

the church of Christ in MALAWI

the warm heart of Africa!

Vol. 3 Num. 2

FEBRUARY 2007

Doug's Report

We are now in the midst of the Malawian rainy season. And believe me, they don't call it the rainy season for no reason. On Friday, Bill Davis and I were downtown Blantyre looking for some plumbing parts and got caught in a deluge. We received about two and a half inches in just a few hours that day. It has rained almost everyday since we have returned back from the States. If it were cold here and we received that much rain we would probably be buried in snow and ice by now. Everything is beautiful and green this time of year, and hopefully there will be another bumper crop of chimanga (corn). Please continue to pray for rain and the success of these crops. Most Malawians are completely dependent on agriculture for survival.

We are in the time of year when I do almost all of my writing for preachers' studies outlines, booklets, and tracts. We are again covering two different themes this year in the Studies. The first theme deals with the Christian family. I have developed a series of studies on marriage, the role of men, the role of women, and children. As we all know, local congregations depend up the spiritual health of their families, and Malawi is not different. It is my prayer that the preachers will take this material and teach it to the congregations they work with. The second theme deals with a study of the book of James. I think it is real important for those who study and teach the word of God to



start thinking contextually. The book of James is really practical and has so many helpful thoughts in it.

Debbie and I have been attending the Blantyre congregation for the last three weeks. That is by design. Last year we went to a different congre-



gation every Sunday even during the rainy season, but I wanted to do it a little different this time. I wanted to spend a little time with one congregation and work among its leaders. While most of our time is spent working among preachers there is also a great need to work with the local church leaders.

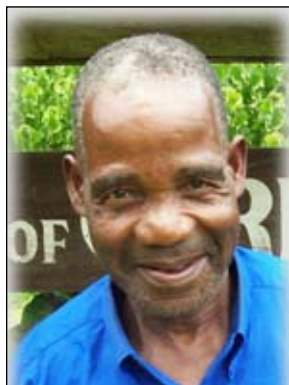
Unfortunately, though, I do not have the time to

REPORT FROM THE MALAWI BRETHREN

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

Bro. Fraction Masauko Eliasi from Mandindi church of Christ in Thylo District

My name is Fraction Masauko Eliasi and I was born in 1950. I became a member of the church of Christ in 1962. I became a preacher of the Gospel long time ago and to date am working with five congregations in my home area, Thylo District. These days I do try to encourage young men to develop an interest in the preaching job so that they should continue with the work of preaching since I am growing old. In my preaching job I have worked with Bro. Bill Davis, Bro. Ron Courter, and Bro. Jim Franklin. May God bless you all.



work with both the preachers and the leaders.

I am currently engaged in a weekly study with the Blantyre leaders on the subject of leadership. Today (Saturday the third of February) was our first study. The brethren had designated 8:00 am as our starting time. 8:00 arrived and there was only one brother present. We waited until 8:30 and there were only two present and

I decided to start. There is a phenomenon called African time. It runs differently than does our time. Clocks and watches do not often mean anything here. I have learned over the years to not get too disappointed when many do not come for studies. In fact, it is much better to be thankful for those who do come and concentrate on helping them. Brethren continued to come in during the study after we had started and we ended having eleven present. I was pleased with the turn out and thought that we had a good study. Today we talked about the organization of a local congregation and also some general principles on leadership. Future studies will include topics on teachers, elders, and deacons, and teaching the word of God.

We continue to thank you for your prayers and everything that you do for this work. This truly is a group effort. Without your interest and support the work here would suffer greatly.

Meet Jessie Kasenda



Jessie Kasenda, 26, is a member of the Blantyre church. She works and is attending the IZF Business College taking business administration courses and hopes to graduate in 2008. She speaks good English, is a very good cook, likes to read novels and listen to music. She desires to help the young people at the Blantyre church to enjoy fellowship with each other and to encourage them in talking with their school and work mates about the Word of God. To all the young people in America she wishes to say, God is real and He is able!



Jerry's Report

We were able to get moved safely to Mzuzu on January 12th. We live in a nice, quiet area and are as safe as anywhere one could hope for in this world. The one handicap is that Mzuzu is a long, long ways from anywhere. However, we knew this before we moved here. Distances from things will be seen as I report on the church work.

The first Sunday we were here, the 14th, we worshiped with the Mzuzu congregation. Brother Chitsulo, one of the preachers in the northern region, moved here to Mzuzu ten years ago and has established over 50 congregations.

On the 21st, we went to a bush church one and a half hours from Mzuzu. At the time the worship service began, there were only a few people present. Within 20 minutes, the building was full, over 75 people. You must remember that the people walk miles to church. A preacher that works with several congregations in that area walked over five miles to attend.

Last week I went north of Mzuzu a little over 100 miles to visit a preacher, Brother Robin, and some brethren. The trip went well and was over good roads. On this trip, I did not see a single filling station the whole day. Much of the trip involved driving in high mountains with the road lowering down to Lake Malawi. One interesting note, I saw monkeys and baboons on sides of the road.

