

the church of Christ in **MALAWI** the warm heart of Africa!

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Doug's Report

October is normally one of the hottest months of the year in Malawi. Pleasant mornings quickly turn into saunas by the afternoon. Hopefully, relief will come with the rains in November.

If you will pardon the pun, we have contributed to the heat by "keeping the roads hot" with traveling this month. I spent the first week of October in Mzuzu, which is a town in northern Malawi, approximately 425 miles from Blantyre. Brother B. Chitsulo lives in Mzuzu and works with the churches in the area. The church building is located right across the road from his house.

We had about 30 preachers attend this study. Because of its location the people of northern Malawi sometimes speak different languages. That proved to be the case here, although fortunately all could understand Chichewa and only brother Davidson had to translate. I have had to use two translators before and that really slows down a study.

October's second week found us going to Lilongwe, which is the capital of Malawi. Debbie was able to go with me, which is a tremendous boost because staying by yourself for four nights in a strange city where many of the folks do not speak your language can get pretty lonely. F. D. Magwira and Austin Katona are two preachers who live and work in Lilongwe. Just as in Mzuzu, the church building was conveniently located right next to brother Magwira's house. Our attendance for this study was about 60, with Duane Permenter also sending 5 men from Zambia.

The third week found us in Kasungu, about 6



Njala Preacher's Study

hours' driving time north of Blantyre. Brother Jim Crouch from the Green Oaks congregation accompanied me, having come to help with some of the preachers' studies. Brother M. Khosolo lives and works in Kasungu. Forty preachers attended this study.

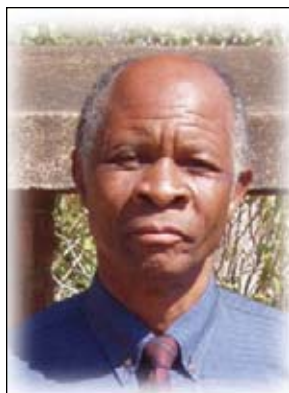
Our last study for October was conducted at the Njala church building near Zomba. We were able to sleep in our own beds this week, driving back and forth daily. The preachers attending this study numbered 109. Jim volunteered to take one full day, allowing me to stay in Blantyre taking care of some business.

The studies in October made me aware of one difficulty that we face here in Malawi. With so many churches in the southern and central region, I can make only a couple of brief visits per year to the northern parts of the country. I hope their isolation does not hurt them spiritually.

Meet Christina & Gladys



Christina Kimu is a preacher's wife. She and Bro. George Kimu have four children and one grandchild. She and her friend Gladys Binzi work in our home. Debbie has taught Gladys how to use the serger and the sewing machine. Gladys is now teaching Christina. Gladys is helping Debbie to make the lining for new curtains in the house. It is a big task since every bedroom has an 8'x 5' window and the living room has the same in addition to a 16' foot wide window and door combination.



REPORT FROM THE MALAWI BRETHREN

"How beautiful are the feet of those that preach the gospel of peace . . ." Rom. 10:15

Eric Costa Banda is a preacher from one of three Ndirani congregations in the Blantyre area.

I was born on 10th January, 1940 at Suman Village, T.A.

Likoswe, Chiradzulu District. I am the seventh son in my family. We are all members of the church of Christ and I was baptized in 1952. The preacher who baptized me was brother L.

Somanje. In 1964, I was ordained to be a deacon at my home congregation at Nguludi church of Christ. In 1970, I was ordained to be the church elder at my home congregation. After my uncle brother Harry M. Mpita told me and encouraged me to be a preacher I began to travel with him. In 1978, I became a preacher of the gospel after studying with my uncle about the Bible. In the same year I went to Balaka, Chembela Village to preach the gospel. The first man to be converted was brother Chimwisi. The second brother to be baptized was L. Bonongwe and a congregation was planted. From there I went to another village called Mangombo and I preached very hard about Christ and His church. Brother B.

Kachingwe and H. Mapira were converted and a congregation was started. For the third time I went there at Balaka, Apyoli Village, this time I took brother W. Maloya from Zomba to help me to preach the gospel. From that time up to now the Lord's work that side has made a very big progress. Concerning my education I did my full primary school at Nguludi Catholic and at Providence Industrial School. I am preaching the gospel in so many areas such as Chiradzulu, Phalombe, Thyolo, Mulanje, Balaka and Mozambique. I have got a wife and five children four boys and a girl. At the present time I am staying here at Ndirande Blantyre District.

The Eyes of Texas...

I arrived in Malawi on October 12th to provide some help for Doug in the work here and to gain further insight for the benefit of the Arlington congregation. I had the privilege of being in Malawi last year for about three weeks to assist in studies with the preachers, and I have been anxious to return ever since.

