



Farewell to Jim & Marlene Franklin

On June 29th, Jim and Marlene Franklin flew out of the Blantyre airport on their way to establishing a new home in Lebanon, Missouri. Their leaving marks an end to another chapter in the history of the Lord's work in southern Africa. They first came to Malawi on the 25th of May, 1991, intending to stay for three years. However, months turned into years and the next thing you know fourteen years had passed.

The Franklins came at a critical time in the work. Confusion and division were rampant, threatening to destroy the unity of the Lord's body. Jim determined to visit as many churches as he could, preaching the simple gospel of Jesus Christ and making a concentrated effort to stem the tide of division. It was certainly no easy task. From his home in Blantyre, Jim estimates that he drove over a million kilometers strengthening and encouraging the Christians. He no doubt has preached to tens of thousands of Christians during this time. Two brethren, Davidson Kasambwe and Stephen Kasenda, accompanied him on most of these trips. Jim would describe these brethren as invaluable to his work. Often leaving very early in the morning, these three would drive to a church and conduct a meeting, and then drive home arriving after dark. They would then repeat the same process the next morning. Those who think that missionary work is a vacation in some exotic



land should have spent a little time with Jim.

A word about Jim's wife, Marlene, is necessary here. No man could do this work without a supporting, helpful wife. The missionary's wife is one who carries a huge load in doing the work. She often stays home, holding the fort down, and spending many lonely hours by herself while her husband is on the road. There is no doubt that Jim could not have remained in Malawi without Marlene's help. Wives, especially make sacrifices leaving family and home behind. The wise man reminds us that a virtuous woman is far greater than any wealth we could accumulate. Marlene will be greatly missed by her music students here in Malawi. She spent many hours teaching violin to children of expatriots from many parts of the world.

The Malawi brotherhood is now united. For that we praise God. To the Franklins we say, "Job well done." They plan to retire in Lebanon, Missouri living next door to their son Terry and his family. Jim says he wants to go fishing. For some reason I think that he will be very busy during his "retirement." God bless the Franklins for their service to the cause of Christ.

Meet Muthowa

Meet your brother Jossom Chimzimu Muthowa, a young man who has worked as a gardener for the Franklins for the past two years and three months. He lives in a community called BCA Hill and rides his bicycle at full throttle for 45 minutes every day to work. Muthowa is hard working and conscientious about his duties with an infectious smile.

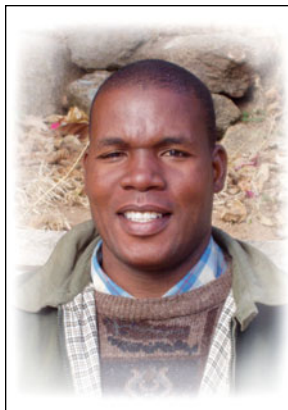
Muthowa is married to Anni and they have four children, Patrick, 11; Timothy, 9; Alice, 5; and Chifuniro, 4 months. He worships and works with the Bangwe congregation. He was raised by his uncle, Smart Bithoni, who taught him about the Lord.

Muthowa currently attends a business school where he is taking computer classes. He will soon be typing our Chichewa studies into the computer for printing purposes and recording other documents. We desperately need to develop printed material for our brotherhood and Muthowa will be a great asset for this work.



REPORT FROM THE MALAWI BRETHREN

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



George Mpasu Kimu is a preacher of the gospel from the Mpemba congregation. Born March 29, 1965, he is from Somba Village, Traditional Authority: Somba in Blantyre

District. Brother Kimu is married to Christine with whom he has four children: Margret, Edward, Elida and Jonathan.

I obeyed the gospel of Christ in 1981 and was baptized at Blantyre church of Christ thereby becoming a member of the church. Since that year, I developed a desire to preach the Word of God and in 1990 I opened up a church at Somba Village.

In 1991, I started accompanying Brother D. C. Kasambwe and Brother S. D. Kasenda whenever they were going out preaching to different places so that I should get the necessary experience, but also to know more about the work of God so that I should become a preacher.

In 1992, I became a full time preacher of the gospel after being encouraged by Bro. Kasambwe, Bro. Kasenda and Bro. Jim Franklin.

To date I am working with 28 congregations of which 7 are located in Msanje District, 6 in Chikwawa District, 5 in Thyolo District and 10 in Blantyre District.

In the year 1999, Bro. Jim Franklin talked to Bro. Ronnie Wood so that I should be assisted with a motor cycle in a way of easing my traveling since I have twice been operated.

Currently I am encouraged because there are five young preachers who have come out of these congregations and I do encourage them and teach them so that we should be helping one another in this job.

May the Lord bless His work here in Malawi.

