

My Mission Trip to Malawi



March 2014

INTRODUCTION

This mission trip to Malawi now marks my 30th since the very first one way back in 1980 when Bishop Stephen Bradley sent me to Namibia. He never realized it, but that trip changed my life and gave me a tremendous concern for Africa, a deep love for her people and an unquenchable desire to teach the Bible from Cape Town to Nairobi. But, I needed training and my 30 years at Holy Trinity in Pietermaritzburg did that for me. By God's grace, I preached verse by verse through the Bible and was then able to learn more at Christ Church Pinetown for the 6 years that I was there. Then I was ready to leave the calm waters of the harbour and in 2012 began my new life as a missionary into Africa with the KwaZulu-Natal Missionary & Bible College, which I founded in 1987. All in all traveling across Africa, living with the poor, getting around in taxis and training new leaders and pastors has been unbelievable, a dream come true. Today some 400 have now passed through the Bible College and are serving the Lord across Africa into England even as far as Pakistan, Indonesia, and Australia. It has been the most fulfilling ministry anyone could ever hope for in life.

So come with me as I go on my 30th mission trip and visit Malawi where I need to do so much work at the JCE Community Centre, hopefully getting it ready for the dedication later on in the year ... but first let me update you on AFRICA (from Operation World).



UPDATE ON AFRICA

Africa's Hot Spots

The following warrant sustained intercession:

- 1) **Central Africa**, where ethnic and international conflicts have brutalized the populations. Tensions between the Hutu and Tutsi peoples in Rwanda and Burundi led to civil wars and periodic genocidal massacres over the past five decades. The Rwanda genocide of 1994 triggered a chain of reaction of war and waves of refugees, affecting surround countries. The Second Congo War of 1998-2003 embroiled DRC, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Chad, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi in a confused and bloody conflict that involved irregular militia groups as much as national armed forces - and had no real decisive winners, only losers. Eastern Congo in particular has been devastated, and the simmering of disgruntled militias and ethnicities poses a continued threat there. The heterodox and occultic Lord's Resistance Army also plagues the population of Uganda as well as southern Sudan and northeast DRC with raids, murder, mutilation, abduction, and enslavement. Pray for righteous leaders - locally, nationally and

internationally - who will act with justice and decisiveness to prevent war and conflict. Pray also that the lives of those devastated by loss and destruction might be rebuilt from the ashes.

- 2) **East Africa** remains a place of instability and regional violence, despite the settling of the Ethiopia-Eritrea war of 1998-2000 into an uneasy, arbitrated truce.
 - i) **Somalia's** descent into anarchy seems to have plumbed new depths. A combination of deep poverty, lack of resources, famine, historical colonial influences, and the deeply clan-based societal structure creates a dangerous cocktail.
 - ii) **Kenya** suffered unexpected violence in 2007-2008 after a disputed election.
- 3) **Sudan's** civil strife has been the norm for decades. Pray for peace.
- 4) **Nigeria and the Sahel**, through which runs the north-south fault line between Muslim and Christian majority areas.

MAKING MEMORIES

DRC, RWANDA, ZAMBIA, QWAQWA, UGANDA,
MALAWI, NAMIBIA, ZIMBABWE, KENYA



THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

African Christianity has established itself as a truly potent force, both on the continent and even on a global level. The colonial past is fading and a new level of confidence, dynamism, vision and maturity is evident. In many countries, the Church has established itself as the only effective social organization that can bring reconciliation among ethnic groups and cope with the many economic, health and education challenges in collapsing societies. Challenges the Church must address:

- 1) **Discipleship** is rightly being addressed as Africa's greatest challenge.
- 2) **Africa's role in the global Church** is more important than ever. Its contribution to revitalizing the flagging churches in Europe is crucial.
- 3) **Pray for unity in such great diversity.** There are over 15,000 denominations, church clusters, and networks in Africa. Pray:
 - a) **That leaders** might place their agendas at the foot of the cross.
 - b) **For pan-African bodies** such as the Association of Evangelicals of Africa.
- 4) **Leadership training is recognized as the critical bottleneck.**
 - a) The serious consideration of **what kind of training is most appropriate for Africans.**
 - b) Theological institutions
 - c) Selection of students
 - d) Funds. The poverty of the Church and lack of understanding among potential donors hamper the development of Bible training institutions.
 - e) TEE programmes, modular training and training-in-service are all key for training both lay leadership and many overworked pastors.
 - f) African theologians, who are now emerging as global theological leaders.
- 5) **The development of a mission vision for the Church.** Africa is becoming a formidable missionary-sending region.
 - a) **The poverty mentality to be overcome.** Western colonial influence, and then some patronizing attitudes by foreign missions, have subverted the continent and created a mindset of dependence. Too many Africans immediately look to Western, (or increasingly Asian), sponsorship to meet every need.
 - b) **Funds to be made available to train and send out missionaries.**
 - c) **Congregations to see missions as fundamental** to the gospel itself and the task of every believer.
 - d) **Effective cross-cultural training for missions.** There is still a shortfall of innovative training mechanisms to produce the necessary results.
 - e) **Christian research** – it has come a great distance, but more needs to be done.
- 6) **Cross-cultural missions.** The missionary force is increasingly African, and multi-continental, and less Western.

