

Doug's Report

This past Sunday (December 25th) Debbie and I visited a congregation near Mpemba which is about ten miles southeast of Blantyre. Brother George Kimu works with the congregation, along with several others in the area. Brother and sister Stephen Kasenda, brother and sister Y. Suwed, and brother Lester Kasambwe went along as well.

Someone has said that first impressions are always lasting. My first impression of this place was not too thrilling. When I first got out of the truck I noticed that we were parked over ant beds with ants scurrying everywhere. I was afraid that ants would fill the truck while we were in services but thankfully my fears proved to be unfounded.

This day was a special occasion. The congregation was moving into a new building that for the most part they had constructed themselves. I suppose that it was a dedication service.

We arrived a little early and sat down in the building. Malawians generally sing before services start and so we sang a few songs. Then, just before the service started we all left the building and formed two lines outside. The men formed one line

and the women the other. One of the brethren placed a small basket at the entrance and we all walked in single file placing a small amount of money in the basket. The men went first and then the women followed. I never did find out the meaning of this practice.

Once inside the service started and went as most Malawian services go. The services here are conducted in the same manner no matter where you go. The usual order is three songs, a prayer, the preaching, invitation song, Lord's supper, collection, closing song and prayer. After the services are dismissed, the village chief or party chairman speaks a few words of welcome. Then I make a short introduction of myself. Next, all of the preachers stand up and introduce themselves, followed by the announcing of all the



The new Somba church building

visiting congregations. Each congregation receives a round of applause for coming out to the service. Since this was a special day some singing groups then presented some songs. As you have probably already guessed, short services are not the norm over here. I am told the crowd numbered 375 with 200 seated in the building and the rest setting outside. Many of those who sat outside sat under umbrellas, not for fear of rain but for protection from a searing, tropical sun.

After the service was over we walked a short distance to brother Kimu's mother's house for a light meal. We had spaghetti noodles and rice, along with a chicken and cabbage relish to go on top of it. It was all very good.

The brethren have done a good job in constructing this building. As I said in the beginning they have done so without my help. They had burned the bricks themselves and obtained roofing sheets from off the old building and other places as well.

Meet Alfred Kamuyango

Alfred works for us as a nightguard. He is married to Ethel and has four children Ruth, Mpatso, Christina, and Emeres. He is also a Christian serving as a deacon with the Somba congregation near Mpemba. Brother Alfred and his wife volunteered their time and labor to carry bricks for the bricklayers who were building the new church building.

Alfred is the head of his family, which in Malawian culture carries great responsibility. He is not only responsible for his own immediate family but also the children of his two sisters. The nieces and nephews must come to him if they have problems. They must also ask for his permission to marry and seek his advice in all other important decisions. As the head of the family Alfred is also in charge of the funeral arrangements for the extended family.



REPORT FROM THE MALAWI BRETHREN

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

Robson Bizwick Roben is a preacher living and working in the Blantyre area.

My name is Robson Bizwick Roben and I come from the Blantyre district. I was

born on the 9th of May, 1950, and in 1976 I got married to Patuma and God has blessed us with six children.

I got baptized and became a member of the Church of Christ in 1974. In the year 1976 I was ordained a deacon. I worked for the church and preached the gospel up to the year 1980 when I became a church leader at Mselemu Church of Christ. I continued preaching about Jesus Christ and the love of God and many people changed their lives and got baptized thereby becoming Christians. In 1989 I became a full time preacher of the gospel.

Being a preacher I have managed to open up some congregations around Blantyre and Thyolo districts where I always go to preach the words of God.



A Word Study in English

Jessie and Rockie Edwards

There are many challenges that one encounters living in a foreign country. A language different than your own ranks right at the top of the list. What makes Malawi unique is that one of the “foreign” languages that we deal with is English. In the past Malawi was a British colony, hence the people were taught the Queen’s English. Most of the time there is no problem with the differences in the English language, but there are a few differences. Let me give you some examples of the differences between the “British” English and the “American” English. In the first column I will give you the English word as used in Africa and in the second column I will give its American counterpart.

