here. Yeah, I see some kids. Kids, you are the better prayer warriors.

Do you know that? You guys see this? When mom and dad are driving and you see a yield sign, say, hey, we got to pray for Miss Brooke in Africa. Okay? Because your mom and dad, they don't even see the yield signs.

They just kind of know where they are. But kids, you guys are actually better at seeing the yield signs than your mom and dad. I guarantee that. So that's a job just for kids especially.

[ 5 : 22 ] Please pray when you see a yield sign. So I've been in Malawi for, since 2018. I came here right before I was heading out.

And so here's your geography lesson for today. It's actually in southern Africa, just below Tanzania, surrounded by Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

A third of Malawi is Lake Malawi, one of the deeper lakes in the world. And if anybody has freshwater fish in their aquarium, most likely they came from Lake Malawi.

The cichlids all come from Lake Malawi for the whole world. They're cool little blue and yellow-white striped. And they're freshwater fish that they end up getting all around the world.

But they're all from Lake Malawi. And most of my team lives in the capital city of Lilongwe. I was telling the morning class that we're about a million people in that capital city, which is quite a bit of culture shock.

[ 6 : 20 ] I used to live in the bush. And so I've had a lot of culture shock coming into the city. And I enjoy a lot of things. There's restaurants. There's grocery stores. There's electricity sometimes.

Better internet. Some of those things. But I do miss the village because I live in a gated, I have to honk the horn and have somebody open the gate to get into my compound. And for security reasons, I get stuck in traffic because most of the roads are two-lane highways, even though it's a million people.

So can you imagine Dayton functioning all on two-lane highways? Podcasts are my friend. Because just going to and from events, I end up listening to music and podcasts sometimes, making phone calls.

But I do live in the capital city of Lilongwe. And most of our ministry was in the central and southern parts of Malawi, where we have almost 30 churches. So here's what the yield sign stands for.

Youth Instructed in Evangelism, Leadership, and Development. That's the main focus of my ministries in Malawi. They're the same in Tanzania. So when you see a yield sign, what are you supposed to do?

[ 7 : 25 ] Pray. Right? And if you don't have one on the road, you take a little yield sign and put it on your fridge, and then you'll pray for me all the time. But before I get into more about what I want to do, I'm going to challenge you guys today.

You guys up for a challenge? Okay. Missions. Most of the time when you think about missions, what do you think about? Evangelism.

That is the number one thing people think about with missions. Is that true? But I want you to think bigger. I want you to think bigger today because missions is really about the body of Christ.

Okay? Missions is about the body of Christ. And there's missionaries all over the world, different organizations. Even Malawi has a lot of missionaries there. It's a very poor country, 22 tribes.

But there's a lot of missionaries there because they need outside help, but also because the gospel is not clear. So the gospel is definitely the first part of missions.

[ 8 : 28 ] Okay? We want to share the gospel. We want people to know that Christ died for their sins. And that by faith alone, they can be saved.

Jane is somebody who works for me. And she goes to a bigger church on another part of town where we don't have a church.

But she always sees me at my table working on my Bible, doing preparing lessons. And she told me, I want to know the Bible as much as you know the Bible.

So she started going to a lady's Bible study in her church. And when she, then when I see her on Friday after her Wednesday, I always say, hey, what did you learn in Bible study? That's just, it's just what we do.

What did you learn about? I didn't go ahead of funeral. Okay. What did you learn in Bible study? Oh, we learned about this. And she pulls out one of my Bibles and shows me the lesson they learned.

[ 9 : 24 ] And I asked her questions. And sometimes she says, I didn't learn anything. How come you didn't learn anything? Well, the teacher didn't really know what they were doing. And what happens, it's a bigger group like this.

And they just start assigning, oh, you're next week. Here's your passage. You're the week after. Here's your passage. Whether the ladies know their Bible or not, they kind of share duties. And so sometimes the ladies don't prepare.

They don't know what they're talking about. But sometimes they do. But it's a good time for me to have one-on-one time with Jane and teach her Bible. And to get her to, you know, clarify things and make sure that she was learning the right thing.

And so one time last spring, she came. She's like, I didn't quite get this passage. And it was in Corinthians somewhere. And so I said, okay, let's look at it. So we opened up the Bibles.

And it had the word gospel in there and salvation. And I said, well, what's the gospel? Well, that's the Bible. That's not quite the Bible. Well, what's a Christian?

[ 10 : 27 ] Well, a Christian is somebody who, and I said, so when did you become a Christian? Or why are you a Christian is what I ended up asking. Well, it's because I don't do this and I don't do this. And I do this and I do this and I do this and I do this and I do this.

Now, that surprised me because I really thought that she knew the gospel. It was based on her character, her lifestyle. I believe that Jane was a Christian. But when she told me how she became a Christian, I was like, hold on.

This isn't right. And so we extended our little 15-minute Bible study to almost an hour. And I was taking her through different passages. Okay, go look at this verse. What does that say about a Christian?

