

the church of Christ in MALAWI

the warm heart of Africa!

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Doug's Report

I am not a loud-mouthed preacher. Long-winded sometimes, but certainly not loud in volume. While here in Malawi, I have had opportunities to preach to many large groups numbering in the hundreds. At one meeting east in Phalombe there were over 1,000 present. In the bush there are no microphones, no loud speakers, only the sheer volume of the human voice. The people all gather around the speaker, sitting on the ground close to him, but it still requires powerful lungs and a good diaphragm. Since I possess neither, my translators have to crank up their volume to make up for my weaknesses. We met our match back in December, though, at the Ntonya congregation near Zomba. This congregation meets in a school room. This particular school had been built with donor money from another country and was well built. The class room that we were in was covered with some of the best metal roofing sheets that I have seen over here. Metal roofing sheets make wonderful roofs, but they have one major problem. When it rains



extremely hard it becomes impossible to speak over the noise. All that you can hear is the roar of water hitting metal. I had just started to preach when it began to rain. Sometimes the rains seem to just suddenly start, pour "in buckets" or "cats and dogs" or whatever metaphor you prefer, and then suddenly stop. I was hoping that would be the case here. At first I tried to crank up the volume to compete with the rain but it was pretty obvious that

I was wasting my time. Hoping the rain would be short-lived I sat down to await its finish. Sure enough, there was a short lull in the action so Stephen and I jumped up and tried to start again. It's harder to jump start a sermon in mid stream than you might think. The rain quickly returned so again we took our seats. This time we tried to sing during the rain, thinking that at least one could hear himself singing in his own mind. It was difficult to even hear the singing of all who had gathered into this class room. Then the leaks started. The roof may have looked nice but it had a problem with a few leaks. I guess that Malawians are patient people. The drips would splatter around them and they wouldn't get up to move. They just sat there patiently, waiting for the rains to stop so we could continue the service. After about thirty minutes the heavens dried up, the scorching sun returned, and we completed our service.

A Special Day

Sunday, December 30, 2007, Lester Kasambwe and Mark Kandiwiri, were ordained to be preachers. The ordination was originally scheduled to take place at the Ndirande church building but it needed some repairs and the expected size of the crowd quickly outgrew it. So it was shifted to the building here at Blantyre. I knew this was going to be a pretty big event when Lester and some others went out Saturday morning to find firewood and food for feeding many visitors. Then, preachers started arriving on Saturday afternoon. By late afternoon ten to fifteen preachers were already here and some other folks had come in from out of town as well. They all slept in the church building that night.

The ordination was scheduled to take place immediately following the worship service. When I arrived I saw the familiar faces of many preachers. Some had come from as far away as Lilongwe (four hours driving time from Blantyre) and Balaka (two hours away). The Balaka group had even rented a lorry (truck) to bring them to Blantyre. After being asked to speak, I had decided to preach on the church leaders as described in Ephesians 4:11-12. Doing the Lord's work is a serious and honorable thing. I wanted the brethren to see that Jesus is the one who gave the work of preaching



and it is not some invention from man. During the invitation a young man came forward wanting to be baptized. How exciting is that!? Being able to view a baptism and an ordination on the same day! Baptism is a common occurrence here with the Blantyre congregation.

After the dismissal prayer we all sat down. Brother Stephen Kasenda came forward to be the preacher in charge of the ordination service. The Christians had decided to follow the examples of ordination as found in the book of Acts, with prayer, fasting, and laying on of hands. Several of us had started fasting on Saturday. Stephen explained the purpose of ordaining and called the

two men forward. They were asked to face the audience and then I led a prayer. After the prayer the two men knelt and several preachers gathered around them and placed their hands over them. Another prayer was led at that time. Then the remaining group of preachers came up and shook hands with Lester and Mark.

The baptism took place after the ordination. Blantyre has a baptistry in their pulpit so they can quickly and efficiently do their baptisms. Being able to witness a new birth was a fitting end for one of those special days in the kingdom of God.

Jerry & Linda



On December 24th Jerry and Linda received a call from her family with news that her father was on his death bed. Linda had been expecting this call ever since she arrived in Malawi. She knew with the state of his health that his body could not carry on in this world much longer. She made a trip home to see her family late September and was able to visit with her father Brother Melvin Crouch. It was thrilling to her that he should recognize her and be able to visit.

Jerry and Linda quickly got on the phone and arranged a flight to the states. She didn't anticipate being able to see him before he died, but she did want to be there for his funeral. The first flight out and only flight for the week was Wednesday afternoon from Blantyre. They took care of business at home as best as they could and drove all day Tuesday arriving here late afternoon. Despite the circumstances we had an enjoyable visit with them that evening.

Jerry and Linda left for the airport at noon Wednesday. Her father passed away at 11:15am Malawi time. Nearly 250 people gathered Friday afternoon, December 28th, to

pay their respects to a noble and gentle man. Obviously he was loved and honored by many people in the states and we would like to add to that number the thousands of people he has touched here in Malawi through his love for the word of God and desire for the whole world to know it. We do not know the numbers before we came but just in the short time that we have been here 80,000 tracts of his *Words of Life* have been printed in Chichewa and 20,000 in Lomwe. Brother Crouch not only wrote the pamphlet, he and Sister Crouch have paid for the printing. It has been a wonderful study help to the members of the Lord's church here.

It has been a tremendous blessing to have Jerry and Linda here in Malawi. We experienced the loss of parents many years ago, and we know the agony of separation from family by continents, but we have not had to face what she has. May the Lord bless and keep them as they spend time with their family and remember a strong Christian man.

Fellow Laborers



Our Thanksgiving week was so successful that we made plans to spend the next holiday with our fellow missionaries too. Doug and I had already given our workers the whole week and a half off the end of the year. So the holiday had to be spent here again so we could take care of the place. This time only the Davis family could make it or so we thought. Due to the passing of Linda's father, she and Jerry spent one night with us on their way to the states.

Daisy made her Heavenly Hash and Mrs. Upton's cake, I made my country breakfasts and Doug and Bill mowed the lawn. Anybody that knows me, knows that I always have a project. But when company comes it is usually a puzzle to put together or board games. Daisy suggested that we do a little upholstery project and put in some more padding and recover the chairs in the new guest room that she had donated. She soon found out that it wasn't such a "little" project but the reward was well worth all the effort. Bill and Doug even got a little "experience" from it.

We had a great week together eating, upholstering, and discussing the Bible.



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DEBBIE'S EXPERIENCES

What a Happy New Year!!! We were able to see and talk to our children New Year's Eve while they were at the Oklahoma New Year's Meeting via Skype on the computer. Marci Willis had her computer ready and Jonathan had his cell phone ready and between the two of them we heard the last thirty minutes of singing the old year out and the new year in. What a blessing! We were even able to conference in Bill and Daisy in Mozambique so they could listen with us.

New Year's Day is Amayi Kasenda's birthday. We invited their family over for lunch to celebrate. Brother Stephen and Amayi have four living daughters and nine grandchildren. I took this photo in front of our house. Amayi

and Stephen are in the middle; Amayi Kapyanga their oldest daughter is on the right with her youngest daughter Rachel in blue; behind her is Amayi Kapyanga's oldest child and the oldest grandchild, Phillip who is 17. To the left of him is Nicia their second oldest daughter; to the left of her is Jessie their only single child; and to her left Eliza the youngest. Collin in the blue sweater with Stephen and Spiwe in the white dress belong to Nicia; front left Maggie and Judith belong to Amayi Kapyanga; Stephen in black and his sister Ellen next to him belong their only son who is deceased and lastly is Akari who belongs to Eliza.

