

EAST AFRICA

BRINGING CHRIST'S HEALING TO UGANDA'S REMOTE ISLANDS

Story by Margot Bass
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On a remote island on Lake Victoria, Uganda, American missionary R.J. Runkowski listened attentively as a 30-year-old woman shared her medical concerns before seeing a doctor. Wearing a hijab covering her head and neck, she told R.J. that she had grown up Christian but had converted to Islam after her marriage. R.J. gently asked her, "Do you know that Jesus loves you? How has it been since you converted?" After an hour-long conversation, she removed her hijab and recommitted her life to Jesus Christ. "I don't want this anymore, and I know that Jesus is the way," she declared as her children watched.

R.J. was one of 16 believers from Calvary Chapel Philadelphia, PA, (CC Philly) who traveled to Uganda in January 2018 to bring the Gospel and desperately-needed medical care to more than 1,000 in the remote island communities of Lake Victoria. CC Philly has partnered with Calvary Chapel Entebbe, Uganda, for 7 years to help bring healing—spiritual and physical—to five islands annually. According to CC Philly's International Missions Pastor Carlos Kalczuk, 130 islanders prayed to receive Christ that week. While doctors and nurses worked long hours, non-medical volunteers held evangelistic and children's outreaches. Children enjoyed Bible stories, songs, crafts, and games at kids' clubs.



Carlos Kalczuk

"No one gets seen by any doctor until they meet with a pastor or counselor who prays with them, hears their concerns, and gives them the Gospel and a Bible," Carlos said. "We saw so many get saved before [getting treatment]."

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and ... disease among the people. MATTHEW 4:23



Left: Ade Oyemola distributes shoes to island children on Lake Victoria, Uganda. CC Philly donated 1,000 pairs of sturdy rubber shoes.

Right: Pastor Deus Byamukama (left) of CC Nangombe, Uganda, greets a church member waiting for medical care from the CC Philly team.



Left: A woman from the CC Entebbe, Uganda, medical team (right) prays with a woman from the village of Nangombe. Nangombe is one of six islands that CC Entebbe has adopted for medical and spiritual ministry.

Right: Abbey Wible of CC Philly plays with the children of Kachanga Island, Uganda.



“IF THEY DON’T RECEIVE CHRIST, IT’S A TRAGEDY.” CARLOS KALCZUK

Lake Victoria, the second-largest freshwater lake in the world at 26,600 square miles, is home to 84 islands where residents subsist on agriculture and fishing. Living conditions are often primitive and unsanitary—no electricity, safe water, or health care. Carlos added that the islands have Uganda’s highest incidence of HIV, sexual abuse, prostitution, and drunkenness. “I call them ‘pirate islands’—there’s no law, police presence, schools, or hospitals. They are little pieces of land with all these slums. The poorest of the poor live here, and they’re forgotten by the Ugandan government,” he explained.

These conditions, he stated, have improved over the years as CC Entebbe members visit each island once a month to evangelize and disciple believers. They provide free medical care, HIV testing and counseling, immunizations, and life-skill and hygiene training. Volunteers have also constructed latrines, clinics, schools, and access to water purification and sanitation. Potter’s Field Ministries’ Ignite students run children’s Bible clubs and camps. “God is on the move in Uganda,” Carlos shared.

He added, “Jesus is the One who will be able to fix all these issues because a heart change will affect their

lifestyles. They need to be transformed by the Holy Spirit to be able to walk in a manner that’s pleasing to the Lord. That’s why we and CC Entebbe continue to go back. Medicine is a great tool, but if their spiritual needs aren’t being met, we’re really just buying time. If they don’t receive Christ, it’s a tragedy.” *Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God* (Romans 12:2b).

During the week, Christian musician Jeremy Camp, who grew up in a Calvary Chapel, performed a free concert in the capital city of Kampala, sharing the Gospel with nearly 20,000 people. More than 1,000 accepted Christ as Savior that night, Carlos recalled. Now Calvary Chapels in Uganda will contact, disciple, and connect these new believers to churches. Jeremy’s nonprofit, Speaking Louder Ministries, raised money to build a new medical clinic on the grounds of CC Entebbe that will serve as headquarters of its medical missions to the islands. 📍

CCPhilly.org
CCEntebbe.org



Top: Denise Perez (left) helps in the assembly line, loading the boat for the return trip after a long day of ministry.

Bottom left: Musician Jeremy Camp ministers to 20,000-plus people through his free concert at the Speak Louder outreach in Kampala. That week, Speak Louder also hosted a pastors conference in Kampala.

Bottom right: A woman worships at the concert; more than 1,000 people accepted Christ as Savior that night.