

the church of Christ in MALAWI

the warm heart of Africa!

Vol. 3 Num. 12

DECEMBER 2007



Doug's Report

Greetings from Malawi. November now has come and gone. I was able to conduct two preachers' studies in November, and that brings an end to the studies for this year. The rains have slowly arrived, brethren are working in their gardens, and the roads in some places are getting muddy and treacherous. These all combine to slow down our travels.

My first study in November was at a congregation called New Stage, which is about 45 minutes southeast of Blantyre. There were about 30 men who attended, making it one of smallest studies for the year. There was some sadness to this meeting as one of the leaders of the congregation had passed away just a few months before the study. As in the States, when a faithful leader passes away it greatly affects the congregation. My second study was at the Saiti congregation just north of Zomba. It was about an hour and a half north of Blantyre. This was my first opportunity to study with these brethren. It proved to be an exciting study, at least to me, because of the fact that every one was new to it. A few of the men had been to other studies, but for the most part, most of them were attending a study for the first time. Approximately fifty men attended the study. I felt a little twinge of sadness at the conclusion of the study because I knew that we were finished for the year.

As I look back on 2007 it was a very busy



and profitable year. I was able to conduct 24 studies at different locations throughout central and southern Malawi. We started in March and finished up in November. With Jerry and Linda living in Mzuzu, he was able to take care of the central and northern areas as well. There are so many congregations as well as preachers and leaders that it is physically impossible to reach them all in a year.

We have close to 700 men registered as preachers. Before we moved to Malawi I thought that it might be possible to conduct two different studies at the same place during the year. During my first year I realized very quickly that this plan would not work. The preachers are scattered throughout Malawi making it very difficult to see them all in a year. So I had to scale down to one study per year at each location. The perfect situation would be to meet with each group of preachers several times a year, but that is not possible.

This year I printed 1,500 copies of the outlines notes for the studies. I have only a handful left. Local teachers and church leaders

came to these studies as well. We are glad to have them and happy to study with as many as we can.

Educating the brethren in the word of God is a slow and challenging job. Some of the brethren do not have Bibles and some have difficulties with reading. Fortunately, we have kind and generous souls at home who help us distribute Bibles. If a preacher does not have a Bible now it is his fault. It will take a few years of continual teaching of first principles to ground these brethren in the faith. It is a challenge but also a privilege to teach the word of God in Malawi.

2007 was a good year for distributing Bibles, hymn books and literature. I printed three different tracts (40,000 of each) and now only a few remain. We also distributed 1,000's of Bibles and hymn books throughout the country as well. Lord willing, we will do the same next year.

We had a wonderful week at Thanksgiving with Jerry and Linda being able to come down from Mzuzu and Bill and Daisy coming over from Mozambique. Thanksgiving is such a family time and being away from home brings a lot of loneliness. It was nice to get to talk "Okie" for a change.

We are so thankful for those in the States who continue to support this work in so many different ways.



THE MALAWI BRETHREN

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

Elias James Sitaya of Zomba was born in 1968 and married Mariya in 1987. They have six children. His parents were members of the church so he

was raised in the church and was baptized at an early age after understanding the reality of the words of God.

I would like to thank Preacher D. Nakutepa who has been teaching me the work of God many years. I am working with 13 churches. As a preacher, I would like to tell my fellow preachers that we

should not stay home idle but let us read the Bible and make plans for our work. I am thankful to God for the privilege to work with the churches. We have a good number that gather at these churches every Sunday. The first week of August I traveled to Kachere church at Lisanjala Zomba. There I met a problem that is still striking my mind. During the rainy season the Lisanjala River over flooded and destroyed many houses, among those were three houses of Christians washed away. Now we are busy working to build those houses. We have worked very hard the month of September to finish those three buildings as we are going towards the rainy season again.

Finally I would like to tell brethren in the country of Malawi and those who are outside that let us work hard with this work for the betterment of our eternal life.

Stephen & Stephen Kasenda



Brother & Sister Stephen Kasenda had seven children. Their only son passed away at the young age of 26 several years ago. He left a daughter and a son whom he had named Stephen after his father. Young Stephen is now 12 years old.