What does that say about the gospel? What is that? Because it was an impromptu Bible study sharing the gospel time. And I showed her, you know, being a Christian is because we believe we're sinners first.

You see, the good news can't be good news unless you have the bad news first. Right? So I actually had to share her the bad news. You're not going to heaven because it says everybody's a sinner.

[ 11 : 32 ] Yeah, but I'm good. No, you can never be better than your sins. You can never outweigh your sins. You're going, not going to make it to heaven by anything you do. But there's verses that tell us how we can be saved.

And we slowly went through all of the passages. Not all of them. There's too many. But several passages showing her that we are saved by faith through grace.

And it's not of anything that we do. It is a gift of God. Not of works. And I went on and showed her. And at the end of the time, as I was talking to her, I said, okay.

In my mind, I'm thinking, you know what? She was a Christian, but she didn't know how to explain her faith. Because that happens to a lot of us, right? We are a Christian, but we don't know how to explain how we became a Christian.

And so I said, so when do you think you became a Christian? She said, today. Today I've become a Christian. Oh, wow. That's really cool. And even the next week when I said something, yeah, you remember when we talked about that?

[ 12 : 34 ] I shared that with my kids. I, you know. So we have to take the opportunity whenever it arises to share the gospel, guys. But you know what?

I'm not an evangelist first. We all are supposed to do the work of an evangelist. Every single one of us should be able to do the work of an evangelist. My spiritual gifting is not evangelism.

My gift is a teacher. I don't usually focus on the gospel first. I focus on teaching the Bible. Like I was telling you with Sunday school, I focus on growing up people after they've come to Christ.

That's usually my ministry. But when the opportunity arrives, I can share the gospel. And every single one of you needs to be able to share the gospel when the opportunity arrives.

Because that is what the body of Christ is about. So missions is about the body of Christ. And the first step is when you become a Christian, you become a member of the body of Christ.

[13:36] That day, Jane became a member of the body of Christ. Now she thought she was a member before. I thought she was. But from now on, she'll tell you that was the day I became a member of the body of Christ.

So that is part of missions. But missions is more. We're placed into the body of Christ. We're placed into the church the moment we believe.

But why are we in the body of Christ? To serve one another. Right? We are in the body of Christ to do God's work.

Think about your own body. Anybody here limping today? Yeah? That's because one of your body parts is not functioning properly. Okay?

So I want you to look at your neighbor and say, You're my fellow body part. Look at your neighbor. Tell your neighbor. Now look at your other neighbor and say, I need you.

[14:39] Now look at the guy behind you and say, You need me. You need me. Because when we stub our baby toe, what happens?

We've all done it. We've all kicked a chair or something. We've hurt our baby toe. We start doing this. The entire body is not functioning right because a little toe got hurt.

Right? Well, how does that transfer to the church? If you're a body part and you're not doing your part, guess what? The whole church is limp.

It's limp. It's limp. It's limp. It's limp. It's limp. Because you're not doing the job God created you to do. And that's what missions really is about. Not only are we teaching the gospel, but we're also teaching one another.

If you want to look in your Bible, or if you're a body part and I'm there. The Bible is good for you to do that. From what decide come to mind if you're a mess of a trusted ghost, for God is taking you to do this. For us to stick to it, ■■■ size, Tell us a little bit of faith.

[15:39] If the■■■■, of Gal grade is aopher, Let us know what you really like to do with us today.

Verses 4 and 5, please. Yeah, out loud. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function.

So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. So we being many are? One. One body.

We are one body. And you know what? Most of the time Paul is talking about the local church when he's talking about the body of Christ. He's talking about you guys right here in Springfield in your local church.

Most of the time when he's addressing that. Now, some people like me, I travel, I've been in a lot of churches this year in many states, more than 20 states I've visited this year. And I get to see body members all over the place.

[16:42] But most of you, most of the time when Paul's talking, he's talking about your local church. You guys in this church right here in Grace Bible Church in Springfield, right? You guys are members one of another.

Each of you is a body part. But we don't all have the same function. Right? What happens if the body's all eyes? You can't hear.

What happens if the body's all a nose? You can't eat. If everybody's a hair, you'd look pretty funny. Each of us is a different part of the body.

And God has made you each different, but given you a job to do for this local church. Now, Christ is the head. He's the brains of the operation, right? But each of us has a job.

So, as missionaries, we want to teach people the gospel. We want to get them grounded in God's word. But we also want to teach them how to do their job in the body of Christ.

[17:50] So you can think about that. You, right now, where you are, you can say, what's my job? What am I good at? How am I helping my body? Because this church will not move forward, and it won't move well if some of you get lazy.

Or some of you stop doing your job, right? And sometimes when we get older and it's time to retire, we've got to train up a replacement for ourselves, right?

Because the body functions well when all of the parts do their job. And our gifting that we have, spiritual gift, is for the edification of the body of Christ.

