

Ashbury Family Prayer Letter

JULY-AUGUST, 2004

Dear Co-Laborers in the work of the Lord,

I wanted to thank you all for your faithful prayers for me while I traveled to Malawi, Africa and visited there for three weeks. I had a safe, pleasant trip as well as a very profitable one. Melody greatly appreciated your prayers for her and the children while I was away from them. Our National Pastors and their church brethren also wanted me to personally express their thanks to you all for your many prayers for them.

Our Lord blessed my preaching meetings in a blessed and in a powerful way. Nine people were saved during these three weeks. Many Christians were encouraged to "keep on keeping on" for their Lord, and some Christians came forward to repent of some sins in their lives. I also had many meetings with our National Pastors to hear about the way our Lord was blessing their churches and to hear about some of the problems in their churches. They have reported to me that 11 people were saved through their local church ministries during these last two months. Two new pastors asked me to come to their villages in Ntcheu and in Chikwawa to help them to plant more Baptist churches and to start a Bible College in their respective villages. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

Our great God saved Edson Kuloko in a wonderful way.

After I arrived at my house in Mapanga, my two preacher boys told me about a man who had been vandalizing our new church in Makalanga Village. He had been taking some of the timbers in our church at night to sell them, so he could buy some beer and chamba (marijuana). We knew that they were our church timbers because some witnesses had told us that they had been varnished and that he had been trying to sell those timbers to them. We had varnished these timbers to keep the wood ants from eating them.

My two church leaders were really angered about this problem and rightfully so. They wanted me to immediately put him into jail. I told them that we could put him into jail, but maybe, we should give him the Gospel first. They persistently told me that I could not talk to him because he was always drunk or high on chamba. And that he was a mean man who would run us off of his property. I asked them to pray about this problem, and then I would try to talk to him later. They consented to pray with me about this problem for a few days.

I had a revival meeting at this church on Saturday, July 24th. We had an uplifting service, but after I walked out of the church building, I saw Edson Kuloko sitting out in his front yard. I asked Brother Wells, "Is this the man that was vandalizing our church?" He said, "Yes!" We walked over to him, and I began to talk to his Dad who was also sitting with him. He told me that he was saved. Then I began to talk to Edson. I asked him a few questions to see if he was sober and coherent. He answered all of my questions very politely.

Then I began to talk with him to give him the Gospel. After I had given him the Romans Road of salvation. I asked him if he was saved. He quickly told me, "No." I asked him if he wanted to be saved. He said, "Yes." Then he bowed his head and asked Jesus Christ to save him. After I gave him some Bible verses on the assurance of salvation, I invited him to come to our church service tomorrow. He did not respond to me, but I told him that I would give him a Bible as soon as I could find one the next week.

I was visiting another one of our churches the next day, but as soon as I arrived home, I asked Shadrick if Edson Kuloko had come to church today. He told me, "Yes." He also told me that he came to Sunday School, stayed for the preaching service, and he came forward during the invitational service. He stood up before the whole church and said these words. "I thought the missionary was coming to my house yesterday to put me into jail. But he gave me the Gospel and I was saved." He wanted to be baptized and to join the church. Only our gracious God can take a church vandalizer, save him, and make him a church member. And we know that a church member would never vandalize his own church. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

A week later I gave him his Bible. I asked Wells and Shadrack to disciple him on Mondays for about two hours a week. They agreed to disciple him. Please pray that Edson will grow in the Lord, overcome his sins, and pray that his Roman Catholic wife will be saved.

Another man named Kingsley was saved at a revival meeting at our Njale Fundamental Baptist Church in Zomba. He heard a one hour teaching lesson on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ which was taught by one of our National Pastors. After his Bible lesson, I taught a Bible lesson on having a good Christian testimony for our Lord. When I gave the invitation to come forward, Kingsley came forward and asked us to pray for some injuries that he had sustained in a bicycle accident. He wanted us to pray that the Lord would heal him of these injuries.

I asked Brother Wells Mwachande to talk to him about his salvation. He told Wells that he was not saved. Then Wells gave him the Gospel, and Kingsley asked Jesus Christ to save him. Then we prayed that our Lord would heal him of his bicycle injuries.

God did another amazing thing for one of our churches in Namadzi. Most of the time when we want to start a church, the village chief usually gives us some land for our church. But in this village, all of this land had already been given out. So we would have to buy it from a Malawian man or woman who had already been given land in this village. The church members at this church prayed about this need, and our Lord worked their situation out in a wonderful way. A Muslim man gave them some land for their church.

I had just visited this church recently while I was there. This church has been established for two years, and they now have 60 church members. This Muslim man came to our Sunday School and to our Sunday morning preaching service. After the service, he asked me to baptize him. I told him that he would have to be saved before I could baptize him. He did not want to be saved at this time, but continue to pray that he will be saved soon. Before I came back to the States, I bought some iron sheets for their church roof. The church family at Ng'Omba Fundamental Baptist Church thanks you for helping them with this need.

I was also able to buy 5 acres of land for \$500.00 for our Bible College in Zomba. We have had a Bible College there for eight years, but we have not put up a permanent building as of yet. When I go back to Malawi, Lord willing, we are planning on building a couple of buildings on this property. We want to build a large auditorium to be used for our Annual Church Conference Meeting and to be used for some other preaching meetings. We also want to build two classrooms - one for the men and one for the women.

I have given ministry reports to five of our supporting churches during these last two months, and I have visited one other church hoping to receive some new support. We have been trying to raise some additional support during this furlough. This is because one year before we began our second furlough; the Malawian government levied a 20% VAT (Value Added Tax) on all items that we buy. Buying food is 20% higher. Buying Bibles is 20% higher. And the price of gasoline is presently costing \$4.00 a gallon in Malawi.

Please remember to pray for our safety as we travel on the busy interstates here in the States. Please pray that William and Hannah will be saved as soon as they can understand the Gospel. Please pray for my Nanny (Grandmother), who is in the hospital at this time, and pray for my mother, who is also in the hospital, receiving physical therapy after having knee replacement surgery.

It is a great honor to be a labourer with our gracious God. Truly, He is doing a wonderful work in Malawi, Africa. We are doing His will, and we are trying to stay out of His way as He works for us and through us. We also consider it a privilege to be your labourers in Malawi, Africa for His glory.

"God setteth the solitary in families: He bringeth out those who are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land." (Psalms 68:6)

Serving by His grace,

Bill, Melody, William, & Hannah