

Doug's Report

February began with Bill and Daisy staying with us at Blantyre. Bill had been having some chest discomfort so he decided to go back to the U.S. and have it checked out. They left their vehicle here at the house and flew out of Blantyre. He has since been checked out by specialists who have found nothing wrong with his heart. That certainly is good news. He is scheduled to come back to Africa at the end of March.

We have finished all of our tracts and lessons for the upcoming year. They are currently at the printer. They should be ready by the middle of March. I wrote three simple tracts to distribute to the Christians this year. They are entitled: "From Heaven or From Men," "Becoming a Disciple of Christ," and "The Christian Family." I have ordered 30,000 copies of each tract and should exhaust the supply by about November.

I have also been able to spend some time with the leaders and interested brethren here at the Blantyre church. Over the last two months we have been able to study how to build a mature congregation.

Blantyre had a young man's service on Sunday afternoon, February 24th. They said it was the first one they had ever had. Debbie and I had been discussing it for a while since they had a lot of young men with many of them not being used in the services. So I presented the idea to the leaders and they agreed to have one. One young man was placed in charge of talking



with the young men and seeing if they wanted to participate. The response from the young men was overwhelming. I expected only a few would volunteer to do anything, but I was wrong! Approximately 15 wanted to participate.

Kennedy, the young man in charge of the program, began to go to each one and see what he wanted to do. He came back with a list showing that some wanted to lead songs, some give a Bible talk, some read the Scriptures, and one or two wanted to read a poem. I wasn't exactly sure about this last one. He also said that the group of young men wanted to sing a song at the conclusion of the service. Again, I wasn't too sure about that. I told him that if they wanted to sing something

or as we would say "dinner on the grounds." About 1:30 we all gathered back into the building. I was a little anxious to see how this would transpire. I must say that I was tremendously impressed with the work of all of the young men. Those who lead songs did well. The young men who spoke did well and they all watched their time! What impressed me most was two young men who stood up and quoted the Scriptures. One small boy quoted several passages from Psalms. Another young man stood up and quoted John 3:1-21. I don't know very many who quote long sections of Scripture, but these could. All in all, it was an exciting day. If these men continue their growth they will be good leaders for the church here in Malawi.

Keith and Anne Thomson from Australia are scheduled to arrive in Blantyre tomorrow for a visit. Jerry and Linda are supposed to come down on Monday. It will be good to see everyone.

together they would have to wait until the assembly was dismissed because this gathering was an assembly of the church and the rules of the assembly were to be followed. This, of course, meant no singing groups during the assembly. The church conducted its regular worship that morning and then broke for lunch. We had "nsima on the grounds,"



THE MALAWI BRETHERN

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

I am Mackson Johnathan Sankhulani. I was born in the year 1961 in February in the Village of Limbani T/A Nsamala Balaka. I am married to Aginess and in our family we have five children. I proposed her in the year 1996, before I married I was raised

by my grandmother who assisted me to grow up and she also helped me with school. She planted a flower in my mind that I should think about. While still at school I began studying the Bible. As I was a member of Zambezi Industrial Mission (Z.I.M.). One day I went to attend a funeral service of a member of the Church of Christ. The funeral message was preached by Preacher Chawawa of Chiradzulu District the message converted my life. Then the next Sunday I went to Zambezi Church to tell the members that I am out. I went to the Church of Christ and was baptized with Christ's baptism. Preacher Nicolas was at Nsimuke Church but he

lost his life in 1996, after he worked for many years. By the year 2000 Christians ordained me as their new preacher and since that time I am working with five congregations. I like my job very well and it helps me to read the words very often. Each church has the total number of about 60 Christians, the opportunity of preaching the words at their gatherings is offered to me. This thing is good for me as a preacher. We usually solve the church problems together as the sons of God. I wish all members of Christ here in Africa and overseas countries to grow in spiritual life. My the Lord bless all of you, Amen!



Jerry's Report

I have been able to finish the new articles to be used in the studies this year, and they have just this week been sent to Debbie Edwards in Blantyre for formatting into book form and submitting to the printers. The booklet will involve 44 pages.

