

May 18, 2013

It is now Saturday morning and as I sit in the house in Mponela, looking back on my first week here, I am very pleased with some things and a little frustrated with others. We coined a phrase years ago to describe the events of this week: "Malawi time." While at home I can schedule as much as possible into a day and then follow that schedule precisely, it is impossible to do this in Malawi. Although I called several different men before leaving the country and even sent an email with exact date of my arrival, there was still confusion about the day I would arrive. Because of this confusion, I had no work scheduled at all for my first week here. This is "Malawi time." While I wanted to work and get as much as I could accomplished, they just don't see things in this manner.

I simply rearranged things so I could still be busy. We went into Lilongwe on Wednesday to pick up the Bibles and bring them to Mponela. The initial purchase was 1,280 Bibles. I left 300 in Lilongwe to be distributed by Alick Billiatt who a trustworthy brother there. Davie Bangira will arrive from Ntchisi district this afternoon and will take 300 to our brethren there. It is my hope to have all these Bibles sold and more purchased in the next three weeks. The brethren are very excited about the discounted price that makes it so affordable. While we are selling at 1300 Kwacha(\$3.00), the Bible Society has a list price of 2600(\$6.00) in Lilongwe and they are being sold for 3500(\$9.00) in the market in Mponela.

I have spent the last two days talking with, teaching and training a young preacher who has been translating for me for the past few years. I have great hopes for him. As I have mentioned in the past, when I arrived in Malawi in 1999 there were several older and very sound men who had great influence over the brethren. These men have all died in the last fourteen years and I have been searching for other sound men to work with. William Chimcande is exactly what I have been hoping to work with and through him, I hope to influence many others. He is a godly and devout man and has great study habits, sound teaching, and faithful service to the Lord. I feel very blessed to be able to work with him. We spent many hours discussing Scripture and answering questions. So though I did not accomplish my original goals, the work I did may have greater fruit than anything else I could have done.

I have sent also sent pictures so you can visualize some of the things in my report. I have enclosed some pictures of the preachers who helped me transport the Bibles after we stacked them in the house. Also a picture of the three different Bibles available in the Chichewa language. There is one picture of William and I while discussing the Scriptures and a few pictures of the house where I live when I am not our preaching in the villages. Not much to look at, but with a toilet and tub, and a mattress off the floor, it is a wonderful change from the bush.

I want to thank all of you for your prayers, and for your donations that have brought all these Bibles to the poor Christians in Malawi. They are very grateful and excited about it and so am I.

This next week will take me to several trading centers in Dowa East. I know I will be busy, but the number of people I will teach, the difficulty of traveling to get there and the type of accommodations I will have when I arrive are still unknown. That is all part of the adventure of preaching here in Malawi.

Your brother and fellow worker in Christ,

Alan