

the church of Christ in **MALAWI** the warm heart of Africa!

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# Doug's Report

## THE 2005 PREACHER STUDIES IN SUMMARY . . .

While returning home from a preachers' study in Balaka brother Davidson Kasambwe remarked, "The Lord has blessed us this year." I certainly had to agree with him. Our weekly studies with the preachers throughout Malawi have come to an end and as we reflect upon the year it is obvious the hand of God has touched our work.

The studies started a week later than originally planned because of the death of Sophie Kasambwe during the first day of the first study here in Blantyre. Sophie is Davidson's daughter who was actually translating for me in a study when one of his sons came in to tell him that Sophie has passed out. We postponed the study until the end of the month and replaced the one scheduled for the end of August until the end of November. I will write more about that study on the next page.

We scheduled fifteen four day studies. Most of them were within a two hour drive from Blantyre. Three of the studies were long distances from Blantyre requiring that I stay overnight at motels or rest houses. Three of the studies were at Blantyre with preachers coming here to spend the four days. The Blantyre studies were especially difficult on the visiting preachers. We were having water rationing during this time with the water being turned off on Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the day hours. We tried to store as much water as we could for the off days but still there were problems because of no water. The preachers slept in the building during these studies.



Preachers from the Thyolo District attending a study in Blantyre

Brother Jim Crouch was with us for three of these studies and his work was greatly appreciated.

Our goal was to study with as many preachers as we could before the rainy season started. We were able to study with preachers from the northern area of Mzuzu all the way down to the southern area of Nsanje. We prepared one thousand booklets of outlines of each study for distribution. Today we have about one hundred left so we were able to study with approximately nine hundred preachers and church leaders.

I had three goals in mind that I wanted to accomplish in these studies. First, I wanted to meet the preachers and visit the areas they work in. There are almost six hundred men listed as preachers and so it is almost impossible for me to remember all of their names and faces. Remembering names is one of my biggest weaknesses and when it is an African name it becomes even more difficult. I am beginning to recognize faces now, although I still have trouble with their homes. Second, I wanted to help the brethren with a general understanding of the Bible. The study on

the scheme of redemption was prepared to serve as a survey of the Old and New Testament. I wanted the preachers to leave these studies having a better understanding of the Bible as a whole than when they first came. I guess that only time will tell if this goal was achieved.

The third goal was to make Bibles and hymnbooks available to the preachers and church leaders at a price they could easily afford. During this time we distributed 1,027 Bibles and more than 2,200 hymnbooks. Brother Davidson was correct--the Lord has blessed us.

## Meet Spellina Sambalopa

Sister Spellina Sambalopa is a member of the Lord's church at Blantyre. She is the fourth born to Bro. Davidson Kasambwe. Sister Sambalopa helped to prepare many meals for the preachers during three studies that were held in the Blantyre area the past several months. She was one of several ladies that learned how to make the communion bread with Debbie and now takes her turn preparing the loaf for the Blantyre congregation.



## REPORT FROM THE MALAWI BRETHREN

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

*White Chafikana Kaiwe is a preacher from one of three Ndirani congregations in the Blantyre area.*

I was born on 14th April in 1948 at Mphulanya Village Traditional

He died in 1970 at Mphulanya Village. I am the third of five children.

I attended primary school at Mwangi F.P. School. In 1970 I married Mage Paika and we have six children.

I became a church leader at Blantyre church in 1976. I became a preacher of the gospel in 1990 and I established a faithful congregation at Ndirande area, Blantyre District. I have established faithful congregations in various places such as Blantyre, Thyolo, Mulanje, Zomba, Ntcheu, Chiradzulu and Phalombe Districts. I am presently living at Matope Village in Blantyre.



Authority Mkanda Mulanje District. I was baptized into Christ in 1960 at Mphulanya church. I obeyed the gospel under the preaching of Johane Wamulova who was my grandfather.

# A Day at a Preachers' Study

In a previous article I wrote about a typical day's outing on a Sunday. In this article I would like to write about a typical day at one of the Preachers' studies.

Mornings begin early here in Malawi. The sun starts trying to peak over the horizon at around 4:45 am. In the States I am not usually an early riser preferring to stay up later into the night. Here, however, I find myself getting up with the chickens. Last week the study was at Balaka which is about an hour and a half driving time from Blantyre. I would get up by 5:00, shower, read and write a few e-mails and try to study a little. Debbie usually had breakfast ready by 6:30 and one of the preachers and I would hit the road at 7:30.

