

the church of Christ in MALAWI

the warm heart of Africa!

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Doug's Report

What is the old saying, "March comes in like a lamb and goes out like a lion?" (I may have the order reversed. If I do, please allow for poetic license or ignorance!) In the States we use that expression to describe the weather, here in Malawi we use it to describe the beginning stages of the year's work. The rains slow down and we start going out again. We will now be keeping the roads hot until December.

On March 6-7 a small group of English speaking brethren met at our house for a Bible study in English. Last year we only had about eight and this year we had fourteen. Our study this year was a survey of the Old Testament. I photocopied some studies, put them in a booklet, and gave a copy to each man. The weather cooperated and we were able to meet on our porch. I enjoy this study because I get to do it without a translator and also I am able to see who can speak English well. Good translators are pretty rare so it always good to keep an eye open for anyone who may be able to help at some future date.

On Saturday the 10th, Debbie, Davidson, Stephen and I drove up to Dwangwa, about six hours driving time north of Blantyre. We spent that night in a rest house in the middle of a sugar estate. Entering the sugar estate is almost like entering a small country. There is a gate at the entrance and you must clear security before you can enter. Once inside you discover that you are surrounded by thousands of acres of sugar cane. The sugar company provides everything their employees need so the people do not have venture out much. Inside the sugar estate are schools,

banks, stores, hospitals, churches, and housing communities. On Sunday we visited one of the small congregations that meets within the estate. That afternoon we drove on up to Mzuzu to spend a couple of days with Jerry and Linda. Debbie discusses our visit in her article.

During the week of March 19th. I met with the Blantyre area preachers for a study. We had thirty men gather for this study. This was my first time to go over the material that I prepared for this year.



Consequently, I was a little apprehensive about how the studies would be received. Our morning sessions

deal with the Christian family and our afternoon sessions deal with a verse-by-verse study of the book of James. Each year I try to build on the foundation of studies from the previous years. As you well know, lessons on the home are very important in the States. With so many cultural changes taking place it is vital to constantly remind ourselves of God's plan for the home. Well, that same thing is true in Malawi as well. Lessons on marriage, and the role of men, women, and children within the family are valuable here as well. Another great need that I see among the preachers is that of learning to think and study the Bible contextually. That is where the study of the book of James comes in. I am hoping that as we go through this short epistle that brethren will see the value of contextual study. These initial studies help me to see where I can improve them in communicating with the brethren. I

still have a little work to do in smoothing out some rough spots.

These studies are the highlight of my work here in Malawi. It gives me great satisfaction to see brethren growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. I thank God for the opportunity to serve here and also thank the generous brethren there at home for your assistance. May God bless you for your interest in Malawi.

Meet Bro.
Harrison
Kamtedza



Brother Harrison Kamtedza is a leader at the Zolo Zolo West congregation in Mzuzu. He was born in November of 1963 in Zomba in the southern region of Malawi. His father was a member of the church of Christ, and Brother Kamtedza was baptized in 1975. He and his wife, Eunice, moved to Mzuzu in 1985, and nine children were born of that marriage. In 2004, Brother Kamtedza established the congregation at Zolo Zolo West in Mzuzu, and there are currently 25 members, not counting children, which are many, attending that congregation. In addition to preaching at the Zolo Zolo West congregation, he also preaches at other congregations. In 1999 Brother Kamtedza received a certificate in gardening from Bunda College, and his current occupation is gardener at our house here in Mzuzu. - Jerry

THE MALAWI BRETHREN

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



Brother Daitone Jonasi is a preacher from the Kazuni area of the Mzimba District in northern Malawi. He was born in 1959 in the Mulanji District in southern Malawi, baptized in 1981, and began preaching in 1986. He moved to the Mzimba District in 1980, and he currently oversees two congregations. Brother Jonasi and his wife Maria have seven children. He recently came to



our house requesting assistance because his house had burned, and they lost much of their possessions.-Jerry

Bro. Dymon Dafter Edson of Njale church was born in 1960. He and his wife have seven children. They also raise grandchildren whose parents

have passed away. "At present I am working with the churches that are within close distance of me. I preach the gospel, baptize people, encourage the churches to be united and assist the poor. I ask God to be with us all the time so that His work should be going on well. Thank you."



