



As I prepare to leave Malawi I am packing my bags with many fond memories. The nice thing about memories is that the airlines cannot charge extra regardless of how many you have, nor do I have to worry about them being stolen or lost. This final report is some of the memories that are better than souvenirs from some tourist shop that we may have passed along the way.

Most of the villages and communities that I have visited have a loose form of government with a chief or head man that keeps things in order. The village chief is not an elected official, but rather he is the one who started the community or an heir of one who has started the community. Those who hold such a position are given respect by everyone in the community.

Most of the time when I visited a congregation out in the “bush” the village head man or chief (some times there is more than one head man) would attend the services. When the services were completed the congregation would always recognize the presence of such a figure and allow him to say a few words. The chief would always thank me for the visit, and tell me how much it meant to the community. Sometimes he would compliment the church for the good influence they had within the community. It was generally just a time for exchanging courtesies.



Jossam Muthowa, baptizing a village head man in the river near Balaka, Malawi

One day I was at a place called Chimbaleme. I remember it was one of those days when I was wondering, “Will we ever get there?” However, it was well worth the time. A crowd of people had gathered together under a brush arbor to sing praises and to hear the Word taught. It is moments like that I am encouraged to give my very best. When the services were over the brother in charge thanked people for attending and then turned to recognize the village head man. His name was Phillip Chimpikizo.

Mr Chimpikizo went through the normal greetings, and then he turned and said, “I have never heard the Bible explained so clearly. I would like to become a member of this church.”

In a few minutes I was seated at his side in a more personal conversation. This was the first time he had ever visited an assembly of the church. He had his Chechewan Bible in his hands. I turned to passages of Scripture for him to read, and then I explained them to him. In about thirty minutes we were headed to the river for him to be baptized.



Here I am standing with Phillip Chimpikizo, my new brother in Christ

## Translating . . .

The man to your right is brother Jossam Muthowa. He has had to put up with me almost every day for the last ten weeks. Only a select few of you out there know what that is really like. (Mike or Alan, if you need this brother's address to send him a sympathy card just call me) Brother Muthowa is a gospel preacher, and he was my translator while I was in Malawi.



Brother Muthowa was forced to listen to my grumbling about the roads we had to drive on each day to get to our studies or preaching engagements. He may actually have been thankful for the bad roads, because his life flashed before him several times on the good roads. When we were late getting to a destination he would have to put up with my accusing question, "Why didn't we start sooner?" His defense was usually that he had not been to that place in a car—only on his bicycle. Sometimes this brother will leave on Saturday morning to bicycle to an area, arrive that afternoon, spend the night, preach on Sunday, and then return home on his bicycle on Monday.

My West Virginia brogue and strange mountain idiomatic expressions left him clueless at times when he was translating for me. Our days were long (often 12 to 14 hrs) and both of us would be weary. His day was definitely more difficult since he was translating for me.

In the few short weeks we were together we developed a

bond of friendship that is lasting. I respect him for his integrity and his love of the Truth. He has proven himself to be a tireless worker in the Lord's kingdom.



Jossam Muthowa with his charming wife, Annie, and their four children.

## The Chapel Bells Were Ringing . . .

Marty and I were invited to a wedding in Lilongwe. Although we did not know the couple getting married, the family insisted that we come. It was a pleasant experience.



We did not have everything being translated so we sort of filled in some of the ceremony with our imagination of what was being said.

We did not stay for the reception because we had church service in another area to attend.

## Reunion . . .

My good friend and brother, Roy Siansobanda, came over from Lusaka, Zambia while we were in Lilongwe. I first met Roy three years ago when Mike Criswell and I travelled to Zambia to conduct some studies and hold some meetings. Roy is a gospel preacher and a top-notch translator. My son Isaac refurbished a laptop computer for Roy. The cost of electronics is outrageous in these African countries. Roy gives a "thumbs-up" to you Isaac for the time you took to make this computer with all of the Bible programs and study helps.