The work in Malawi has exploded over the last few years, resulting in literally thousands of new congregations and creating many challenges for the work. Many of the congregations and preachers are in desperate need of training. It is vital that we meet these needs, for Malawi holds tremendous evangelistic opportunities both locally and in bordering nations. A strong, vibrant work in Malawi will provide a strong base for Christianity in southeast Africa for generations to come.

As a country, Malawi has hit upon hard times. The country is overpopulated (11.5 million people in a land the size of Tennessee). The vast majority of the people depend on subsistence farming, meaning each family requires a fair amount of land to raise animals and to produce enough in crops for the year. As a result, the usable land is farmed out. Further, during the last few years, the land has not received sufficient rainfall to produce the crops needed to feed the people adequately. In some cases, the people are



desperate for food. Despite their hardships, the Malawians are generally happy and kind in disposition.

The Malawi preachers' studies I have been able to attend have been very enjoyable. Doug has done a great job preparing the material, and the preachers are thirsty for knowledge. There are over 500 preachers in Malawi, but only about a dozen receive support (another dozen receive some travel compensation). The rest receive no support for the work they render. In a country of over 4000 churches, the congregations still outnumber the preachers by nearly 8 to 1. Their task is great and their earthly rewards are few. With so many congregations needing

teaching and training, the task of training the preachers to be able to train church leaders is vital. That is Doug's primary objective during his stay here.

It has been so good to spend time with Doug and Debbie. The work in Malawi is daunting in size, but so is their commitment to the work and their faith in God. I am thankful they are willing to lend their wisdom and strength as God's instruments. They have been a blessing to me over the past few weeks, and I pray I have been of some help and encouragement to them. Please pray for Doug and Debbie. Please pray for our good brothers and sisters in Malawi.

Njala Relief

"Njala" is the Chichewa word for hunger. It is one of the first words that we learned upon arriving because of the famine that currently grips this country. Good brethren in the United States have expressed a desire to help their brothers and sisters who are suffering. With your assistance we have been able to help Christians in hard hit places like Thyolo, Phalombe, Chikwawa, and Nsanje. Because of the magnitude of the drought, we are trying to help those who have trouble taking care of themselves--the widows, orphaned children, and the elderly. The brethren keep accurate records of those we help.

I would like to ask all Christians everywhere to fervently pray for good rains in southern Africa. A good rainy season will produce good crops which will help the Malawians start the journey back from njala.



DEBBIE'S EXPERIENCE

In October, I had the pleasure of making a trip to Lusaka, Zambia to get Jessie and Rockie, the two new adorable additions to our household. It had been 18 years since we left Zambia, so I was excited to see it again, see Duane and Laurie's home, and hopefully see some familiar faces among the Christians there. I was accompanied by Maggie and Lester Kasambwe, neither of whom had ever been out of Malawi. Lester drove most of the long trek.

In Blantyre we have water every other day plus evenings and nights because of the shortage. We were looking forward to a break from the shortage. Upon arriving Friday evening, Duane greeted us with, "I haven't had water all day for some reason." We were without water the whole three days we were there. He had had no warning so he didn't have any in reserve. Early Saturday morning we headed to the Kaunda Square church's building and filled containers with water. The only containers he could find besides one water cooler had previously contained diesel. Laurie was away visiting her children in Texas. I hope she forgives us for putting "diesel water" in her toilet tanks.

After we got the water situation under control, we hurriedly went to pick up the six weeks old puppies. I had only seen a photo of them on the internet and described to the owner what I was looking for. They are the most wonderful little time consumers in the world. It was love at first sight.

They have been the answer to the empty nest I have been struggling with. I only wish they were potty trained. The first week I almost lost Jessie. They both had a hard time adjusting. The stress of the fourteen hour trip and separation from mom took its toll on them.

The highlight of my weekend was worshipping with the brethren at Kaunda Square. I was so happy to see some faces from so long ago. Sister Cecilia Sinyani and I reminisced about our hospital visits with the Chelston sisters. We would all pile in the little Mazda on Thursdays and go visiting. One time we had a flat. The jack was stuck with rusted bolts.



There were probably eight sisters that held the truck up while Bro. Chulu changed the tire. I also saw Sister Phiri who must be in her eighties. We and the Cryers helped her son Patrick get through school. All of her children have passed on and now she is raising great-grandchildren. She had given my boys guinea pigs for pets.

I was thrilled that evening when Sister Siansobanda (in the photo) came by the house to greet me. We had many Bible studies together. Her sons are the same age as my sons. One, Roy, is now a preacher and two more have the desire to be preachers. Her third son, Niko, is on the right in the other photo. I was very impressed by these four spiritually minded young men. The one on the left is Gabriel Chulu, son of the late Tobias Chulu, a past leader at Kaunda Square. Duane is doing a great job training them.

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