Bro. Cedrick Dickson Lipenga was born January 1, 1952. He and his wife have seven children and six grandchildren. "I was baptized in 1981 in August at Gotha church of Christ in Thyolo District. During that time I was not a lazy Christian. I worked hard. I have been a preacher since 1993 and I currently work with six churches. Very soon I will establish a new congregation. I like the work and I ask God to be with me and bless His work."

Bro. S. T. Kaipa was born March 3, 1939. He has twelve members in his family which includes two grandchildren.



He was baptized in 1960 and began preaching in 1973. "At this present time, I work with six churches: Soda, Mitawa, Nankhombe, Mulambe, Nankwali and Nankwali 2. Every week I preach the gospel and I ask God for His blessings to be with these churches."

Jerry's Report

The schedule for the annual studies has now been set up. Initially, I am being asked to conduct 15 three-day studies, covering a very wide area. I am scheduled to go as far as 300 miles to the southwest and 200 miles to the north. Also, I am scheduled for Sunday preaching through October, with a few breaks. The new pickup was in Durban, South Africa, last week, and will be shipped from there to Beira, Mozambique, and from there to Blantyre. We believe it will be in Blantyre by next week. This pickup was made in Japan according to United Nations' standards and is absolutely necessary for this work because it is a four-wheel drive that can maneuver over the bush roads. There are some roads here in Mzuzu that my car cannot go over. Three weeks ago we tried to go to Zolo Zolo West congregation in Mzuzu, and at one place six men had to literally pick up the front end of the car in order to get over a big rut washed out by the rains.

The rains are unrelenting in this part of Malawi. Rains make it a pleasant place to live, but very difficult for travel to the bush. In this area (Mzuzu), the rains last longer than farther south. It has rained several inches in the last two days.

I have previously mentioned that my lessons on Acts and on What The Bible Says About... were edited and being printed. They are now printed, but I have not seen the lessons in booklet form. Doug reports that they look very nice. The 14 lesson series on Acts 1-11 involve a booklet of about 64 pages, and the seven lessons on fundamental and foundational subjects involve about 55 pages. I will mention that these lessons are not just for Africa, but may be and are being used in other places around the world. The notes are on the computer and are free for the asking. The above



We took this picture because it is fascinating what Malawians carry on their bicycles. We took the picture of this bicyclist in the mountains while traveling to Mzuzu, and he has stacked on his bicycle 34 pieces of wood which, we assume, he is taking to the Mzuzu market many, many miles from this area to sell. There are forests in northern Malawi, and wood is supplied for building and for cooking all over Malawi.

lessons can be used for private studies, home studies, correspondence courses, and for lessons in the church. I would like to believe anyone high school age and over could benefit from them. They were written with my own youth in mind. As a young teacher and preacher, I had no mentor. I felt I needed more help than I was able to receive, and would have welcomed something in written form about the Bible, what we believe, and why. Also, as an older and, hopefully, mature preacher, it is my hope and prayer that I can leave something useful for future generations.

Recently a friend wrote and asked several questions about the book of Romans. I have a little time before the studies here begin, so I have decided to write some notes and my understanding of the book of Romans. I never thought I would attempt it, but I figure after more than 50 years of preaching, studying, and sometimes teaching Romans, that I should be able to at least put some thoughts into writing. Three years ago I was asked to give an overview of Romans 9-11 at the Preachers' Study. So I have studied those chapters already. I already have notes of various kinds on chapters 1-8, so I am going to try to write it all up into one continuous study. I have done a brief introduction, and have completed chapters two and three. I am not writing a commentary. However, it will be a structured writing. I will happily send my finished notes to anyone. The above will let you know what I do "in my spare time." I also have other works on Ephesians, chapters 1-4 (the doctrinal section), and an overview of John, presented at the Preachers' Study a few years ago. If we return safely from here 18 months from now, I will gladly, free of charge, come to any church in the world and

Tradition with a Capital T

Malawians as a general rule are very formal when it comes to greetings and protocol. Because of modern culture in the States we are quite impressed when a child says "yes sir or no sir" or a stranger says "good morning". Quite the contrast, in the city of Blantyre you will find even the more modern type people are very respectful to one another in greetings and hold tight to formality. A "How are you?" greeting to every person you meet (cashier included) is just plain good manners. If you meet three people at once, you must ask the well being of each, not leaving anyone out. Young and old alike will give a little bow or curtsy while putting their hands together as they acknowledge the presence of someone they hold in respect.