It's not for us to look good and to sound good. It's for the edification of the body of Christ. God made each and every one of us unique, different, and he gave us a job in our local church, in the church, the body of Christ, the greater church, we have a job to do.

So I work with this team in Malawi. We are six families. Each of us has different gifting. Each of us is doing a different focus in ministry.

[18:59] What's unique about my team is even though we're six families, we are from five different countries. That's pretty cool, huh? Half of my team is not from America.

Half is from America. Half is not from America. They're from other countries. They're fruit of other ministries that other missionaries did 20, 30, 40 years ago in parts of Africa.

Well, GMI has a policy. They don't let you be a missionary in your own country, but to another country. So these guys are from other parts of Africa serving in Malawi alongside of us.

But each of us is doing a different ministry. Sometimes we overlap. Sometimes we work with the same people. My focus is what? Teaching what?

Youth. Remember the Y on the yield sign? Youth. You don't have to remember all the other letters, but remember youth. Youth. Somebody between the ages of 13 and 30 or so. Okay? Trying to get youth ministries going.

[20:00] So each of us is working different. We work alongside the Grace Church in Malawi. In order to own land and to build buildings in Malawi, you have to be registered as a denomination.

Are you guys a denomination? What denomination are you part of? You're not. In America, we can be non-denominational. You might be part of a fellowship of other churches. You have like-minded Grace Churches around the world, right?

Even in the U.S. But you're not a denomination. Well, unfortunately, in Africa, most of the countries require you to be registered as a denomination in order to buy land.

And so one of the first things the missionaries that first went more than 10 years ago is they kind of created a denomination. It sounds funny, but that's the way the laws work there.

And you have to work within the structure that you find, right? So they helped create what's called the Grace Church of Malawi. And under that, we have leaders, chairman, secretary, treasurer who do all the accounting and reporting to the national government, which is required.

[21:03] And when we plant a church, we put them under that umbrella so that we can buy land. In some ways, it helps because it helps give some structure and some organization.

But together, as GMI missionaries in Malawi, we are working together with the Grace Church of Malawi. All of the leaders there are Malawians. That's the law, the way their constitution works. We work right together with them in all of the ministries that we're doing, not only training their leaders, but also helping the next generation to come up. We have about 27 churches, 10 church plants, several other preaching points.

It's exciting, isn't it? Probably most of this has been done in the last 15 years, especially the last 10 years. And each of my coworkers is focusing on a different area to help these local churches grow and help the members.

Sometimes we do community development, like teaching business or teaching better farming skills. But the ultimate goal is to help the local church, the body of Christ in Malawi, not only physically, but also spiritually grow.

[22:10] Now, my main focus is youth ministries. And the national leaders have given me Pastor Evans Malongo to work alongside. He is their youth director for their churches, all 27, 30 of them.

He is supposed to oversee youth ministries for 30 churches. I'm his advisor. I'm his coworker. I'm not in charge. He's technically in charge, but I'm helping him.

Before I got there, they didn't have much of a youth program. They had an advisor. They had the position, but they didn't know what they were doing. Most of the churches had a youth choir. That was it. And so some of the things I did in Tanzania, I said, okay, guys, we got to get this going.

What's really going to happen? And so we started thinking through the vision, which I shared some of that with you guys in Sunday school today. But you see, this is our logo for Grace Youth in Malawi.

What do you see about that logo? It's rooted where? In the word. We're not just entertaining youth.

[23:16] We're rooting them in God's word. We want them to grow up to be strong trees rooted in God's word. And this is always the goal of any ministry that we have with the youth is to get them into the Bible.

And so how do we do that? We want to have spiritually mature youth in our local churches? Well, we've got to have Bible studies. You guys would call it youth group here, right?

We don't have youth pastors because the word pastor comes with quite a respect level in the community. But we have youth teachers. And we want each church to have a healthy youth group with someone teaching their youth.

That's our big goal. About 30 churches, that's a lot, right? And if none of them four years ago had any youth teachers, you know what? It takes time to establish that.

Some of those churches are brand new churches. They might have only 10 adults and a bunch of youth in the church and only one or two men or women that can read. How are you going to have a youth teacher then?

[ 24 : 21 ] That's kind of hard. So we can't do it. We cannot have 100% success rate right away. Sometimes we've got to wait for the younger generation that knows how to read to grow up so that we can have them teach.

Sometimes we're even training youth themselves to help teach one another. Knowing that God's word does not return void, even though we don't have somebody with more training. We have to use what we have there in their village, in their setting.

Most of our churches are in the village. We have three churches in that city, one in another city. But most of our churches are rural churches in poorer communities. But our goal is to have the healthy youth groups.

And we want to have trained leaders. Guys who can teach them every week. And then we're going to have some special events. So my job actually ends up being training the leaders for the youth. I do work sometimes. But what we do is when they're having healthy youth groups, we want them to have fun every once in a while. You guys ever go to camp? Or VBS or something? Those are the one-time events.

