



Doug's Report

March has brought the return of our Preachers' studies, although on a limited scale. The rains continue on a regular basis making it very difficult to travel to some of the village areas where we conducted studies last year. April is the time when many do their chimanga (maize) harvesting so we will not fully get started until the end of April. But we were able to schedule and conduct two different studies during the last two weeks of March.

Our first study was with the Blantyre area preachers and it took place March 21-23. I have decided to try three day studies this year instead of four. I noticed last year that by the fourth day the preachers were getting tired and many of them had to travel quite a distance back to their homes. I have been meeting with this group of preachers on a monthly basis during the rainy season. There were about 25 present for this study.

One of the new twists that I have added this year is a morning test on important Bible subjects. One morning I ask the preachers to give me the plan of salvation along with a Scripture for each step. The second morning I ask them to list from memory as many books of the New Testament as they can. On the third day I ask them the acts of worship along with a Scripture for each. These tests help me to determine the direction that I need to go in my studies.

The second study, March 28-30, was with a group of preachers scattered throughout the southern area where we will not conduct Preachers' studies. There were 52 present at this study.



Blantyre area preachers

I am presenting two themes this year. The first deals with the importance of church leadership. We are going to study about the work of preachers, elders, deacons, and how to study the Bible. The second theme deals with doctrinal errors such as false views on fellowship, the Sabbath, the communion, salvation, the Holy Spirit, and Jehovah Witnesses' views. I want this second theme to be a practical one dealing with issues that preachers will deal with in their work.

These Preachers' studies are a good time to distribute printed material as well. Currently I have three new tracts and a Bible bookmark to give out. Each preacher usually takes several copies of each tract to distribute in his home area. In this manner we are able to get our printed material scattered throughout the country. Brother Jerry Cutter has given us some studies that he has done on the book of Acts. Brethren are translating these into Chichewa and hopefully we will soon be able to distribute these as well.

Meet Chief Likotima

On Sunday, March 19th, Debbie, some of the Blantyre preachers, and I made a trip to visit the Likotima congregation. This congregation is about thirty minutes from our house. The church usually invites the chief (mfumu) and the political party chairman to come hear the gospel preached when I visit a congregation. After the service was over the village chief made a short speech welcoming us to his village. He had many nice things to say about the church. The traditional leadership system of village chiefs continues even today in Malawi. The chiefs own all of the land in their area and they distribute it out to their people. When brethren want to start a new congregation they have to first ask for permission from the chief, who then gives them a plot of land. Often times villages are named after the chief, and in this case the congregation is known as the Likotima church of Christ.



Mfumu Likotima, Doug, & Bro. Dinga

REPORT FROM THE MALAWI BRETHREN

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

Stevenson Harry Mpita is a preacher living in the Chiradzulu district and working with several congregations.

I was raised in a Christian family, although I cannot explain how my father received the word of God. I was the number seven son born in the family and the youngest. My parents took me to church as I was growing up. My father was teaching the gospel of God while I was at primary school.

I completed all levels of primary school, as well as secondary school at all levels. I passed the Malawi's School Certificate of Education in 1973 at Malosa, which is one of the nation's secondary schools. Even when I was at school I did not forget what my father taught me about God. So I preached at my home congregation

until my father died on the 7th of December, 1987. The congregation then chose me to be the preacher, from that time I was ordained as a preacher.

I am working with Malabvi, Mkhwai, Nkola, just to mention a few of the congregations which were born from the Nguludi church.

Finally, I am happy to work today with more than 20 congregations. I am married with 8 children, some of whom are already married. May God bless all the congregations born from the Nguludi congregation and bless His work everywhere.



I am Stevenson Harry Mpita of Nguludi congregation which is in Sumani village, traditional authority Likoswe, in Chiradzulu District. I was born in 1955.

This and That... *new churches, rain, malaria, utilities, etc.*

The work continues to grow in Malawi. During the first three months of this year we have registered twenty-five new congregations. We thank God for this increase. We visited the new congregation in this picture on March 26th. They have only been meeting for two months. Their building is only a temporary grass structure and a stronger one will have to be built soon. There is one aspect of the work that Malawian preachers are really good at, and that is evangelizing and starting new congregations! These brethren stand ready to take the gospel to their world.