- a) **Partnership.** Honour must be given to the huge impact of dedicated missionaries in the past, who achieved so much despite the frequent neglect or even opposition of colonial rules,
- b) **Pioneer areas.** These still abound. A high degree of commitment and sacrifice will be required to reach present pioneer areas where conditions are sometimes very hard.
- c) **Church support personnel** for teaching, youth work and other areas are needed as never before.
- d) **Specialists** for Bible translation, theological education and media ministries (audio material, radio, television, the Internet and Bible storying).
- e) **Holistic ministry**, which is an ever-growing demand. Needs in areas such as counseling, working with children at risk, education, health care, agriculture and many others neglected by government can be met by Christian organizations, providing a beautiful testimony of the transforming power of the gospel.
- f) **Mission sending from Africa is ready for the next phase.** This is essential for a continent with many willing to work but lacking the training and material resources to do mission the way Westerners and East Asians have traditionally done.

So for the rest of my life I so long to assist the Church in AFRICA.

Floyd Mc Clung wrote:

"the greatest growth, the greatest openness and the greatest move of the Holy Spirit are happening in AFRICA, Latin America and in Asia. We need to build our work among the people we want to reach and mobilize. There are hundreds and thousands of teachable, dedicated, emerging leaders in the nation of Africa who are crying out for training and mentoring."

So I want to play a part in mentoring and training leaders across Africa.



Malawi Update



Republic of Malawi
Africa



Geography

Area: 118,484 sq km

Central African state extending along Lake Malawi and its outflow river, the Shire. A landlocked nation whose southern half is virtually an enclave within Mozambique.

Population: 15,691,784

Capital: Lilongwe

Urbanites: 19.8%

Peoples

Peoples: 33 (12% unreached) [All peoples](#)

Official language: Chichewa and English Languages: 24 [All languages](#)

Religion

Largest Religion: Christian

Religion		Pop %	Ann Gr
Christians	11,925,756	76.00	3.0
Evangelicals	3,069,243	19.6	2.9

Answer to Prayer

1. **Malawi remains a stable and peaceful land** in a region plagued by wars, civil strife, and violent politics. This reflects the peaceful and mostly rural nature of the people - despite intensifying pressure from population growth, AIDS, and large-scale movements of people into, out of, and through Malawi. The multiparty democracy is in good health, having a president with a background in economics and a tough anti-corruption stance. Praise God for the peace that allows Christian ministry and national development to continue unhindered.

Challenge for Prayer

1. **Malawi faces serious challenges in the future**, such as the combination of poverty, high population growth and increasing pressure on agricultural land. High levels of national debt, AIDS and unemployment, when added to the aforementioned economic factors, produce challenges that will require wisdom, long-term planning and proactive policies by the government. The grip of poverty hampers development not only in the financial sense but also in terms of education, AIDS prevention, family life and even effective ministry and discipleship. Pray for leaders in Malawi, most of whom are church members, to act with wisdom, humility and long-term planning on biblical principles.
2. **The increasing activity of Islam** is a significant issue in Malawi. Over 80% of the Yao are Muslim, and make up the largest block of Muslims in Malawi. The Qu'ran has been translated into Chichewa. A Quranic movement (Sukuti) is trying to replace the prevalent Qaddiriya folk Islam with a more scriptural version of the faith. Malawi has a great influx of funds via the Africa Muslim Agency. These extend Islam's influence through primary

education, scholarships for tertiary students to go to Muslim nations, aid distribution, drilling wells, medical aid, mosque building and many other means. Although the impact of these has thus far been quite limited, pray for awareness and training for the equipping of Christians to meet this challenge. Pray also for a persistent, loving witness to Muslims throughout Malawi.

3. **AIDS has been a terrible scourge.** Life expectancy was reduced at one point to age 43, and over 1 million are infected with HIV. AIDS is the leading cause of death.
4. **The CCAP (Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian)** is the largest Protestant denomination and the direct fruit of the vision of 19th Century explorer David Livingstone. It is a union of the churches planted by the South African Dutch Reformed Church, the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland. Pray for revival as nominalism and the influence of African traditional religion are commonplace, yet there are also many strong evangelical leaders and congregations. Pray for unity within this diverse denomination, and for many to come to genuine faith within the framework of the CCAP.
5. **The major issues to be tackled by the churches are:**
 - a. **Maintaining effective ministry** in the midst of deep poverty and the growing AIDS crisis.
 - b. **Effective and appropriate theological education.** Pray for many to be called into the ministry. Pray for the further establishment of pastoral training programmes among the fast-growing Pentecostal and charismatic churches.
 - c. **Training for pastors and workers,** because the traditional model of theological education cannot produce leaders fast enough to meet the needs of the rapidly growing Church. Poor rural churches are especially needy - few can afford to train or support workers. TEE courses are run from Zomba by TEEM (TEE of Malawi). In-service training for pastors is available through various means.
 - d. **Financial provision** for theological students and pastors in training, since poverty is the primary factor hampering theological education. Pray for provision via funding and partnerships. Pray also for new models of training that can accommodate the many poor and already overstretched pastors.
 - e. **Unity.** Pray for more cooperation among the Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM). The more mainline Christian Council (CCM) and the charismatic churches.

Donald Mc Clure a missionary to Africa for over 50 years wrote:

"I am filled with an undying ambition to do something worthwhile in the great land of AFRICA."