[ 25 : 28 ] They don't happen every week, right? But the one-time events that are kind of like, I like to call it dessert. Okay? You need dessert every once in a while, right? So once a year, we want to have them be able to come to youth conferences.

Where we do special intensive teaching for two or three days. Our topic this past year that we did was Romans 12 and 13. Guess where I got the body of Christ theme for you from?

We were already teaching it to the youth in April. We went through chapter 12 and 13, being transformed by the renewing of your mind. It's a great topic.

It talks about the body of Christ. It talks about the gospel. And we did our first conference over Easter in the capital city, inviting all the surrounding area, even the village churches close by.

And the youth came and they're like, why haven't we done this before? And I was like, because you don't eat dessert first. I wanted them to have their weekly Bible studies every week.

[ 26 : 29 ] And once we kind of got some of that foundation, even though it's not 100%, but we have a foundation, now we can add dessert to the top of that. Because they're getting their regular food every week. But I didn't want to put the cart before the horse.

Because the kids, they love having all the fun. But you've got to have them in the Word every week. And so the program was great. They're like, we're doing this again. We're doing this again. And eventually some other areas, we have our churches divided into five zones.

Just for the structure, for the organization of 30 churches. I cannot visit 30 churches. But geographically, people in this area, there's like seven churches over here, and four churches over here, and ten in this area.

Just regions. And so those zones or regions each have a youth leader. And every year I've worked with them and taught them how they can train people in their areas. And those zone leaders were like, we need to have a conference in our area.

Let's do it this year. And I'm like, I'm going to be in America. So how are we going to do that? So I took this team of leaders who I worked with in April. And we did intensive two-day training, making sure they could do everything we needed to do while I was gone.

[ 27 : 42 ] I left behind a lot of supplies. I printed a bunch of booklets. You can see some of them out on the table. Left some money with a co-worker so that when they needed it, it would be in the ground there.

And then in July, I came to America, end of June, 1st of July. End of July, I got this picture. That's a conference they did down south. When they got there, the youth were so happy about it.

Let's add another day. And the leaders were like, we don't have the curriculum or the supplies. We can't just add a day right while we're here. But maybe next year you can plan for that.

And then in October, they did it in another area. And so I've been able to get these reports from my leaders on these conferences. And that's really cool. And this is something that I think is going to go forward.

We're going to probably do four or five of these every year. Same thing, but having a team of leaders. Not only do I get to teach the youth God's word, but I'm also training leaders through this program.

[ 28 : 43 ] And if you haven't noticed, leadership training is the main focus of mine. Not only do I bring those zone leaders in and we train them. How do we train teachers in your area?

How do we hold them accountable? How do we talk to pastors and elders about getting a program in their church? How do we, how do we, how do we? And there's a lot of leadership training. It's not just God's word, but it's leadership training.

And as we started to plan these conferences, somebody said, oh yeah, tell the youth, just everybody bring a dollar. And I'm like, well, where'd you get that number from? Yeah, a dollar for three days, that's enough.

How are you going to feed them? Oh, a dollar's enough. No, you can't feed youth for a dollar for three days. Now, their food is much cheaper than yours, but still, a dollar does not feed a growing young man for three days.

And so I had to hit the brakes at one of these seminars last year and say, guys, let's figure out how to do a budget and how to plan an event. They had never done that before.

[ 29 : 47 ] They'd just guessed. I assumed that some of their leaders had done this. They had not. So we hit the brakes and we spent several hours going, okay, what do you think you're going to feed them? Let's make a menu on the board.

How many youth are going to come? 50. Okay. So how many chickens is that? Well, that means we need so many chickens and so much flour and so much oil and so much salt. And we started doing a budget.

Something that most of us would find, it's not easy, but we would find that to be a normal thing, right? When you plan an event, you make a budget. Well, how much does that last?

Well, that's like \$6 a kid. Well, when mom and dad only make \$30 a month, that's a lot of money. How can we reduce the budget? We don't have to have meat every meal, guys. We don't have to have special breakfasts.

Well, yeah, that's fun. Yeah, but you can't afford it. What if your mom or dad has two kids in the program? Suddenly they're spending more than half their salary on one event. We need to do that.

[ 30 : 43 ] And so we spent a long time just doing budgeting. Isn't that crazy? It wasn't in my purview to say we're going to teach on budgeting, but we did it. And pretty quick, they were having a leaders meeting for the national level leaders of all the pastors and all the other ministries and said, can you come teach us that?

So I went to that level and taught them basic budgeting. And what was funny is those pastors, they wanted more stake than even the youth. And their budgets were even higher.

And I'm like, guys, you cannot do this. Let's do the math. Let's figure it out. And then we found out, well, if you go to this region, they have a lot of dried minnows that they eat.

Those are really cheap in this region because they have a lake. Sure, they're going to eat that. Well, over here, sweet potatoes are really cheap. Oh, then they're going to eat that. Over here, rice is really. Well, then that's what they're going to eat there.

And it may vary based on your area and the time of year and all these things. But teaching them those basics is something I didn't plan on, but we had to do in order for these things to happen.