For worship last Sunday, we traveled back toward Mzimba where a new church has been established. Mzimba is 80 miles southwest of Mzuzu. The preacher at this place, Brother Mpita, moved there only last October, and has since established a church that meets in his home. Three were baptized last Lord's day; and since

the work began, there have been more than 20 baptisms. After services, we had a nice visit and stayed for lunch and ate with the Mpita family. We had previously visited and eaten with this family.

After services and lunch, we continued south to Lilongwe, the capitol of Malawi, which is located 375 miles round trip from Mzuzu. We stayed overnight in Lilongwe and on Monday morning purchased much of the groceries we will need for the month of February. There are only two small grocery stores here in Mzuzu, one being the size of a 7-11 and the other slightly larger. Also, for over two weeks we have not been able to successfully operate our computers, so I purchased some necessary

parts while in Lilongwe, and now I am able to write this report on our laptop. The desktop is in the hands of a computer technician. Our return to Mzuzu went well; however, it rained all the way, and the last third of the trip is through mountains. Again, there are no filling stations along the road for over 100 miles in places. You may wonder what we drive. We drive a very nice 1995 model Toyota Vista (Camry in the US). We cannot drive it far into the bush, as one would imagine, but the car serves our needs until the four wheel drive pickup that is on order arrives. Most of the time we drive on reasonably good tarmac roads. The Lord has been good to us, and we live among many kind and caring people.

We miss seeing Doug and Debbie Edwards, who live down the down the road 435 miles, but we are often in contact with them by cell phone. It is also very easy and cheap (through phone cards) for friends and family to call us from the States. Pray for us.



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Rainbows, Snakes & Rats



We have enjoyed beautiful rainbows as a result of rains but along with the rains also come—insects, snakes and rats. I guess the moisture brings them in from the fields around us. Gladys killed a baby snake a few days ago in the laundry room. The laundry room is not in the house proper, but that is still too close for comfort. Debbie put a rubber strip under the kitchen door that hopefully will keep snakes out of the house. Only a few minutes ago she showed me a dead green momba that a young man had just killed on the hill behind our house while slashing the grass. Years ago, when we were living in Zambia, we had a snake come up our toilet. But that is another story!

We also have a problem with rats in our attic. A couple of days ago we were sitting in the living room and reading when we heard a rat running right above our heads in the attic. I thought that he must have been playing football as loud as he was. We have been using mouse traps trying to catch them and have actually succeeded in catching a couple of them before. But we decided that we needed something bigger. I went to town and found a rat trap. Brother Muthowa climbed up into the attic and set the trap for us. Since we have put the trap out we have no longer heard the rat, but we still haven't caught him.

DEBBIE'S EXPERIENCE

Granny Bottom's Plain Cake recipe has made it's debut with Malawians!

I have a creed that has been with me for most of my life. It may have become more applicable in my overseas experiences. "Never Trouble Trouble 'Til Trouble Troubles You", "Waste Not Want Not", and "Necessity is the Mother of Invention." The first one I use to reign myself in when I desire to jump in and "fix" situations. The second is a major promoter for eating leftovers. The later just feeds my passion for fixing things with little resources.

I never cease to be humbled by the economic state of most third world people. In spite of their situation and most likely because of their situation they are very resourceful. It amazes me. They are so rich in ingenuity.

Doreen Kasambwe asked me back in November if I would teach her how to make cakes. I knew she didn't have electricity, but promised her when I got back from the states that we would have a cake baking afternoon. She and Iness (her niece-in-law) were all excited as I pulled out the cookbook one Sunday afternoon. She had never followed a recipe before and was not familiar with



some of the ingredients like baking powder and vanilla. She had never used an electric mixer, teaspoon, table-spoon nor measuring cups. It was quite an experience for all of us. As the cake was baking in the oven, we made the icing and they were intrigued with the idea of making different colors from the primary food colors I had. They decided to make purple icing with white trim. The cake turned out very pretty and she took it home to her new husband Lester.

The next Saturday she and Iness came over to learn how to make pizza. Lester had told her about eating it with us when he lived here at the church. Kneading the yeast dough was a new experience for her as well as grating cheese and using all the different spices to make the sauce. While the pizza baked I showed them how to write the recipe on a

card. Then gave her a homework assignment - to bake a plain cake at home. I helped her write out the recipe for Doug's favorite cake in the whole world. She took it home and promised me she would make it this weekend. I doubted she could do it without an oven.

Today after lunch Doreen and Lester invited us to their newly wed home. She surprised Doug with Granny Bottom's plain cake. It was delicious. She cooks with charcoal in an iron grate. She had put the batter in a pan and somehow placed hot coals above and below it. It tasted just like my oven cakes. Their rented house is ready for electricity but the electric company says they have run out of meters. So they wait. But Lester is diligently providing things necessary for his new wife to become the homemaker that she desires to be. He pulled back a curtain and showed us a convection oven ready to use as soon as they get electricity.

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