Doug's Report

We arrived in Blantyre, on the 28th of May, where Debbie, Jonathan, and I were warmly greeted by Jim Franklin and several of the Malawi brethren. They immediately drove us to the house where we were greeted by several other Christians. It was finally good to be on African soil. For some reason the last month of preparing to depart is full of stress, problems, and tearful goodbyes.

We spent our first Sunday worshipping with the Blantyre congregation. A large crowd gathered on that occasion to welcome us. Malawi has a slogan: "Malawi - The Warm

Heart of Africa." It is a slogan that is well earned because the people, for the most part are warm and friendly. The Christians have been especially good to us. It was after this worship service that we were formally introduced to the brethren and I made a short

speech concerning our work.

During our second week here, Jim, Jonathan, some brethren and I took a trip to the northern part of Malawi. We left at 4:00am one morning and drove to Karonga, arriving around 4:00pm. Early the next morning we drove to a little congregation on the Malawi - Zambia - Tanzania borders. It took about four hours of driving over some of the roughest roads imaginable, but the trip was worth it. The congregation meets on the top of a mountain with other mountains surrounding it. It was a beautiful sight. Our mission was a combination of a "hello - goodbye" tour. Jim said goodbye to these people and I had the opportunity to meet them. The brethren warmly greeted us and we enjoyed the short time we had together. After



the meeting we descended the four hours back down the mountain to where we spent the night.

We made three more stops during the next three days to visit brethren. It is difficult for us to imagine the number of congregations currently meeting in Malawi. There are literally churches from the extremely northern end all the way down to the extreme southern end, and every where in between. We drove to a town called Mzuzu and spent a few nights there, visiting the churches in that area. It was a good trip for me seeing the churches in the northern region. They are so far away that I will not be

able to visit them very often, but I certainly do not want to forget them. We arrived home about 7pm Friday evening, exhausted, but excited about the work.

I have also spent a week here in Blantyre setting up bank accounts and learning the ropes on how to

get around in town. I had forgotten the difficulties of driving on the 'wrong' side of the road. I think that some of the Malawian's will no doubt scatter for safety when they see me coming down the road.

We will spend the month of July visiting the churches and introducing ourselves to the brethren. Our preachers' studies begin the first week of August and will continue throughout the rest of the year. I am really looking forward to working with the preachers as that is one major reason for my coming. I plan to have studies with as many of them as I can during the time we are here. Brethren are currently translating my notes into Chichewa so that I can pass them out during these studies.

JONATHAN'S EXPERIENCE

Debbie and I were happy to have Jonathan spend our first summer with us in Malawi.

I have taken communication and culture courses at the University of Oklahoma so coming to Malawi was supposed to be a breeze. Well the rose tinted glasses have come off, been stepped on, and run over by a semi-truck. I have learned more than any college course ever taught me and I've only been in Africa one month!

My outlook on this experience is a love-hate relationship. I love certain parts of this summer and I hate certain parts of

it. I have fallen in love with the church in Malawi. The joy of every Christian, the power of the Gospel, and the potential for the church here is simply amazing. I give God glory for all He has done.

However, the darker side to being a missionary is that I miss my family and friends a lot more than I thought I would. It is very tough and sometimes leaves me emotionally drained. The conclusion I have reached is that I will some day be a full time missionary with a grasp on the reality of the sacrifices that will come along with the responsibility.

Thank you to the home front.

One of the key blessings of doing foreign work is the relationship that develops between Christians and churches. Foreign work is a shared work, involving the preacher and his family and the churches back home. The preacher is usually in the forefront, but he knows that he could do nothing without the help, support, and cooperation of the churches at home. Paul described this cooperative effort in evangelism when he said, "for we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building" (I Cor. 3:9).

I feel very fortunate to be able to work with the Green Oaks congregation from Arlington, Texas in helping the Malawi work. These brethren have been extremely helpful and encouraging to me. As a congregation, they conduct their work in a professional businesslike manner, which I greatly appreciate. I feel certain they stand ready to assist this work in whatever capacity they can fulfill. It was no easy task that they voluntarily assumed. They, too, love this work and want to see it progress.

Of course there are other congregations and interested people who assist in this great work. No single congregation could shoulder the work that goes on here. I am not able to name every congregation and every individual that supports this work, but God certainly knows who you are and makes record of your love for the truth.

I am also appreciative of all the hard work of previous preachers and their families. My respect for these brethren grows everyday, and they have left me some mighty big shoes to fill. I can only imagine the sacrifices they must have made. They have laid a great foundation for us to build upon. *Truly, the Malawi work is a total team effort.*



Now don't think I am not enjoying myself. This summer is going to be unforgettable. I strongly recommend any young man or woman who is interested in being a missionary or missionary's wife to spend a month or the summer outside the United States. It will change your life for the better, and you will appreciate every blessing God has ever given you.