Next week on Monday, March 3rd, we plan to go to Blantyre (450 miles south of here) to meet a preacher and his wife, Keith and Anne Thomson. They are from near Perth, Western Australia. Their plans are to arrive in Malawi March 1st and stay until the 25th. While here, Keith will work with Doug Edwards in a two day study in Blantyre, and then he has graciously agreed to go with me to Tanzania to help in what we hope will be a future work there. We will first fly from Blantyre on March 5th to Dar es Salaam and then continue from there to the city we will be working in. Our plans are, the Lord willing, to be in Tanzania until March 12th. While we are away, Linda and Anne Thomson will stay with the Edwards in Blantyre.

Keith and Anne plan to return with us to Mzuzu after Keith and I return from Tanzania, and will be here until their return to Australia on the 25th.

We are unable to travel into the bush because of the heavy rains. However, the brethren wanted us to go to a new congregation in the bush recently, and we soon found out why this was a big mistake, even on what was thought to be a good bush road. Now they are satisfied that in this area we cannot go into the bush during the rainy season. The Mzuzu area receives more rain than most areas

in Malawi, due to the elevation, nearness to Lake Malawi, and a little further over, the Indian Ocean. But, conversely, it is dry right now in southern Malawi, where most of the food is grown. As far as places to preach, in Mzuzu alone there are four small congregations. And last Lord's day we traveled to Mzimba, 100 miles west of here, to preach. After returning from Tanzania, we are scheduled to preach in the Karonga area 100 miles north of here, but, of course, in a congregation near the highway.

One of the vexing problems this time of the year is that many run out of food before the new harvest is ready. No one is starving to death, but some lack some of the staples, such as corn. We help those who come to us as much as we can, but we do not contribute to whole churches. Recently a preacher from about 100 miles north of here came with a list of every congregation in his area, and every member in those congregations. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of congregations in Malawi, and helping the poor must be done more on a personal level, simply because in all there are tens of thousands of members, and if each member received only \$10, it would soon run into the millions of dollars. And \$10 is only enough money to buy a 110 pound (50 kg) sack of corn, the Malawian's main food, which would last maybe three weeks for the average family. But, happily, it will change in about a month, as the harvest matures.

This is a good work, but not without its problems. Continue to pray for it and all of us.

Quoting Scripture



DEBBIE'S EXPERIENCE

This time of year seems to have a lot more sickness than usual. Five weeks in a row we have had a funeral among the members of the church here. I went to the hospital Monday to visit Martha. She had cooked for the preachers when we hosted a preacher's study here. They said she had Malaria, pneumonia and tuberculosis. Just pick one and that is enough. She was skin and bones. The hospital ward where she was staying was a large room, the paint on the walls was chipped and dirty, no screens on the windows, no curtains, wall to wall beds, mattresses on the floor between the beds, patients laying everywhere, family and friends standing

all around them, assaulting smells, sickness and death. Inhumane. Martha had no IV. No medicine. Family had to see to all her needs. She was incontinent. There is no place for family to stay, but they are required to be there to take care of the patient. They stay out on the lawn at night and bring their own provisions, because the hospital doesn't even provide meals or bedding for the patients. We walked forever just to get to her ward. We passed waiting areas for daily clinics. Crowds of people lining the walls waiting to get in to see the doctor or a medical personnel. Rooms with no electricity that looked like dark caves crammed full people in hopes of seeing a doctor. What can I say....it is a free hospital. We had to go through one ward to get to the next. I stepped on people accidentally, knocked over an IV pole. I leaned over her along with her sister and quietly said a little prayer for her in that massive room of sick people and their visitors. As I was leaving, in the next ward, I

was stopped by the loud shouting of a religious woman doing her daily visitation. She marched from bed to bed yelling her words of comfort and then took off in a breathless prayer with a stream of words at a volume that would wake the dead along with the sick laying every where. I waited until she finished before I passed through to make my exit. The length of her prayer put mine to shame. The whole ward seemed to sigh in relief when she finally said amen. I would rather die at home. Martha passed from this life this morning.

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