While never being able to live up to him, nor to Livingstone, Moffat, Harrington, Mc Kay, Bingham, Cameron Scott, I do want to live out the remaining years of my life in Africa, mentoring and training leaders across this great continent, spending time in their homes and enjoying the thrill of the African life.

I thought after all these years, it would be good to have a fresh look at Africa and Malawi, I hope that you have enjoyed the overview, now join me in Malawi as I go to work on the JCE Community Centre, in honour of my son who so longed to come here. But by God's grace, this will be a legacy of Jon for life ... among the poor ... in Africa, providing for their spiritual, social, material, and physical needs.




MY DIARY

Wednesday, 5 March

As I would be leaving very early to catch the plane from Durban at 6am it was important for me to do my readings the night before. I continued reading from Mc Cheyne's calendar and read from Exodus, Luke, Job, and 2 Corinthians. As always, I follow the Bible readings with Oswald Chambers and he wrote:

JOY

"joy means the perfect fulfillment of that for which I was created and regenerated, NOT the successful doing of a thing."

How often I make that mistake ... BUT ... the priority is always to stay focused on Christ. I also finished a brilliant  book yesterday, entitled FOREVER by Paul Tripp, it was phenomenal. Listen to what he wrote:

FOREVER

"Living in this present world is designed by God to produce three things in me – longing, readiness, and hope. Rather than deepening my drive to have it all now, the disappointments of this present world are intended to make me long for the next. God also knows that we are not ready for the world that is to come. There are ways in which we still are too impressed with our own wisdom, strength, and righteousness. We still struggle to love the Creator more than creation. We still want to have our own way and write our own rules. So there are important character changes that grace needs to work in us to make us ready for our final destination. And God is using this present moment to produce in us sturdy hope. As by his grace we experience tastes of what is to come, we don't panic in the face of difficulty and disappointment, because we know that God is moving us toward a place where the suffering of this present moment will be no more."

Up at 3am and drove down to Durban to catch the 6am flight to Johannesburg from where I would fly to Blantyre, Malawi. It was so moving to see Eric and Gail Keiser waiting at the airport, they

have been the most amazing friends over many years. They have paid for so many of my trips across Africa so now on this trip I want to spend some time with them and encourage them. Sadly their contract has not been renewed so at the moment their future is uncertain ... but ... what a couple!!



The first stop I made was to pop into the shop at the airport to get some airtime to stay in touch with home, then headed off down into the Shire Valley. This is the most beautiful drive, but of course, I had to stop to enjoy the shade of a tree under which David Livingstone and James Hetherwick rested while walking up from the Shire Valley into the Blantyre area. It was now raining heavily but still managed to get a picture of the beautiful valley.



It was fantastic crossing over the mighty Shire River remembering how Livingstone had such high hopes of using it to travel into central Africa; it never ceases to amaze me how majestic the river looks as you come down into the Shire Valley. Arriving at our destination the sun was setting, giving that special light to the day that I love ... I hope that I have captured this light in the picture I took of this Baobab tree.

It has been a long day so let me close with another quote from FOREVER as I sleep under the beautiful African sky and listen to her many and varied sounds.

REPLACE

"Every day billions of us get up and ignore the love relationship with God for which we were created. Because we do not love him as much as we should, we do not have the motivation to please him, we find it easy, in small moments and big, to replace him with something else. We replace love of God with a life-dominating love of self. We replace concern for the glory of God with self-glory. We replace a desire to serve the Creator in the way we steward his creation with the worship of the creation. Inserting ourselves in the centre of our world is the ultimate delusion. Sin not only denies the structure of the world as God made it, but it also denies our very identity as human beings. We are God's image bearers. We were made for him. Living as if we are independent beings, free to live on our own and do our own thing will never work."


THURSDAY, 6 MARCH

Such a beautiful morning so how better to begin than by soaking my mind with the Word of God. Continued with my readings from Exodus, Luke, Job and 2 Corinthians and was so challenged afterwards by Oswald Chambers.

DRUDGERY

"Ask God to keep the eyes of your spirit open to the Risen Christ, and it will be impossible for DRUDGERY to damp you."

How sad it is to see how for so many Christians they have allowed their spirits to be dampened and for drudgery to set in ... by God's grace I don't want that to ever happen, each day is a gift from God and the most wonderful work has been given to me to do in Africa.

Today I began  a new book 'ON BEING WITNESSES' by 3 lecturers of missiology, JJ Kritzinger, PGJ Meiring and WA Saayman. The main themes discussed in the book were:

- ☐ Mission - what
- ☐ Mission - who
- ☐ Mission - where
- ☐ Mission - how

The church without a missionary existence is something like a fire without flames, impossible to envisage. Our God is a missionary God, who keeps reaching out to His creation with life-giving love. He expects His people as His representative body on earth to be involved in the same way. They quote GISBERTUS VOETIUS, a Dutch theologian belonging to the 17th century who gave the following definition of missions:

MISSION

"the immediate aim of mission was the conversion of the Gentiles, this immediate aim was subordinate to the second goal, the planting of the Church, and the ultimate goal, to which both of these were subordinate, was the glory and manifestation of God's divine grace."

Another two quotes they gave were both reminders to me:

ERMILO CASTRO

"THE Church as the body of Christ has no other existence than an existence IN MISSION."

SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

"the Church on earth is by its very nature MISSIONARY."

Working and travelling across this great continent is such a wonderful experience. Today I came across these amazing signs on my travels:



It has been such a hot day, the cold shower afterwards was so welcome, then a good African supper, a lovely sleep all in preparation for some hard work at the JCE Centre in the morning. Tripp again was such a challenge before drifting off to sleep under the beautiful African sky.

PREPARATION

"Many of us treat here and now as a destination. Whatever our theology says about eternity, at the functional level we live as if this is all there is. We live with a destination mentality instead of a preparation mentality. This present world with all of its joys and sorrows is not our final address. When we treat it as if it is, we try to get from this world what we can only experience in the next. We try to pack into our present life all the pleasure, happiness, and excitement we can. We do this because what comes with the thought that this life is all there is, is an inescapable fear that somehow life will pass us by. Here is what a destination mentality fails to understand: our complete, present, personal happiness is not what God is working on in the here and now. Why? Because the plan of his grace is to deliver us out of this world to one that is much, much better. Whether we live with eternity in view or not, there is one thing we all need to understand: God always responds to us with eternity in view."

FRIDAY, 7 MARCH

Today we were very busy again and would be spending more time with Lenard Gowa working on the JCE Community Centre. So ... first into the Bible and continued my readings from Exodus, Luke, Job and 2 Corinthians, after which Oswald Chambers wrote such amazing teaching ... wow ... it was brilliant, just for me!

SUPER JOY

"the surf that distresses the ordinary swimmer produces in the surf-rider the super joy of going clean through it. Apply that to our own circumstances, those very things – tribulation, distress, persecution, produce in us the SUPER-JOY; they are not things to fight. We are more than conquerors through Him in all these things, not in spite of them, but in the midst of them."

After breakfast I went with Lenard to check on the borehole, for which Jon had raised the money to install.



So emotional for me ... but wonderful to see the community using it, Jon would be thrilled, it is a massive blessing to the village.

From there we went on to the new school hall, which we are erecting close to the borehole. Heart of Africa and Footprints into Africa have put up the money but sadly it is still not completed; the basic shell is up but it needs lots of work, although the builder emailed me to say everything was completed ... and was paid in full ...



So work begun early on the JCE Community Centre, before the heat of the sun took its toll. With the aid of some of the men, we began to plant some trees.



I also showed them how to build a "tippy tap" (me being a construction engineer of note), which I had seen in Zimbabwe ... then we sent a whole group of goats out to "cut" the grass. Life is so full of fun here in Africa ... the chief's son went on his motorbike to buy us some Cokes!!! Here in Africa one of us should have gone, but I said he would do a better job and gave him some money.

Building the "tippy tap"



While the men were hard at work, Charmaine and the ladies were busy with the children, explaining the basics of general hygiene - how to use my ingenious "tippy tap" to wash their hands and then they were shown how to use the medicines, that had so kindly been donated by various Bible study groups. The local teacher and one of the well-educated young men were shown how to correctly attend to the various ailments that the children were suffering from, and which medicines were to be used. We left laminated charts with them to help them identify which medicines to apply and which dosage to use for the various age groups. It was amazing that once the word spread, many elderly women also came for assistance. Most were superficial problems, but the sad thing to see were those suffering from the more serious complications of HIV, and all that we could do was show them some love and care.



So the dream for the JCE COMMUNITY CENTRE moves ahead so very slowly. Our dream is for Luke 2:52 to be realised here, catering for the physical, social, intellectual and above all, the spiritual needs of the people. We have trained Lenard at KMBC to teach the bible, the school will then look after their intellectual and social needs. On our part, perseverance is needed because we should not become discouraged by the slow progress. BUT, it is not always easy working in Africa.



The day was almost over, and I was looking forward to a peaceful sleep under the African sky. Let Tripp again close off the day for us with such a challenge from his book FOREVER:

THE PACK – IT – ALL IN MENTALITY

"Peace is found only in knowing that this world is meant to prepare us for the next and that the temporary pleasures and pains of this world are not our final address. When we live knowing that the God of grace will lift us out of this broken world and is now readying us for the world to come, we can face difficulty without wanting to give up and experience pleasure without becoming addicted to it. We live with hope in our heart, eyes to the future, and hands holding this present world loosely."

Everything in this world is meant to be a preparation for the next. That means that your marriage isn't a destination; it is a preparation. Your job isn't a destination; it is a preparation. Your friendships and family are not destinations; they are a preparation. The sight and sound, touch and taste experiences of this present world are not a destination; they are a preparation for a final destination. No, it is not wrong to celebrate marital sex or a beautiful bouquet, or a silky chocolate pie, or a wonderful painting, or a death-defying roller coaster. It is right to stop and smell the roses along the way – as long as you do not treat those roses as a final destination.

We are fat, disappointed, driven, in debt, and addicted because we treat this here-and-now moment as if it were all we have. We have acted as though it is a destination, when all that is going on now is somehow, someday a preparation for the final destination that is to come."

SATURDAY, 8 MARCH

This will be my last day in the village because tomorrow we head back to MULANJE. Read again from Exodus, Luke, Job and 2 Corinthians after which Oswald Chambers was such a challenge, listen:

THE RELINQUISHED LIFE

requires of you."