Jerry's Report

The study season is over and we are now writing new lessons for next year. This work is a joint effort. I write the lessons, Linda edits and formats them, and we then have an English-speaking brother translate them into Chichewa. Linda types the Chichewa into the computer, and has the translation double checked. Both English and Chichewa lessons are sent to Blantyre where Debbie Edwards puts them into book form and Doug Edwards has them printed.

What I would particularly like to write about in this report is concerning what the African Christians have taught us. First, I would like to mention the singing. The Africans, it seems by nature, love to sing. Most of them can sing very well. In the services, several of the men have song books, and a few of the women.

The song book generally used in Malawi has 376 songs, and it seems they can sing every song in the book. The same words can be sung to more than one tune. There are no notes with the words. Thus,

about the only book really needed is the one the song leader uses, and the rest follow him and sing from their hearts. Little children who can barely walk also sing. Every verse is led, and sometimes there are many refrains. I wonder in America if we would sing more without our books if the songs would become



more meaningful. And, also, I wonder if we were to make our melodies easier, more of the "ordinary" singers would sing.

Second, I don't think anyone in the world is more dedicated to the church than some members I know in America. But life is so much easier in America. In the "big" meetings over here, Christians walk miles to come and help in the services, not uncommonly more than 10 miles. A while back I was returning from a study and the brethren had me stop for a young Christian woman walking down the dusty trail. She was carrying a baby on her back, leading another child, and had already walked a few miles before we approached her. We transported this Christian another several miles to near her home. She had been visiting a sick person in a bush hospital that we had

passed, and would have been hard pressed to get home before dark, if we hadn't come along. This is not an isolated incident.

The African preachers are not always overly informed, but for sure we cannot tell them how to get and keep the attention of an audience. They put some heart and energy into

their speaking, and it produces results.

On giving, we are often disappointed that the contribution is not better than it is, but what one must realize is that many of these people who work are literally supporting dozens of poor relatives. Brother Chitsulo, my co-worker, supports a veritable tribe, both here

★ An American Thanksgiving



In September we purchased two turkey chicks with the intention of raising them and fattening them up for a nice Thanksgiving dinner with our American friends. Ignorance is bliss. At the time we didn't know turkeys needed more time than that to grow, but we diligently fed them and even named them, Tom and Terry (but had to rename them Thelma and Louise after a while). We were thrilled to have Bill and Daisy from Mozambique and Jerry and Linda from Mzuzu join us for most of the week for visiting about the work as well as relaxing and enjoying the good ole American accents of each other. We had a nice Thanksgiving dinner. A small in size Thelma graced the table as well as Daisy's delicious Heavenly Hash salad, Linda's scrumptious dressing and my pecan and pumpkin pies.

in Mzuzu and in the Southern Province.

Other noteworthy areas: The young show great respect for their elders; modesty in apparel among Christian women is the standard. They may nurse their babies publicly, but no Christian woman is seen with anything less than a garment that reaches near the ankles.

These are some of the areas where African Christians equal and sometimes exceed we American Christians.

LINDA'S EXPERIENCE

On September 25th I left Malawi to go home for a visit for seven weeks. Not only did I wish to see my and Jerry's children and grandchildren, but I had a real need to see my aged parents. My parents, Melvin and Marjorie Crouch of Arlington, TX, are both in care centers. Daddy is in a full-care facility because he is bedridden, and Mama is in an independent living facility and is doing very well with the exception of some problems attendant to the elderly. Daddy, as most of you know, wrote the pamphlet "Words of Life" in the 1970s, and that pamphlet is used extensively here in Africa and in other areas in the world. I was able to spend half of my time with my parents, and I am so thankful because life is so uncertain. One weekend all of my siblings and I were together, and that was a real treat. I thank the Green



Oaks congregation in Arlington, TX, for allowing me this time at home with my family. I was busy every day I was at home, but when the time came for me to leave, I was ready to come back to Malawi and my life here with Jerry and the ongoing work in the Northern Province. I was glad that all was well while I was gone, but Jerry did lose weight. He is not known for his cooking ability!

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Doug Edwards:
churchofchrist@broadbandmw.com
21st Street, OKC:
d_m_cutter@juno.com
Jerry Cutter:
ntchurchofchrist@africa-online.net
Green Oaks church of Christ:
jlnorton@tx.rr.com
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