

the church of Christ in MALAWI

the warm heart of Africa!

Vol. 3 Num. 10

OCTOBER 2007



Doug's Report

Today is a rare day for me. I am home on Saturday. A meeting had been scheduled with a congregation in the Zomba district, but we found out yesterday that it had been cancelled. So this left me with a free day. I think it is only the second Saturday that I have been home since we hit the road last April.

This morning Debbie and I went to craft sale in downtown Blantyre. A garden center hosts a craft sale on the last Saturday of each month. We found a few readable paperback books selling for fifty kwacha each (about thirty five cents). There are times when curling up with some adventure novel helps with the solitude. We then went to an art gallery where there was a flower and plant sale going on. Debbie found some flowers that she wanted. Then Kennedy, a young man who works for us on the week ends, and I went over to Limbe to look for him a bicycle. He has been saving his money and was ready to get one. We found two bicycle shops, did our comparison shopping, and then purchased the one he wanted. I think he is pretty happy about getting a bike. Bicycles are the number one means of transportation in Malawi. When you drive down the highway they seem to be everywhere. We are constantly bobbing and weaving through the cyclists. The preachers ride their bicycles to the studies and it looks like Walmart in December when they park them all together.

September was a good month for the Lord's work. I conducted three preacher studies. The first was in Chilema which is about an hour and a half



north of Blantyre. A brother named Chitonya works with this congregation and he is a good worker for the church. He usually accompanies us to our meetings whenever we are in the area. He also had attended several of the studies this year. If my memory serves me correctly we had about seventy men attend the study. My second study was at the Mikomwa congregation about two hours east of Blantyre. It is not as far distance-wise as Chilema but the roads are much worse, requiring longer to get there. About forty men attended this study. I purchased two baby turkeys during week at Mikomwa. Debbie is determined to serve turkey for Thanksgiving this year so we hope to fatten them up by then. She is afraid, though, that there is not enough time for them to fatten up. So we may be back to baked chicken. My third study was at a place called Mayaka about



an hour and a half northeast of Blantyre. This is the area where we have so many churches and preachers that I have to conduct two different studies there in order to get to all of the preachers. We had around eighty-five present. Davidson, Debbie, and I made a trip up to Lilongwe last week end for two meetings. Blantyre and Lilongwe are the two largest cities in Malawi, and Lilongwe is the capital. Lilongwe is four hours away from Blantyre so I do not make many trips there. On Saturday we visited a congregation about an hour out of Lilongwe near the Mozambique border. It was a small group but we enjoyed the singing and the service. After the service we ate a meal with the brethren and one of the men of the village approached Debbie to name his new baby boy so she named him Douglas James. I am afraid this little boy is scarred for life now! On Sunday we visited a congregation near Lilongwe. There was a large crowd there so most of the folks had to sit under the shade of a large tree. Even though she was sitting in the shade Debbie still got a pretty good sunburn. That's the thing about the African sun. You can be out in it for only a few minutes and still get a good burn. We try to be careful, using sunscreen and staying out of the sunlight, but sometimes you just can't avoid it.



THE MALAWI BRETHREN

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

Elias James Sitaya of Zomba was born in 1968 and married Mariya in 1987. They have six children. His parents were

members of the church so was raised in the church and was baptized at an early age after understanding the reality of the words of God.

I would like to thank Preacher D. Nakutepa who has been teaching me the work of God many years. I am working with 13 churches. As a preacher, I would like to tell my fellow preachers that we should not stay home idle but let us read the Bible

and make plans for our work. I am thankful to God for the privilege to work with the churches. We have a good number that gather that these churches every Sunday. The first week of August I traveled to Kachere church at Lisanjala Zomba. There I met a problem that is still striking my mind. During the rainy season the Lisanjala River over flooded and destroyed many houses, among those were three houses of Christians washed away. Now we are busy working to build those houses. We have worked very hard the month of September to finish those three buildings as we are going towards the rainy season again.

Finally I would like to tell brethren in the country of Malawi and those who are outside that let us work hard with this work for the betterment of our eternal life.

May the Lord bless you all Amen!

A New Little Douglas James



Debbie has had the privilege and honor of naming two new babies this month. Amanda Joy is the new grandbaby of Preacher Jameson near Blantyre and Douglas James is the sixth child of Stephano and Joyce Chisale near Dedza.

Jerry's Report

September has been the busiest month yet. But, first, Linda has returned to the U. S. for a visit, leaving September 25th. She was a little apprehensive traveling alone for the first time on a long international trip. However, every thing went well and she arrived home to a joyous reunion with her family and friends.