"no one is ever anointed with Jesus Christ until he is willing to relinquish not sin only, but his whole way of looking at things. To be born from above of the Spirit of God means that we must let go before we lay hold, and in the first stages it is the relinquishing of all pretense. Relinquish all, and God will make you fit for all He

Today will not be easy because I need to meet with the chiefs, the village headmen and the school committee and try to explain why the building is not totally finished. Then I need to meet with Lenard and put some plan into place so that the JCE Community Centre may develop into what I want it to be. So may the Lord go with me ... and then to have a final meal together.

The children were all waiting for us in the new hall and sang so beautifully, it was wonderful to hear ... Jon would have loved it ...



Then it was time to meet with the group of assembled leaders and that took time ... but remember ... this is AFRICA!!! I went over how we had trained Lenard for 3 years, then went on to describe the work of Jon in putting in the borehole, which is a huge blessing for the community. We discussed the new building and put together a plan to finish it all off ... but only when I could get the funding. It was a very constructive meeting and time well spent.

But for me a more important meeting was then held with Lenard's son Daniel and his friend Luke. They are both lovely young men, so we will now do all we can to bring them down to KMBC in July, one of our friends in Pietermaritzburg has kindly offered to pay for Daniel's costs. This is very exciting and it will mean that there will be 3 Bible-trained teachers in the village.



It has been an emotional few days working on the JCE Community Centre - planting trees, erecting the "tippy tap", meeting with the chiefs and leaders, preparing Daniel and Luke to come to KMBC, working to channel the run off of water from the borehole into a better drainage area.



Now ... I have organized the first ever soccer match on the JCE soccer pitch. It was fantastic and I was the referee. Unfortunately there was no ball so I drove from village to village, from shop to shop but could not find one and then ... there were a few young boys playing with a ball on the side of the road ... I stopped the car, wound down the window and asked them if they wanted to sell it. I offered them KW1000, but this cheeky young boy said he wanted KW2000, I offered 1500 and the deal was done!! So, I blew my whistle and refereed the cup final of all finals!!

Exhausted, the sun blazing hot and all bordering on heat stroke ... we went back to Lenard's house for refreshments. They had especially killed a goat and we enjoyed a great meal of goat stew and rice, specially prepared by Lenard's wife and the women. These people are so warm and hospitable. The meal was terrific, *but a bit tough* - life in Africa always has something in store for one!

The farewells are always bitter sweet and tug at the heart strings ... so the next thing that happened took all my attention and concentration. It had been raining a lot and the ground was water-logged, and as I negotiated a bad patch ... guess what happened ... I got stuck in the mud, good and proper! About 8 local men came to my rescue and eventually pushed me out, mud was flying everywhere and they were covered in it ... so obviously ... it cost me another few thousand kwacha ... I would have to get someone to give Gail's car a good clean, she would have a heart attack. WHAT A DAY IN AFRICA ... so full and rich.

SUNDAY, 9 MARCH

Today we left for MULANJE so as always read from Exodus, Luke, Job and 2 Corinthians. How these times with the Lord in His Word prepare one for whatever may come our way. Then Oswald Chambers wrote:

REPLASE

"many today are spending and being spent in work for Jesus Christ, but they do not walk with Him. The one thing God keeps us to steadily, is that we may be one with Jesus Christ."

Before my breakfast I read from "On Being Witnesses", a brilliant book. As I move across Africa the one huge problem is that of so many claim to have been converted but their lives are no different. Listen to how the World Council of Churches put it in 1982:

CONVERSION

"conversion happens in the midst of our historical reality and incorporates the totality of our life, because God's love is concerned with that totality. Jesus' call is an invitation to follow Him joyfully, to participate in His servant body, to share with Him in the struggle to overcome sin, poverty and death."

As we set off, our first call was at the next village where one of the men wanted to show me the "tippy tap" which he had now installed after I had shown him how to do it. It was so nice to see ... a real encouragement.



Passing through the different villages was amazing until we again came to the SHIRE RIVER. Along the banks of this river are some lonely graves of missionaries who years ago gave their lives for the cause of the Gospel. I will never forget going to Thornton, Scuddamore and Dickinson's graves ... they moved me very deeply, men who gave everything, even their blood to bring the Gospel to Malawi. Today they lie on the banks of the river ... but their souls are with Jon, now in glory.



Arriving in Blantyre I headed immediately to the Church built by the early missionaries from the Church of Scotland, men like Scott and Hetherwick in honour of Livingstone. It is always a very special and moving visit for me. Alongside is a cairn erected in honour of the place where the first missionaries built their homes and then further along a monument to all the pioneer missionaries who died.



From there we drove on to MULANJE where Eric and Gail live. It is such a beautiful home in the most magnificent setting among the tea plantations. Sadly they will be leaving within the next 2 months, to go back to South Africa. Their support of my work has been phenomenal and their hospitality extended to me on many visits to Malawi is so very appreciated ... so their move will create a real gap for me. Here is a picture of Eric braaing with his favourite brew and Robert ... who does everything in their home, with his broad smile.