Some have asked about the famine and the rains. Most of the areas in Malawi have received good rains this year. Some, unfortunately, have experienced too much rain resulting in flooding and crop damage. There are some areas in the far southern tip, in some central regions, and in the northern regions which have not received good rains. In the areas which have received good amounts, which includes most of the southern area where much of the population lives, the government is estimating good to bumper crops of maize. That certainly is good news. I am afraid, though, that because of the large population and limited farming conditions that hunger will always be a problem here.

Several Christians have been sick lately with malaria. Many of those who live around us and

work with us have suffered. Several of the preachers and their families have contracted malaria. We are thankful to God that all have recovered. The rainy season is the worst time of the year for malaria, although it does occur year round. Malaria is the number one killer here. We practice



We met with the newly established Mphandula church

cautionary methods by sleeping under a mosquito net and taking a preventive.

Utility shortages, especially during the rainy season, continue to be an ongoing challenge. For over three months we were without water during the day hours of Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday mornings. That shortage stopped about three weeks ago. We

sometimes have electrical shortages. They give no warning when it will go off. It may be during the day or in the evening. It may go off for 10 minutes or 10 hours. We have to scramble when it goes off to turn off our computers and other electrical appliances because when they turn it

back it comes on with a big surge. Our telephone was out for about a week. It was out for about three weeks back in January. Fortunately, this time we got it turned back on in about a week. Life in Malawi can be challenging at times.

Speaking of telephones, someone broke into the church's line on February 6th and ran up long distance bill of over \$100 to the USA, England, Ghana, and South Africa. That is not supposed to happen because we have a block on the phone not allowing international calls. We showed the phone company our service contract with blocking on it and they took

the calls off our bill. I am sure that this is not the last that we will hear of this situation.

Malawi has recently been hit with a disease among pigs known as "swine flu." A large number of pigs have been destroyed and the health officials are warning against eating pork. We usually do not eat very much pork so this has presented no problem.

DEBBIE'S EXPERIENCE

Did you know that Suwed planted a mouse in our garden? At least that is what I told Amayi Kasambwe and Amayi Muthowa. They had a good laugh at me, but it was taken in fun.

Doug and I have been studying Chichewa with the Peace Corp Chichewa Language Study books since the first of December. We have made a little progress, but have a long way to go. We studied Spanish for a short while at Moore with Laverne Porterfield. We weren't the most diligent students she ever had. If we had put the time and energy into Spanish that we have Chichewa she would have been pleased. The vowel sounds are very similar to Spanish, but that is where the similarity stops.

Two things drive me to learn the language. I want to speak to my brothers and sisters. Most Malawians do not know English. They are thrilled when they greet me and I am able to greet them as well. Secondly, the hymn books are Chichewa and it is my desire to be able to sing with the spirit and with the understanding without referring to the English version of the book that gives us the meaning of each song. It is not translated word for word. I want to know each word and phrase.

There are three major difficulties for me with the Chichewa language. First, it is a language full of prefixes and suffixes which leads to six cylinder words. They classify each noun. So far we have learned 18 classifications. The verb and demonstrative pronouns have to agree with the subject in the sentence. The

prefix on the verb will change every time to agree with the noun and its class. For example: "Ana ali kuno." literally means: Ana=children, ali=are, kuno=here. But to say: "Fruit is here.", you have to change the prefix on the verb to agree with the subject noun: "Chipatso chilij pano (here also changes)." When I was first learning the language, I would memorize phrases that Suwed or someone would give me, but I didn't know the grammatical break down. I have painted a mural at one of the entrances to the house with a welcome greeting I have memorized and use to greet my visitors. "Takulandirani," literally means "Ta=we, ku=you as an object, landira=receive, ani=you respectfully."

The second difficulty is that it uses a totally different word order in the sentence than the English language. For example their most common greeting is: "Muli bwanji?" It literally means "You be how?" You answer: "Ndili bweno." meaning, "I be fine." Another that is a must to know: "Chimbudzi chili kuti?" meaning, "Toilet is where?" So far I haven't been able to think fast enough to construct my sentences properly as I speak. It is easier for me to read it than to speak it.

Thirdly, many words are similar in spelling but vastly different in meaning. So I have been making blunders left and right. When I told Maggie that Suwed planted new seed=mbewu in the garden, I actually told her that he planted a mouse=mbewu in the garden.



I have become a bird watcher. As I see a different bird in the yard I plan to add it to our welcome tree (mango). Jessie and Rockie like to chase them.

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