[ 31 : 44 ] And so it's been really interesting because I've been getting messages saying, we're already planning next year's conference for when you get back. We've already done the budget. Good. They're learning some.

Now, it may not be perfect. You can never anticipate what the price of corn will be six months out when the economy is changing and some of that. You know, there's margin for error, but it's better than just everybody bring a dollar.

No. There's a reason. And so those are some of the things we do, not only logistical planning, but teaching them how to communicate. How can we use our accountability reports?

And so there's a lot of those meetings that I have with pastors, and it's not cultural for them. They haven't grown up in a society that does that. And so we often feel like maybe we're beating around the bush and repeating things, but it needs to happen because little by little they're learning this is the better way to do things, and this is how we're going to be able to reach more people.

And we can do this. It's not that they can't afford the event, but if you tell them ahead of time, they can start saving money for it. And we don't have to have steak every meal. We can have cheaper food.

[ 32 : 52 ] And so we've done a lot of that. Alongside the leadership training, I also do all the curriculum planning. So when we want them to have youth group every week, we have a basic guide for Bible studies.

Over about five years, I want them to go through the entire Bible. I mean, they're going to skip some of the real complicated passages, but starting in Genesis and getting through some of the epistles. Over five years, that's my goal.

I've got book one and two are on the table out there. You can't read Chichewa, but you could probably figure out, because of the Bible verses in them, you could probably figure out what they're doing. Book three is not ready yet.

But I only have a couple groups in book two, so I've got a little bit of time. But the youth conference, I wrote the curriculum, the leadership training, I'm writing the curriculum. Just recently, I was also helping write a curriculum for one of the Bible school classes.

And so there's a lot of curriculum development. And do you know what? That sounds easy, right? No. Now do it in another language. I don't speak Chichewa fluently.

[ 33 : 53 ] I have a tutor who comes one day a week. And she spends a couple hours with me. And so through that, I told her, you know what? I want to learn Bible, Chichewa, because I want to be able to speak and teach in the Bible.

And we started doing Bible studies, kind of, in another language. And pretty quick, those Bible studies led into, sometimes I just switch into English and start explaining the theology behind the passage we're learning.

And through that, my Catholic Chichewa tutor came to Christ, doing one-on-one Bible studies. And now we use her to help translate some things. Because I've had so much one-on-one time, when we have other curriculum we've written in English, I know that she's going to translate it properly, based on the theology that she and I talk about all the time.

You know, it won't be perfect, but it would be better than pulling somebody else that doesn't know any theology, translating. And so, but what happens is I'll write it, I give it to her or somebody else to translate, and then I kind of go through and format it.

[ 35 : 00 ] I can understand enough to find some basic errors, and then we send it to somebody like her to do the final editing. Because she has a bachelor's degree, and she's still in English, so her grammar is quite good.

And then it comes back, and we have to do the formatting and editing. So if I want to teach something in January, but right now I have to have it at the translators. And then we're going to do it. You know, it takes a two- or three-step correction process to have it written.

So you can't just do these last minute. Oh, we're going to teach this next week? Here you go. No, we can't get it translated and typed and edited. So it's a big process to develop curriculum. But it's important, because they take home those books, and they can read them at home, and they can look at them again.

So that's a lot of the things that I do. Now, one of the other fun things I get to do is a little bit of worship training. I grew up playing piano. I taught myself guitar, basic guitar.

So in the city churches, Friday I go to one church, Saturday to another church, Sunday afternoon to another church, and we teach them basic guitar and piano. Because their hopes are once their churches get their buildings done, then they're going to buy some musical equipment.

[ 36 : 08 ] And so we're giving them the basics in that. I also have a joint worship team of the three city churches where we get together for special events. Like Easter, they're going to have a joint service. So the worship team is all practicing right now, so they can lead worship at Easter from three or four churches all together.

And so when we have Bible school graduations or other graduations for some of the programs that we have at our main campus, my worship team gets together. And so that's been another just

sideline that I get to do.

And through that, you get to teach, obviously, Bible theology, but also have fun. So you're going to have... By grace, by grace.

It's only by God's grace. That was a graduation song. We were leading everybody in worship. You guys stand too still when you're leading worship here. Are you giving me a little clapping? Some of those are pastor's wives up there.

And if I had some of the pastors, they'd be... That's a slow worship song in Africa. Usually, especially for a celebration like that. You can tell I'm the sound guy when these events happen.

[ 37 : 29 ] And I have all this equipment that we've gathered. Even in Tanzania, I was doing some worship program. I was able to transfer all of my musical equipment down and use some of that in Malawi. So that's another thing that I do sometimes.

Keeps me busy every week doing local piano lessons. One of the youth groups that's in one of our new church plants in the city, I go there on Sunday. We teach piano and guitar. And then the guys lead the Bible study.

And sometimes I'll pitch in and help. But I'm also the transportation person. Because that church is in a suburb. And some of those people walk 30 minutes to church in the morning. Go home for lunch.