It has been another wonderful day in Africa so let me allow Tripp to close off the day with a very solemn reminder:

DEATH

*"It's the one thing we all agree on, the one area where there is no human debate whatsoever. It is the one time in life when we all experience the same thing and act in similar ways. It is the one moment in life when everyone's thoughts, emotions, desire, words, and actions are predictable. We hate the thought of it, and we dread that it's coming and we can't do anything about it. It's mysterious, frightening, discouraging, paralyzing, and sad. We hope we can escape it for a long time, and most of us wish it on no one. When it is near us, we don't know what to say and are unsure how to act. We feel helpless. The pain crushes us at the moment and often lingers in our heart for years. It is the ultimate interruption, the unwanted intruder. No one who is alive will escape it. **Death.**"*

MONDAY, 10 MARCH

What a beautiful morning greeted us at the foot of Mt. Mulanje. The two security guards were sweeping the grass, Robert was cooking breakfast, and his wife was cleaning the house. Life is tough here !!! My old briefcase which has travelled with me all over Africa is coming apart ... but Robert says he will repair it for me. By trade he is a tailor ... what a man! Began with my readings

which continue in Exodus, Luke, Job and 2 Corinthians and then Oswald Chambers' devotion was on preaching. How I long to be like this each time I preach:

PREACHING

"gather your material and set it alight when you speak."

With Robert working away I finished reading this book 'ON BEING WITNESSES.' It was published over 20 years ago but is absolutely brilliant. The missionary authors are challenging us readers on our missionary methods. In the process they give an overview of traditional and contemporary views on the missionary task and endeavour to map out relevant approaches in today's world. They quote from Stephen Neil, the great mission historian who wrote:

MISSIONARIES

"missionaries have on the whole been a feeble folk, not very wise, not very holy, not very patient. They have broken most of the commandments and fallen into every conceivable mistake ... yet God has used their weaknesses."

JESUS THE MISSIONARY

"Jesus' incarnation was the prime model. Jesus came to serve. He spent Himself for people with a minimum of 'success'. He moved among the people, suffered their afflictions, had much to say, but said it in a humble way, all the while blessing people with His presence, touching lepers, lifting up the lame, healing the sick, and giving back children to their parents. His kingdom was not of this world, He was not interested in the measures of worldly success, but to live out and erect signs of His kingdom in the world."


I long to follow the example of Jesus as I travel across Africa teaching the Bible and living among the people. Today is again a full day for me.

This morning I will be meeting with HASTINGS KADAYA who graduated from KMBC last year. The Lord has opened an amazing door for him in the Cape MacClear district and I am sure he is going to do a great work for the Gospel. It will also open doors for me to visit that area where so many of the pioneer missionaries went.



What a lovely man Hastings is. Working up in the Cape MacClear district with Ann Davidson who runs an orphanage and a small school, but who now wants to open a Bible teaching Church for the area, will be great. Also what a thrill for Eric and Gail who sponsored Hastings' studies at KMBC - they can surely be a very happy couple. After a refreshing drink Hastings went back to his home

on his bicycle with a turkey which Eric gave him, plus a radio and CD player which Gail had given him. Life in Africa surely at its best!!

So how better to end another wonderful day in Africa than by finishing the other  book I brought with me, "BOLD AS A LAMB". It is the story of Pastor Samuel Lamb and the underground Church in China. In 1950 China's Christians numbered about a million; today some estimate as many as 100 million. "Bold as a Lamb" is the story of Pastor Samuel Lamb who was imprisoned for more than 20 years for preaching the Gospel but on being released he built a phenomenal house church congregation of more than a thousand. It is a fascinating, eye opening account of one of China's best known pastors, his dauntless congregation and how they found such joy and optimism in the face of relentless persecution. Even Billy Graham once visited the Church. Drifted off to a great sleep under Mt. Mulanje.

TUESDAY, 11 MARCH

Another majestic morning, which makes my readings such an extra joy. I continued with my readings in Exodus, Job, 2 Corinthians and then started with that majestic chapter in John 1. Then Oswald Chambers reminded me:

LEAKAGE

"If we lose the vision, we alone are responsible, and the way we lose the vision is by spiritual leakage. The only way to be obedient to the heavenly vision is to give our utmost for God's highest ..."

What a challenge - never to allow spiritual leakage to happen but day by day to give my absolute utmost for God's highest. That's what I want.

Today is my last day, I need to catch up on everything, pack and get ready for Eric to take us to the airport in Blantyre in the morning. There is a Christian bookshop in the Mulanje village so I popped in to see what bargains there might be and also to perhaps see some missionary graves, which I heard, are not too far away. I wanted to visit the Mulanje Mission, so Gail kindly offered to take us there.

At the bookshop I managed to buy 2 great books on the early missionaries to Malawi, books I would never have been able to get back home. Then in the market I tried to barter for a third-hand pair of shoes ... but I lost my touch and the guy wanted too much. I posed for a photo next to a bicycle laden with bananas - it is amazing what these people can load onto a bicycle! Then we headed off to the Mulanje Mission ... what a blessing was in store.



The visit to the Mission was fantastic. Let me give you a brief overview as to how it all began. It traces its establishment from the exploration voyages to Malawi by David Livingstone from 1859-1863. Later in 1876 that led to the establishment of the Blantyre Synod of the Church of Scotland by Henry Henderson and David Scott. From Blantyre the work then spread to Livingstonia, Zomba, Domasi and also to Mulanje in 1890 under the leadership of ROBERT CLELAND. He did the most amazing work and today more than 100 years later there is a thriving church, a well run hospital, huge school and a nursing College ... what a tribute to Cleland and his fellow missionaries. It was thrilling to be there.



