

Brethren,

My final week in Malawi was in Ntchisi and Nkota-Kota and began early Monday morning (June 17). I was at the bus depot at 7:00am, but with all the waiting and stopping it took about two hours to arrive at Mumba's home in Kasungu. It was good to work with the man who has helped me so much over the past decade. We then caught a second minibus to Molomo which is located in the Ntchisi District far to the North and East of Mponela. The second trip also took over two hours. I thought I had seen the worst of overloaded minibuses, but this driver amazed me. At one point he had four adults and two children in the front seat with him, driving with his head nearly out the Driver's window to see. With the other 13 passengers behind him, the minivan carried 20 people. Although we arrived after noon, the church was assembled and we still had time to do three one hour classes. At the end of my workday, I often seek out a walk. I find the nearest hill or mountain so I can also get a good view, and ask if someone in the church will guide me there. I enjoy looking at the plants, insects and small animals. It helps me unwind. This day we took a steep descent down to the Bua river.

The second day, after preaching five lessons we began the 18 mile journey to the next village and arrived about 5:30pm. Although there were only a few brethren, they were very excited about what they learned in the seven lessons taught there. At the end of the second day, Mumba returned to Kasungu and another translator arrived on a very old motorcycle. His driving skills were very poor and the dirt roads very steep in places. It was very stressful because he kept taking the engine out of gear and coasting down the hills, which often led to unsafe speeds. At one point, we started down a much steeper hill where the brakes failed to slow the bike enough and we very nearly left the road. At that point I told him I would not ride with him any further unless he used the engine to slow the bike. He learned quickly, and I felt much better for the rest of the ride. Our last meeting in Ntchisi was scheduled for three days and we had an excellent crowd. We even had a class at night reading the Bible by flashlight.

My final week in Malawi brought me to Nkota-Kota on the lakeshore. I only had Monday and Tuesday left to teach. Wednesday was my final day in Malawi and I had scheduled it as my one day off for the trip. I was planning to be a tourist and do some sightseeing. The home where I stayed was very nice home with electricity and a real bed. I was excited that my final days would bring all the comforts of home. Later that evening one of the elders in the church at Nkota-Kota came for a visit. He is a doctor at the district hospital.

Early the next morning we drove about an hour to the village where I was to teach Monday and Tuesday. I wasn't feeling well, but was able to preach three lessons. The last lesson I was asked to preach a lesson on giving and paying preachers. Since it is a real problem in Malawi, I had spent some time developing a much more comprehensive lesson.

I decided to use God's commands to Israel about paying their Priests and Levites. God wanted the Priests to receive all the sacrifices, first fruits, devoted items, and firstborn animals (Num. 18:8-20). He also commanded that the Levites should be given all the tithes from the 12 tribes (Num 18:21-24). God wanted them to be well paid for their service to Him so they would be fully devoted to their duties. But when Israel did not bring the tithes or offerings, the Levites and priests were forced to ignore their duties to survive. God spoke of Israel robbing Him when they did not bring the full tithe.

*"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. Mal 3:8-10*

When Israel didn't bring their tithes and offerings, the priests and Levites were not cared for and God's promises to them were not kept. They were forced to ignore their other duties to work for their families in other endeavors. Israel's giving therefore had a direct impact on the quality of the service in the tabernacle and the work God had given them to do. When Israel was generous all was well. But when they were selfish the spiritual work suffered. Thus God left the power of Israel's spiritual service to God in their own hands.

I then emphasized that God has done exactly the same thing with the church today. The work of the church is funded by the contributions of the brethren (1 Cor. 9:6-14; 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8-9). If the work is to be done well, generosity is needed. The more a church gives, the more work it can do, the greater influence for good it will

have and the more spiritual blessings will be enjoyed by the members.

Most of the churches in Malawi are very weak because the brethren have never been taught to give. They have a small handful of preachers who are paid. The best and brightest young men who might otherwise become preachers are forced to become teachers in the public schools because the government pays teachers a wage they can live upon and with those wages they can feed and care for their families. So just like Israel, God placed the work in hands of each local church. If a congregation wants the best and brightest of the young men to preach for them they need to be generous in their giving and in their reimbursement.

I told them the reason America has well educated preachers and many good men who have time to study and teach is due to the generosity of the brethren. The reason America is sending preachers all over the world is also due to this generosity. None of these things are being done in Malawi and if they want that to change they simply have to change the way they give to the Lord. Many elders heard this lesson and they were moved by it. It is my hope they will listen and make the necessary changes.

By the end of the day, I was feeling like I had a bad flu and my translator from the previous week had already been diagnosed with Malaria. I knew I was at risk. I called the elder who was also a doctor and he suggested we go to the hospital as soon as we arrived back in Nkoto-Kota to have a blood test. Unfortunately on the way home the drive shaft sheered from the engine and it took them over four hours to fix it and we did not arrive home until just before midnight.

Tuesday morning I was sicker than I have ever been in my life. I was in my sleeping bag, shivering and shaking uncontrollably. When the doctor arrived to take me to the hospital, I could hardly walk to the car. The blood test revealed I had a bad case of Malaria and they decided I would need to be admitted and given IV Quinine over a 24 hour period. This kept me from preaching my last day and also took away my only free day in Malawi. I don't remember much about Tuesday. I was in and out of consciousness most of the day. On Wednesday morning they gave me my third IV drip, but because I needed check in at the airport the next morning they released me to a hospital in Lilongwe which was very near the airport. We arrived in Lilongwe after dark and the American doctor felt I needed another night in the hospital. He warned me I might not be able to fly out the next day. He stated that if I relapsed on the plane and began shaking, the pilots would land at the nearest airport and I would be put off the plane. Since we pass over many obscure African nations in the first eight hours of the flight, he was concerned I would end up in a third world country with no medical facilities and no one to help me. He promised to reassess me in the morning. By Thursday morning, he was pleased enough with my progress to feel comfortable that I would get home safely.

I can't remember much of the flight home. There were three different planes and 28 hours of time before I arrived back in Denver. I was still running fevers then chills, and the side effect of Quinine make the ears feel like they are full of fluid, and it sounds like you are near a loud waterfall. I was so happy to touch down in Denver and be greeted by Virgil and Carl who had come to help me get home.

After a week, I was still not feeling better so I went to a specialist for Malaria here in Denver. He was not happy with the treatment choices in Malawi, so he started me on another Malaria medicine (Malarone) which slowly removed all the symptoms.

I am sorry for taking so much time in this report talking about myself, but I wanted to explain why I am so late in this final report. Thank you so much for your prayers. So many good things happened, and I trust fully in God's providence and answered prayers. Thank you!

It is only through your generosity and love for brethren in other parts of the world that I have been able to do all the things I have written about in my previous reports.

I will send out one final summation in a few weeks, explaining how the money was spent on the Bibles, how I used the money you have me for support, and the help I gave some of the preachers.

Your fellow-laborer in His kingdom,

Alan