So to say the kids are going to walk 30 minutes again after lunch, I'm going to lose some of them. Because it's Sunday afternoon. So I'll pick them up and help them get there a little bit.

So it takes from about 1 until about 7 on Sundays. Me just doing youth group with piano and guitar and transporting everybody. So my Sundays are really busy days. So while you all are in church, I'm probably just getting home from youth group about now.

[ 38 : 27 ] So it's about 7 hour time zone difference right now. But it's been cool to help with them and watch some of the young college age people grow and learn. And they can now teach a decent Bible study.

But it takes time to grow them up and to learn that. So there's also a lot of other opportunities. In any ministry, right? In life, guys, there's opportunities to serve the Lord.

Not just in your job description. Not just with youth for me. My coworkers, some of them were traveling. I just recently was able to teach a Bible school course on the prison epistles. I loved it. I didn't get done. Got three Ephesians, part of Philippians. I got to finish that when I go back to our year two English students. When I get done with that, I'll tweak the curriculum. They're going to translate.

That'll be used for all of our Bible school courses in the future. So that's a big job I've been working on. Doing other administrative things. Helping people with books. We also had some cyclones hit in January and February.

[ 39 : 26 ] Some of you guys heard about that probably through the emails, right? Cyclones are hurricanes in the southern hemisphere. They came through Mozambique. We had two church buildings practically destroyed.

And in one area between three churches, more than 160 families were affected where they lost all their harvest. They were just getting ready to harvest and it was all destroyed. And so through the email updates, we were able to send out, hey guys, will you donate to this cause?

These guys were just getting ready to harvest. They lost all their crops a month before harvest. They're not going to be able to plant or harvest for a year. And so it was really cool to see the body of Christ come together.

The body of Christ around the world donated money. We were able to raise enough money that we immediately brought seeds to one area that would still get rain. The other is it was too late. Bring big bags of corn, which is their staples.

We've already done that three times to the affected areas to help with hunger. And we'll do it again right after Christmas and probably once more in February. And they'll be able to harvest in March.

[ 40 : 31 ] And they'll be on their own. We also raised enough money to rebuild some of those churches that were destroyed by the winds. So it was really cool to see the body of Christ helping one another, right? In Romans it says we should weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice.

So that was a time when they were weeping. I had a leader come to a training. He said, I don't know how I'm feeding my family. I have one bag of corn for the next year. And I was like, whoa.

And so quickly we got on the email and on Facebook and we sent out updates. And that's how the body of Christ helped one another in a time of need, right? That's what the body of Christ does. But yet you guys can now rejoice with me because God met those needs. You can rejoice together with the body of Christ in Malawi and how the church plants are growing and youth are growing. See, the missions is not just about evangelism.

It's about the body of Christ. Growing up members of the body of Christ. Together we serve God, right? As the body of Christ, together we worship. Together we grow, we mature.

[ 41 : 38 ] That's the goal. And together we can support one another. So when you think about missions, don't just think about evangelism. Think about growing up the body of Christ. Healthy churches with people who are functioning and serving one another.

And when you see a yield sign, will you pray? Will you pray? Thanks, guys. Any questions? Yes, ma'am.

Oh, he's going to bring you a mic so everybody can hear, huh? I want to know what you do in your spare time. Actually, one of the cool things I get to do in the capital city is I'm on a volleyball league. I like playing volleyball. And at night, let's see, the sun sets at about 6 or 6.30 every day. And so our people cannot be walking in the streets after 7.00.

They might get robbed. And so all of our ministries have to finish by usually 5.30 so people can get home safely. So the evenings are free for me. I have some friends with other organizations who go out to eat.

[ 42 : 45 ] But I also play on a sand volleyball league that's people with all these other non-government organizations or embassies because it's capital city. So there's people from all over the world. I'm playing with guys from Syria and Iran and Germany.

Most of them not Christians. So it's another ministry. Some people, I'm the only missionary they've ever met in their entire life. So that's a fun ministry. Another question.

Yeah. You're a person that's working for you. Yeah. That became Christian. Yes. That day. Was she able to go back to her church and share some of this?

She goes to quite a big church, probably 1,000 people. And she's maybe in the choir, but with COVID, the choir is not. But in those Bible studies, she gets her rotation about three or four times a year.

And she gets to teach. I always help her prepare those lessons as well. And with her family and friends, she definitely can share. Yeah. So, yeah. Is the government combative, supportive, or neutral?

[ 44 : 00 ] I would say neutral. There's some areas where there's a lot of Muslim influence, but it's pretty neutral. It's a poor government corruption, but compared to other parts of Africa, not so bad.

But because it's poor, we're having things like fuel shortage, electricity shortage right now. Because the government doesn't, it just can't get everything.

Oh, it's ducks in a row. But, yeah. Ministry is free pretty much, except for in some of those real Muslim areas. But that's pretty rare. Sorry, you're competing with Islam to a certain degree, but it doesn't sound like it.