I would not have missed that visit for anything. After lunch Eric took us to see a small missionary graveyard not far away ... it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, driving up Mount Mulanje in his 4x4. We got lost in the forest, there was really not a road at all, just narrow tracks almost totally overgrown with long grass. Eventually we came across a few poor dilapidated buildings and there was one of the plantation security patrolmen who said he knew where the graves were. He climbed onto the back of the bakkie and directed Eric where to go. Phew! Without him we would never have found them ... tucked away in the forest was a small walled area almost totally covered by the overgrowth, but there to my amazement was a single cross and 2 gravestones and a number of brick markers on the ground. Altogether there must be at least 12 people buried there. Just look at these amazing photographs!



It was a never to be forgotten experience, saddened only by the poverty of the people living in the area where we dropped the local security guard off ... it churns me up so much to see it.



But we were so grateful for his help, we would never in a million years have found those graves without him. I gave him some money, and paid the locals to take a picture of them - at least it would give them something to buy food with.



Truly Africa is -

"a worm that makes its way stealthily into your being. Sometimes it sleeps and sometimes it wriggles about, but its there, just under your skin!"

I will never forget the following quote by Robert Shannon:

"never pity missionaries – ENVY THEM. They are where the real action is – where life and death, sin and grace, heaven and hell converge."

What a day ... it was the perfect ending to my visit to Mulanje!

It has been a glorious day so let me close with a reminder from JOSHUA WATHANGA from Kenya who was speaking on the need for missionaries today.

**NEEDED
TODAY**

"because AFRICA is not getting easier to work in, it is ravaged by poverty, war and disease. It is being strangled by political misgovernance. It is bleeding from corruption. It is suffering from violence and carelessness in the society as a result. So going to AFRICA is not a great adventure or a picture safari. It will be very hard work and it can be dangerous ... BUT ... most Africans need to be helped to some empowerment. Missionaries should go prepared to TRAIN UP and MENTOR African leaders who will in time replace them. This will encourage people to take responsibility for God's call upon their lives. And finally this new breed of missionary will go prepared to LEARN and be CHANGED, whilst working with Africans as equals."

GOD BLESS AFRICA

WEDNESDAY, 12 MARCH

I woke up to yet another glorious morning so got straight into my readings, on this the last morning of my trip to Malawi. My readings continued from Exodus, Job, 2 Corinthians and John 2. As I went Oswald Chambers reminded me:

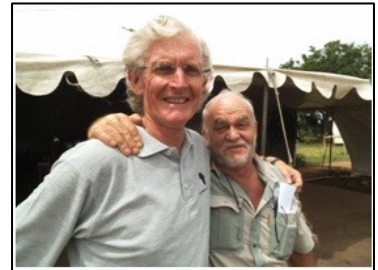
ABANDONMENT

"beware of stopping short of abandonment to God"

Malawi is a missionary historian's dream ... you see so much of the work of David Livingstone, visit the many graves of these missionary heroes like Thornton, Scuddamore, Dickinson, McKenzie and others, see their work continuing in thriving mission stations like the one established by Robert Cleland in Mulanje ... it was for me so very moving and challenging to visit Malawi. God willing next time I come, I hope to visit Hastings at Cape MacClear and move on from there to Likomo Island and farther north to Livingstonia where Robert Laws did such an incredible work.

I am also toying with the idea of renting an old dilapidated kya in the rural areas and using that as a base so that I will be able to bring others on these trips who also want to experience the thrill of being in Central Africa ... dream on ...

So this 30th trip draws to a close, it has been a roller coaster of emotions for me, weeping at the borehole, disappointed with the new building, loving working on the development of the JCE Community Centre, laughing with the children during the soccer match, enjoying the fellowship of Eric, Gail and Charmaine and then being so blessed at the gravesides up Mount Mulanje and seeing the work of Robert Cleland. One last picture of Eric and me at the Blantyre Airport.



Let me close now with a quote that sums me up by Helen Blakeslee:

"I go to Africa not for fame and prominence, but because I am attached to Jesus Christ in a love that knows no sacrifice too great to be made ... that men and women everywhere throughout AFRICA may know of and come to possess the wonderful inheritance He has won for them on the Cross. I go to AFRICA because I believe her people to be worthy of the most heroic effort that can be put forth to save them."

SIYABONGA MAMA AFRICA

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS



At the end of my 30th mission trip, may I share my heart with you on some issues:

TWO CRITICAL LESSONS:

Coming back to Malawi, being down in the village where so many dreams lie, has again taught me two big lessons which the book 'ON BEING WITNESSES' emphasized:

❑ BEING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN DOING

"Western culture is typically a "doing" culture. Things must be done as effectively and efficiently as possible. Westerners are judged by what they have done. They find their identity in their occupation. By contrast, the culture of Africa is much more a "being" culture. Being is much more important than doing. Moreover, this being is pre-eminently a being together. Where people are together, it is not all that important that they should be doing something - being together is already enough. Joinet describes it thus 'the essential thing is not to do something, but to be together', full stop."

In a sense this was what I have tried to do on this trip, to be with them ...