We usually arrived in Balaka at 9:00 am. There were 48 preachers gathered for this study. I would shake hands with most of them upon arrival and then some of them would carry the Bibles, hymnbooks, tracts, study notes and my ice chest into the building. One would think that I was moving if he looked into the back of the vehicle.

November in Malawi is very hot. The first day or two of this study I felt like a Thanksgiving Turkey basting in the oven. Fortunately, this study was in a town and the building had electricity so the brethren supplied us with a small rotating fan. I had never thought that hot air stirred up could feel so good.

During the morning I conducted two different

study sessions on the scheme of redemption. I would talk for a little bit and then ask a question. At the end of the study I allow a time for questions and answers. I try to keep them on the subject at hand, but sometimes that proves to be a little difficult. Some questions are common at each study, like "Where did Cain get his wife?" Others were a little more original, like "What did David do with the four stones after he killed Goliath?" Can anybody out there help me with that one!

We usually broke for lunch at about 12:30. I normally brought something from home to munch on. Some days I had bread and peanut butter. Now there's a feast for a king! On other days I might have some bread and cold fried chicken.

My translator usually ate with me while the brethren would eat their nsima.

I only conducted one study in the afternoon at Balaka. It was so hot everyone was miserable and I also wanted to be back in Blantyre before dark. The sun goes down at about 6:00 pm and it is not a good idea to drive around in Malawi after dark.

I usually would arrive home late in the afternoon exhausted from the drive. I cannot explain the driving conditions to those who have never experienced Malawi. Debbie says that I would arrive home to an old grouch but she is actually my sunshine at the end of a hard day.



## Dressed in Sunday Best



Like moms at home, Malawian moms love to dress their little ones up for church. The children of Malawi are precocious and full of surprises. One Sunday at a service in the bush during the contribution a little girl, less than two years old, slowly walked toward the front where we were sitting. I watched her meander up to us and wondered what she was going to do. She reached out and put a coin in my hand for the contribution and then walked back to her mom. I was very moved by her innocence.



## DEBBIE'S EXPERIENCE

The first of November I helped Christina Kimu prepare a cake for her 20th Anniversary celebration. It was enough cake to feed 300 guests that Saturday afternoon. Anniversaries, showers, and weddings are very important just as at home, but celebrated quite differently. We arrived a little early to the community room to set the cake up. Chairs had already been set in place with an aisle down the center. Streamers of ribbon and various papers were draped across the ceiling with an arch at the first row of chairs. Up front was a love seat couch flanked on each side and behind with folding chairs. At one side was the cake and the other the audio equipment that blasted music very loudly throughout the whole afternoon. Just before the chairs up front on each side was a table set up with empty baskets.

The happy couple arrived dressed in full wedding attire; she in a white full length wedding dress and he in a tailormade suit which matched that of the groomsmen. They arrived in vehicles then came in a procession from the back and up the aisle to their special seats in front. Joyful and deafening music exploded from the front corner. First to slowly shuffle in was the preacher, Bro. Kasenda, and his wife who were called the Leaders in Procession. Everyone in the wedding party slowly followed with a little two step shuffle down the aisle (some did more than a two step). Following the preacher was the Kimu's grand-



daughter who was flower girl, their youngest son who was Stick Boy (holding a staff), oldest daughter and her escort, then oldest son and his escort all dressed like they were wedding attendants. Next came the Minibride and her escort dressed in a white bridal gown followed by their second daughter dressed in white as a junior flower girl. Then came two Ladies in Waiting with their escorts and finally the Chief Lady in Waiting and her escort. These ladies and their husbands are closest friends of the couple. At last came the anniversary couple dressed as bride and groom down the aisle.

We had an opening prayer led by Doug and after that nothing resembled an anniversary celebration that I had ever attended. The loud music

rarely stopped. A master of ceremony had a microphone and would announce it was time for various groups or individuals (anyone wearing a jacket or anyone married more than ten years, a friend of the bride etc.) to shuffle forward and throw their money to the bride and groom. At times the couple would sit and then stand and we would throw money. I had quizzed someone a few days ahead to see what the protocol was and discovered that instead of gifts we take money to this type of event. Jim Crouch, Doug and I determined ahead of time how much we were planning to give and got that much in small bills so we would have plenty to throw. We threw money off and on all afternoon. I have to say Doug and Jim may have thought they were shuffling, but it wasn't evident from the outside. We learned quickly that the table set up on the sides with baskets were to collect the money thrown and to make change for those who wanted to turn large bills into many small bills. The grand finale was the cake. It was cut and each piece was sold to the highest bidder.

We have a nephew, Brent Dalto, getting married in January and suggested to him that he might want to start a new tradition in America.

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