During the month of September I have done an inordinate amount of traveling and preaching. I have done three studies and two of the three involved long trips and three days of staying away from home.

Also, I have preached at three new congregations and a fourth that has been established in the last year.

The new congregations are a joy to attend. They are all "open air." The last one we attended (Linda and I last Sunday) was especially a joy. The people making up this congregation had been first introduced to the church through a tract that Linda's father (brother L. M. Crouch) had written many years ago. The tract has been distributed world-wide in several languages and by the tens of thousands. The tract is called "The Words of Life." This congregation is at the gate of a large tea estate that we cross in getting to some of the churches. As we entered the estate the brethren got acquainted with the gate keeper and among other things gave him the tract mentioned above. This led to the establishment of this congregation of some 25 members.



At these new congregations, what I do is first carefully go back over the reason we need salvation and the plan of salvation itself. I go over the life a Christian must live (using the seven Christian graces as a text, plus others). I explain the tragedy of not remaining faithful (II Peter 2:20-22). I tell them how to pray and the need for faithful worship. I point out what they can do on the Lord's day in the absence of a qualified teacher. I tell them that one or more of the brethren who are good readers can read to the group from the New Testament, beginning in Matthew.

This is based on I Timothy 4:13. I suggest reading at least three chapters a week. I caution them not to try to explain what they are reading until they have been properly taught to teach. Few people in Malawi, and maybe some in America, have ever heard or read

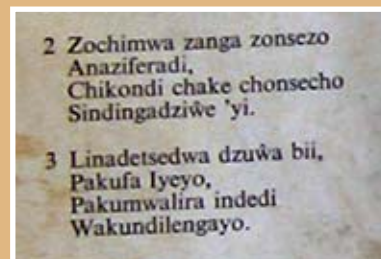
every word in the New Testament. In Malawi sometimes they never hear any more than a poorly qualified teacher says in a simple lesson. By reading the three chapters a week, the whole New Testament can be read in well under two years. Over the years this adds up to it being read many times over.

One last great break-through for the work is that now brother Chitsulo, my translator, is now conducting studies and filling in for me when I am not able to be at a study.

Publications

We have a book of sermon outlines written in Chichewa currently at the printer. They should be ready to go sometime early next week. The preachers here have nothing as far as reference books are concerned. I am so thankful for the brethren at home who want to see the preachers helped with printed materials. It is so important to the work here. May God bless you for your concern and help for these printed materials.

Hymns



Here is a photo of a couple of verses from one of the hymns we sing in our hymn books. The people do not read music here. All of their hymns are printed in a book with the words only. Their tunes and melodies are all from memory and passed on orally. Parts of the country might sing a different tune to the same words. The same tune might be used for several different songs. Although there is some semblance of four part harmony in some places, most everyone sings the same part as the leader.

My very busy season is scheduled to end in the first week of November. I will still be going to the churches, but not conducting studies. It is during this time that we prepare for the next season.

All continues to go well for Linda and me, and we are so thankful to have the chance to work with such wonderful brethren. The Lord has blessed us all.

DEBBIE'S EXPERIENCE

Bill and Daisy are moving out of Connie's flat which they have leased for the past year. They only frequent it a time or two a month and now that they have internet access in Milanje they feel it is time to let it go. Merry the housekeeper will be moving to her village. Daisy wanted to go see the new house she is building. So Merry, Aaron (gardener), Daisy and I took a little trip

this week in my little car which rides just a few inches off the road. Our little trip was ten miles. Probably eight of it was rocky mountainous dirt road. It took an hour and



a half approximately to drive those ten miles in my little car and at one point Daisy had to get out and direct me over layers of solid rock. An athletic person could have ran it faster. She and I found out we are not the athletic types after walking two and a half more miles up and down some pretty steep

hills the last bit of our jaunt. As a matter of fact, if someone would have volunteered to carry us a mile we would have gladly accepted. Merry put us to shame though because she was carrying 15 or 20 pound Christopher. Merry's whole family was there to greet us. Aaron was anxious to see where Merry's family would be living soon. Jobs are so scarce here. It is an uneasy time for the both of them as they prepare to finish their work at the flat and move on.

.....
Doug Edwards:
churchofchrist@broadbandmw.com
21st Street, OKC:
d_m_cutter@juno.com
Jerry Cutter:
ntchurchofchrist@africa-online.net
Green Oaks church of Christ:
jlnorton@tx.rr.com
.....