❑ BEING A SERVANT

This may sound so obvious that there is no need to spell it out. But it is not as simple as it may appear at first glance. We are dealing with cultural, historical and religious circumstances which can easily conspire to rob missionaries of the realization of their servant hood. As Joinet puts it:

"must I rather content myself with the austere joy of being useless – that uselessness which is the very mark of success."

1. KMBC

Here we are now in our 28th year since I started this College. How gracious the Lord has been in sending us about 400 students to love, train and equip for ministry into Africa. Last month while in Zimbabwe I suggested to Pastor Hama that he come and study with us, now in Malawi let us pray that Daniel and Luke will join us in July. The need is HUGE, I so long to encourage and assist those who pastor mainly among the poor in the rural areas. My mentor, Oswald Chambers put it well:

"The passion of Christianity is that I deliberately sign away my own rights and become a bond-slave of Jesus Christ. Until I do that, I do not begin to be a saint. One student a year who hears God's call would be sufficient for God to have called this College into existence. This college as an organization is not worth anything, it is not academic; it is for nothing else but for God to help Himself to live."

So my 30 lectures a week are so crucial, to keep on training preachers who will do expository sermons wherever they go into Africa. One student a year, says Chambers, will make it so worthwhile. But the challenge is huge, because the precious men in the rural areas cannot afford theological training. Please pray with me as I continue to raise the needed support so that these men may come to KMBC and be trained. As Operation World said:

*"Leaders are in short supply at every level –
for village congregations
For the urban educated
For theological training
For missionary endeavours ..."*

KMBC has such an important part to play.

2. CROSS CULTURAL MISSIONS:

The missionary force is increasingly African and multi-continental and less western. Much sensitivity and humility is required for effective ministry that reaches the unevangelized and defers to the maturity and vision of the growing African church. The need for missionaries continues to be greater than the supply of those with the gifting and vision. This is my passion with FOOTPRINTS INTO AFRICA as I visit into Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, Namibia, and Kenya as well as into the townships and rural areas of South Africa. As Floyd McClung wrote:

"there are hundreds and thousands of teachable, dedicated, emerging leaders in the nations of AFRICA, who are crying out for training and mentoring."

3. JCE COMMUNITY CENTRE

My dream is to establish this community centre in the village which is in one of the very poorest areas of Malawi. The borehole is functioning perfectly, providing fresh, pure water for the village and would have brought Jon such joy. Lenard has been trained to teach the Bible and now his son, Daniel and a friend will be coming to KMBC in July. But the one sadness was to see our new building so poorly built and uncompleted. Pray that as I contact the builder and then work with Lenard that it would be completed and also be such a huge blessing to our school (before they met under a tree) and to the community.

I so want to leave a legacy for Jon, in the heart of Africa and especially among the poor - that is where his heart was.

So, I head back home exhausted both physically and emotionally. It has been an excellent trip following up past students, making contact with possible new students and then working on the JCE COMMUNITY CENTRE. I get back on Wednesday evening but on Thursday morning will be back at my desk at KMBC, teaching the Word of God. On Thursday evening I lead a Bible Study on Mark and will preach at the Hayfields Brethren Assembly on Sunday morning. Next month I will be speaking at a leaders conference in Lumbumbashi in the DRC and then off to Uganda in May for more conferences in Kampala and in Jinger. The Lord has opened all these doors for me and I am so very grateful. Now let John Piper remind us of what missions is all about ...

*"The job is not done! The work that Christ gave us to do and the mandate is still binding on us today. That is why we speak of unreached people groups, but missions is the backbreaking, culture penetrating, darkness shattering, initial work to penetrate, plant the Church, see it flourish, train its own people and evangelize. It's the task of missions. It is not over.
Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven and the alternative is hell!"*

And now ... just a few notes for Jon's birthday, which is tomorrow....



THURSDAY, 13 MARCH

Today is Jon's birthday and he would have turned 34. With all the sadness I am so overwhelmed with joy at the memory of a son who was passionate in his devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ and was a dear son who loved my work at KMBC and then into Africa. His one dream was to come with me to Malawi.

But ... by God's grace ... I will try and build a legacy for him in Africa, among the poor where his heart was, no matter what that may take.



In addition, right in the centre of KMBC, I have also put up a Celtic cross as a permanent reminder of a precious son who gloried in the Cross of Christ. Also every year on the 25 September, the day of his death, the school up in Malawi will have a public holiday in honour of Jon ... so very special ... now read the moving notice they gave to me, it really touched me very deeply and many tears flowed ...

RE: SORROWFUL

FROM THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE BOARD.

IN MEMORY OF J.C.E. COMMUNITY NURSERY CENTRE SCHOOL. WE ARE ALL INDEED AFFECTED AND VERY DISAPPOINTED TO MISS JOHN COLE-EDWARDES WHO WOULD HOWEVER DEVELOP OUR CENTRE IN AFRICA, AND BECAUSE OF THIS WE AS THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND THE CHILDREN AND ALSO CHIEFS HAVE FULL OF SORROW AND FULL OF TEARS IN OUR EYES TO LOSE OUR BELOVED ONE, WHO HAD HAVE FUTURE FOR AFRICA THEREFORE, WE ALL PRAY FOR HIS SOUL TO REST IN PEACE.

2 TIMOTHY 4:6; 7:8

COMMITTEE BOARD

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