Chips	French Fries
Biscuits	Cookies
Mince meat	Hamburger meat
Tarmac	Pavement
Bonnet	Hood of a car
Boot	Trunk of a car
Chemist	Drug store
Full stop	Period (.)
Bush	In the country
Robot	Traffic light
Galimoto	Car; a Chichewa word combined with English
Petrol	Gas
Mash and Bangers	Potatoes and sausage
Headmaster	Principal
Que	Line (standing in a line)
Pudding	Dessert
Custard	Pudding
Lorry	Truck
Plaster	Bandaid
Rubber	Eraser
Zed	The letter “z”
Nil	Zero
Lift	Elevator
Ice lolly	Popsicle
Dual carriage way	Boulevard
Best woman	Maid of honor

We don’t have any grandchildren to brag about like some missionaries do that live in a country not too far from here. *But* we do have some *grand* puppies that are brother and sister to their puppies. Jessie and Rockie have been such an enjoyment to the both of us this past few months. They are four months old now and full of adventure. They love to be inside with us in the evening. Jessie is being trained to stay inside with us to guard at night. Rockie is disappointed that he didn’t get that position. Rockie does his very best to make a good impression whenever he gets the chance to be inside. He is hoping we will reconsider his job description. They are hearty eaters. Both eat out of the same bowl. If we try to give them each their own bowl, they will eat together out of one then eat together out of the other. They love to play chase and take-away in the front yard. Since the yard is straight up a hillside they have had quite a few head over heels flips down the hill. They have learned to sit, stay, lay down, catch the ball, shake your hand and to wait patiently for their food.



DEBBIE’S EXPERIENCE

I have a studio. Well I sort of have a studio. Separated from the house by a breezeway/patio is a little room with big potential. I share it with mats, blankets, chairs, file cabinets, tracts, Bibles (when we have them), and twin beds. My “stuff” occupies one end of the very packed room. Other people call it the storage room, but I call it my art room.

When it was first built, it was meant to be a garage, but the hill was so steep getting up to it that cars were never actually parked in it. Instead, it became the meeting place for the Blantyre church. Brothers Davidson Kasambwe, Allen Nkakanyao, White Kaiwe and Chiliawani are some of the original members of the little group that met there. You would never imagine that when you see the 140 or so people that meet in the large building down the hill presently. They still use the original pulpit. Bro. Davidson was the yardman at the time and during the week he set up a desk in the little meeting room to do translating, correspondence and other work for the church. Eventually the garage door was replaced with a window. The church moved into its new building down the hill and Bill Davis used it for his study. Next it became a bedroom for his daughter Connie. It set empty for a short while and then housed a small printing press with hopes of saturating Malawi with much needed printed material. The press needed repair which it never received and was eventually sold. Then Marlene and Jim Franklin came to Malawi.



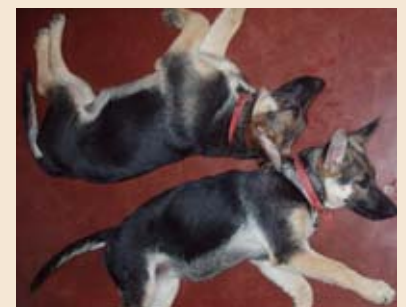
Marlene brought new life to the room with her music. She taught many many students to play the violin in the “music room”. Still to this day I even catch myself referring to it as the music room.

With Doug’s goals for the work in Malawi came tracts and Bibles and Preacher’s Study Notes. Where to store these important things until they can be distributed? With the studies came mats and blankets to bed down as many as 30 to 40 preachers for a week at a time. Where to store these important things?

In November came 1340 cases of grape juice in addition to the 1300 already stored in the church building. Where to store them? Fortunately for my art supplies, what little space they take up was not enough room for it all so the grape juice had to be

put in the breezeway. It filled it up, but there is still a little path that leads into the art room aka storage room.

I have spent much of my time settling in and making the house our comfortable home that it now is. I would love to say I am finished, but I have living room curtains to do still. It is my plan to spend some much desired time in my “studio” making art and stained glass the next few years. My little Jessie and Rockie have already staked claim to floor space. Every time I go in, they feel like they must accompany me.



Doug Edwards:
chchristbtml@sdp.org.mw
 Green Oaks church of Christ:
crouchcpa@email.com