This past Sunday we were surprised at a show of respect that neither of us had witnessed before. A baby was fussing quite a bit and finally the flustered mother gave in to gathering him up and stepping across several other women to take him out. As she finally got to the aisle before turning to leave, she turned to the front and gave a little bow (could it have been an apology?) and quickly exited the building. After worship services, people come up to the front to buy Bibles and hymn books. Many times the women will come to the front and get down on their knees and look down until it is their turn to make a purchase. That particular day an older sister wrapped in her traditional garments slowly made her way up the aisle careful not to disturb anyone. She finally got to the front and bent down on her knees just as someone else bought the last Bible.

teach on any one of the above books.

We have had a traumatic month, but Linda is well on her way to recovery from her burns. One of our pups died unexpectedly, and the reason of death is unknown, even though the carcass was carried to Lilongwe for a special examination. As a result of not knowing, Doug, Debbie (they were here helping us as Linda's accident had just happened) and Linda are now taking rabies shots. Many, many prayers have been answered. Also, for the many words of encouragement in the form of emails and telephone calls, we send thanks. -Jerry

DEBBIE'S EXPERIENCE

Doug and I were able to visit Jerry and Linda for a few days the first part of March. They live eight hours from us so we won't get to be together as often as we would like. Doug was scheduled to speak at a little church in the middle of a huge sugar estate that morning only two hours from their house. It is always so good to get to be with them and get rejuvenated. We were so shocked to see Linda and the extent of the burns she suffered from a pressure cooker accident. She was bandaged across the chest, neck and upper arms and peeling from the lips down the neck and lower arms. She has been able to receive good care from a private doctor although she had to carry along her own medicine. It was a very trying time for the two of them and a realization of how limited the medical care is in Mzuzu. By now she is doing much better.

The day after we arrived their little Missy (the white puppy on the right) was not perky and didn't eat her breakfast. She became listless and despondent as the morning went on. I assumed she had eaten something that didn't settle and maybe it was poisoning her system. By afternoon she was drooling so Linda and I (I handled her because of Linda's burns) took her to the vet clinic (which has



no vet) and had her checked out by an assistant there. She had a fever and they discovered worms so they gave her medicine for both and sent her home. She did not get any better and by the evening had separated herself from us and didn't want us near. When I approached her to pick her up, she bit me (hardly a bite more like a scratch) on the knee. So we left her to herself. She continued to go down hill and finally died the next evening.

Then started the quandary about what actually killed her. Was it poison, parvo, the medicine, or could it have been rabies? We talked to my vet in Blantyre and Linda's doctor who both advised us to get the rabies vaccines. We took her little carcass to Lilongwe the next day on our way home and dropped it at the national veterinary headquarters lab. I was not pleased with what I saw. I received a phone number to call to get the results. The first test they ran was negative, but they have to do a follow

up test with suckling mice which takes three weeks. We were told to go forward with the shots. Finally a young technician I was able to get on the phone said they regretted that they did not have the means to do the mice test so it was not performed. We never have been able to find out what she died from. It has been almost three weeks now. We had our fourth shot yesterday, but still no test results. So we will take all five shots (in the arm).

From what I understand the rabies vaccine has a shelf life of six months so all hospitals do not carry it. We were able to find it at three hospitals here in Blantyre. We chose the cheapest one and convinced them to let us buy it and ship it over night in a cooler to Linda since her doctor could not find it there.

Buster, Missy's brother has done fine. Linda said he is lonesome.

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