



## Doug's Report

September has come and gone here in the warm heart of Africa. While most people in the States are looking forward to cool, crisp Autumn days we are preparing for our hot summer months. I had the opportunity to conduct three preachers' studies this month.

In addition to these studies I visited other congregations on Saturdays and Sundays as well. Mike and Brooks Criswell arrived on September 28th and Lester Kasambwe got married on September 30th.

The first week of September found us at Kasungu about

six hours north of Blantyre. Lester Kasambwe accompanied me on this trip and translated for me also. My usual translators, Davidson and Stephen, were unavailable as they accompanied Jim Franklin to Kenya to check on a potential work there. The brethren had arranged to use a community building for the study. "Community" is a good choice of words because it felt like the whole community parked itself right out our window for the study. A carpenter worked outside our window and spent the entire day hammering and sawing. One enterprising individual set up a telephone bureau outside another window. A telephone bureau occurs when a person puts a small table with a phone on it somewhere in the public and runs a phone line to a



jack somewhere. Then they charge people to make or receive phone calls. So there was the constant chatter and ringing of phones going on outside another window. Some of the church ladies were

cooking lunch outside another window and quite often we had crying and screaming kids! But the study went well, and we had about forty men present.

The second week saw

Lester and me going for a study to the Chilema church, which is about an hour and half north of Blantyre. I felt very fortunate to have brother Ron Courter with me on this study. Ron had flown into Blantyre to meet up with Bill Davis and help him in the Mozambique and Zimbabwe work, but he had visa problems with Mozambique so I invited him to come to our study and he helped out with the lessons. We had over eighty men attend this



## Meet Bro. & Sis. M. Juma

Bro. Juma is a member of the Blantyre church of Christ. He was baptized in 1964 in Zomba District. He was an elder in Zomba Naiwale church of Christ. He and his wife have eight children. He works with Portland Cement Company. For 16 years he worked with the factory at Chungalume in Zomba District until it closed and then transferred to Blantyre. His wife is a farmer and keeps the gardens growing back home. They commute two hours on the weekends to see each other. Last Sunday was her turn to visit.

study.

My last study for September was in Mzuzu, where Jerry and Linda Cutter will be shortly moving. It is about eight hours north of Blantyre. Debbie went along on this study so she could spy out the terrain for the Cutters. She spent the

days looking for acceptable housing while I conducted the studies. She found one that looks pretty good so we rented it for Jerry and Linda. The yard was all grown up but the house itself looked clean. We certainly hope that it will be acceptable. Speaking of the Cutters, they are scheduled to arrive in Blantyre on October 21st. We are certainly looking forward to their arrival. They are planning on house sitting for us in November and December while we come home for a visit.

Mulungu akudalitseni (May God bless you).



Mr. & Mrs.

Lester Davidson Kasambwe

Lester and Doreen were married at the Blantyre church building early one Saturday morning. The Chisomo singers sang in their beautiful acapela harmony as Lester met Doreen halfway down the aisle escorted by her father. It was an emotional entrance. Their church wedding was somewhat similar to ours with a few exceptions. The bride and groom sit in special chairs in front and they have a public signing of the marriage license.

# Same, but not the same. by Mike Criswell

It's been almost forty years since the noisy BOAC twin prop aircraft I was riding in touched down at Blantyre's Chileka airport. The year was 1967, Malawi had recently gained its independence, Dr. Kamuzu Banda was president, I was a hyper active six year old, and a nervous mom and dad with four kids were praying they could make a difference for Christ.

But that was then and this is now. And yet, after only being here a week I've come to realize that four decades have not really dulled the essence of what makes Malawi the "Warm Heart of Africa." Naturally time has made an indelible mark on the culture. And I suppose, depending on one's perspective, the nation as a whole has progressed and regressed all at the same time. Blantyre has changed. Kandodos, the grocery store where mom occasionally snagged a box of Kellogg's Corn Flakes, is gone. But now there's

Shoprite and Game where, for a price, you can get just about anything you want. Our old house is gone now - the one with slick red waxed concrete floors; the one up the hill from the bamboo forest where we used to build bridges over a stream we were sure was infested with "bilharzia;" the one with a veranda where the church met on Sunday, where you could sit and watch the clouds roll in during the rainy season, and where "goombies" (giant flying ants) swarmed at night sending the locals in



quest of a juicy snack. Now in place of our old house there are a plethora of walled and heavily gated newer homes where prudence would certainly not allow children to roam at will as we did. The "bush" has also changed. In many places mud brick buildings have replaced "mud huts." And now you occasionally see a "telephone hut" where you can actually make calls. And hand pump water stations now dot the landscape.

But the more things change the more they stay the same. Malawi's people remain some of the most friendly I've ever met. And as I travel with Doug from study to study I am reminded that this is truly a place where the Lord's work is being done. After preaching around the world in difficult works like Malaysia, Russia, and America, it is refreshing to see a part of the world where the gospel has such free course. There are thousands of churches here in Malawi and one could sow the seed for a lifetime and apparently still leave soil untouched.

Some might look at Malawi and say it's a destitute country. I look at Malawi and see believers rich in Christ. Some see villagers living in dirt houses and say they are poverty stricken. I look at these precious souls and see only folks who are "poor in spirit." In fact their bright smiles and enthusiastic worship lead me to suspect that they've found something in Jesus that most of us are still searching for.

After forty years of being away my re-assessment of Malawi has only begun. My son, Brooks, and I will be here for another couple of weeks helping Doug with preacher training. But if the hospitality and kindness that Doug and Debbie and the Malawi brethren has shown is any indication of what lies ahead, it will be hard to go home and I'm sure that part of my heart will forever stay in "The Warm Heart of Africa."

## A New Friendship



It has been wonderful to have so many visitors to Malawi this year. It has been a big boost to have Brooks here since his youthful spirit livens up the place. We have never seen a young person so dedicated to doing homework when he has three weeks to procrastinate and put it off. He already has homework completed in two subjects and he still has two weeks. Amazing!

Brooks hasn't wasted time in making friends either. Kennedy Kamwendo is seventeen, our weekend gardener, a devoted Christian and a member of the Chisomo quartet. He stopped by the day Brooks arrived to welcome him to Malawi. They spent the whole day of the wedding together with other teenagers assisting in what needed to be done and enjoying the festivities. Today after Brooks came in from the preacher's study and Kennedy finished with school they met up here for a good time. Brooks is teaching Kennedy how to play Phase 10. At the moment they are tied.

## DEBBIE'S EXPERIENCE



Bridal showers and receptions in Malawi revolve around the bride and groom holding a tray or basket with a Master of Ceremonies calling for people to come forward all afternoon to toss money to the couple. I took a gift to Doreen and Lester's shower, but it was not opened there. So I threw money.

Traditionally the women attending the wedding find out what fabric the bride has chosen for guests and have a dress made. I followed suite *or is that suit*.

I was asked to do two things for the



wedding. Make the cake. Make fresh cut flower arrangements. I made the cake and put it in the freezer ahead of time. Thanks to Mike I had a large can of Crisco to make beautiful white icing. A welder made me a cake stand which I wrapped in aluminum foil and decorated with silver ribbon. That was the easy part. The hard part was that I had to traipse up the aisle with Amayi Kapyanga, throwing money, bowing to the parents, bride and groom and cut the cake. Tiny pieces of cake are given to those who throw money at the bride and groom.



I got up at 5:00 that morning, cut my roses and greenery for the floral arrangements and had the church decorated by 7:00. It was a beautiful wedding and neat experience.

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