Yeah, they're just one of the tribes that's Muslim. The government is not Muslim. No. Sometimes, yeah, no. The president right now is a Christian. He was an Assemblies of God pastor, but the previous president was Muslim.

So they kind of rotate tribes and things like that. So, yeah. Yeah. And what's the makeup, I guess? You know, if anybody else has a question as far as, like, Christian, Catholic, Muslim.

[ 45 : 07 ] You know, it's hard to tell. It depends on which website you go to. I think probably they would say 80% Christian, 20% Muslim, or some people might say 65% Christian, about 20% Muslim.

Um, there's a little bit of Hindu in the city. Like, my landlord is Hindu from India. And there's indigenous. There's some traditional religions that even a lot of people that go to church, they don't realize that they're practicing on the side until their funeral comes, and those people come and take over the funeral.

And people are like, oh, that guy was an elder. We didn't know he was dabbling in this local religion. So that's kind of hard to discern, too. So, you know, Christian means you're not Muslim for a lot of people.

So they would say, yes, I'm Christian. I'm not Muslim. But that doesn't mean they know the gospel at all. Of the 65%, 80% of Christians, like, you know, how many of those would you imagine are? Maybe 25%, 30% are evangelical that really know the gospel.

Could be higher. It's kind of hard to know. So, like, within the churches or they're locally with you, what are the families like in the church?

[ 46 : 17 ] Do you have a lot of, like, functioning mother, father, family? That's a good question. One of my coworkers has really been focusing on men's ministry and marriage ministry.

He just did a seminar. There are families that worship, but they've not had good examples in their parents or grandparents. And so the marriage structure is quite dysfunctional.

I've been to women's seminars before, and the wives are talking about how they can get their husbands to give them money for groceries because their husbands keep going to buy a soda down the street. And so what the wives do is when the husband's sleeping, they sneak in their pocket and steal money so they can buy dinner.

It's not that they're stealing it for themselves. They're stealing it to buy the basic vegetables for dinner. And so they've grown up with their parents doing that all the time. They don't know any different.

And so they really distrust each other. And the husband, my wife's always stealing from me. The wife's like, the husband never gives me money for the basic supplies. And obviously that's a source of friction, right?

[ 47 : 23 ] Some of the tribes in Malawi, compared to Tanzania especially, are maternal. Which is rare in the world. Where you actually inherit from your mother.

It's good for me because they respect women more. So in my age is also good when you're older. You get more respect in Africa. So I can do a lot more ministry even with sometimes men because of that maternal background.

So if you want to marry a woman in that tribe, you've got to go build a house for her in her family's land. And if she gets mad at you, she kicks you out and you've got nothing.

She keeps a house and the kids. So that's several of the main tribes there. Not all of them. Some are paternal. But that just gives you a glimpse of a little bit of the wife's family has a dominant.

But if you don't do that, I watched a lady whose husband was an elder in the church. He got really sick and died. And she said, the family has let me live in his house for a year and they're kicking me out.

[ 48 : 30 ] She's like, I don't know where I'm going to go with my kids. Because her husband had built on his land and not her land. And so here's a widow with nothing. She was going to lose even the fields that had belonged to her husband.

And so that's their culture. That's what their grandparents and their aunts and uncles are doing. So how do you be a Christian in that environment is really hard. And so when we train our pastors and elders, some of those situations a missionary cannot advise very well.

It's better for the locals to advise based on their cultural wisdom. Because it's complicated. Because it's so different than our culture that we would, even I can compare to Tanzania culture where I lived for a long time.

But they were very paternal there. I couldn't even translate for a sermon as a woman. And over here they're like, yeah, we want you to fill in because there's no man to preach today. So wait a minute. So it's a little different, yeah.

What else? So I encourage you guys, come visit. If not me, go visit another mission field.

[ 49 : 39 ] Missionaries enjoy people visiting, doing so you can come teach or whatever. But just to see so that you know how to pray more. You guys are one of my supporting churches.

You've supported me for a long time. And I really thank you for that. But send a team over to visit to teach a seminar or something like that. We would love to have that. Yeah, I was going to ask about that as far as short-term missions, right?

Yeah. So you have short-term missionary, or people come for short-term missions. We haven't had a lot. COVID is, I've only been there four years. Right. And COVID kind of hit in the middle. So we haven't had a lot since I've been there.

But the opportunities will arise, definitely. Okay. Especially if you can teach the Bible, that's a big, we can always help, use help in some of that.

Yeah, I didn't mention this, but we do support Brooke through Grace Ministries International as a church. And I believe there are people individually here who also support Brooke, or at least get the newsletter.

[ 50 : 40 ] And yeah, I would encourage people to sign up for the newsletter. Even if you don't support on a monthly basis, if a need comes up, like you mentioned, that came up with the famine, I guess, kind of.

Yeah. You know, you have an opportunity to help the body of Christ, you know, on the other side of the world through a need like that. But also consider monthly support as well.

We do some as a church, but it's always, I think, better for individuals to, you have more of a connection to who you're giving to. So consider that.

But for short term, the other thing I was thinking about is, as technology expands, are there opportunities for people, like let's say in this church, who have a certain skill or whatever, maybe to do like a video conferencing type of training to help somebody with their English, or to do training on some of the skills you were talking about as far as like budgeting or things like that?

There might be. I know we have some people on the ground. The problem is in the city we have a lot of English speakers. In the village, they don't speak English. Yeah, okay. So that's probably the bigger thing.

[ 51 : 52 ] But definitely there have been some guys that have done, recorded, the time zone difference is a little complicated. You know, it's seven to eight hours difference depending on daylight savings time.

So you'd be, you know, if we're doing a seminar at eight in the morning over there, that's like one o'clock in the middle of the night for you guys here. Right. But there are, there can be ways to definitely do some short Bible studies and stuff like that, yeah.

Okay. And then kind of finally, you know, maybe just give a one minute, I don't know if that's possible. How did you end up getting, you know, into missionary work?

And then if there are people, you know, in the audience, you know, especially young people who think, it might be something I might be interested in, how would you go about exploring that, you know?

Do you just sell everything that you have and go? It took him two minutes to ask the question he wants me answered. Yeah. For me, I grew up in a Christian home, went to a Christian private school, a small one in our church with like 40 kids K through 12, our little gray church, so very small.

[ 52 : 57 ] And when I graduated, I didn't know what I wanted to be. I knew I wanted to do ministry of some sort, and there was an opportunity through that Christian school. It was, I'm going to date myself now, but it was not long after communism fell, and they were going to start Christian schools in Russia.

And so I signed up to go with them for a school year and help establish these Christian schools teaching English, but to get the gospel into Russia right after the wall and everything fell in the early 90s.

And so it was an adventure for me. It wasn't really a mission. I mean, it was a mission trip. I raised money, but I didn't think of it as a mission trip. I thought of it as a venture, gap year type thing.

And while I was there, God really worked on my heart. He taught me a lot of spiritual lessons, but also I fell in love with doing ministry internationally and just saw the great need for the gospel and came home wanting to be a missionary.

And that's what I've wanted to do ever since then. I went to Bible school, got my training, and then ended up doing ministry in our local church again for a few years, getting experience before God opened the door for me to go to Tanzania.

[ 54 : 07 ] And that was really a God thing. Everybody that knew me knew I wanted to go, and I signed up for a short-term mission trip to help homeschool some of the missionary kids on our Bible school campus in Tanzania where there was three, four families.

And the moms all knew the language they wanted to teach in the Bible school and teach them English and to do some curriculum. They said, we could really use somebody to come help homeschool our kids while we do these ministries. And so because I'd worked with Christian schools and wanted to be a missionary, I found out June 1st that I wanted to, that the opportunity was there.

Yeah, you could do that. And on September 10th, I was on an airplane. And September 11th was 9-11. And I was in London. So that's how long I've been a missionary. But within that three months, all of my family and friends, they all knew I wanted to be a missionary.

And so they were, you know, ready to write the checks and do the sponsorship. And it was a short-term commitment. But in my mind, I knew I wanted to do full-time. But I'd never been to Africa before, so I didn't want to just say, yeah, I'm going to go live there for 10 years without ever seeing it.

And so that homeschooling missionary kids evolved into doing youth ministries and camps and things like that. And so, yeah. So, yeah.

[ 55 : 20 ] Short-term missions. Yep, short-term missions are really important. Learn your Bible because any time you go as a missionary, they think of you as a leader. And so they will ask you hard questions. But do ministry right where you are.

Don't say, I'm going to train to go do it there. You've got to be doing it here first. But look into it. Take a trip. Even if you don't want to be a missionary, come visit us just to encourage us so that you can be a better prayer warrior for missions.

Yeah. Because, yeah. Yeah. It's a different type of ministry. And obviously, you guys can tell there's a lot of cultural things that I don't even get. And I've lived there for four years.

So come and learn. Yeah. Amen. All right. Well, let's thank Brooke for coming today. Thank you. Thank you. And sharing with us.

Like she said, there's a table out there with more information. And you can sign up for the email list and get one of the prayer cards and all that. And if you have any questions, I'm sure she'd be happy to share it any more.

[ 56 : 25 ] But, yeah, let's close in prayer. Father, thank you so much for the ministry that Brooke has out in Malawi. And she's really encouraging and edifying the body of Christ.

We're grateful for the body of Christ all over the world. And especially in Malawi, you have people all over the world that are your people, that are part of your body. And we ask that you would work in our church, this local body, to see how we might not only spread the gospel here, but also be a part of spreading the gospel and supporting and encouraging and edifying the body of Christ in other parts of the world as well as opportunities arise.

And how we might help Brooke in the ministry that she's doing and the work of GMI out there in Malawi as well. Thank you for all these things. Amen. Amen.

All right, thanks, everybody.