

Jesus Loves Malawi Update

Spring, 2023

Dear Friends,

Remember the story where Jesus tells his disciples to bring Him stones, which He then turns into bread? And the next time He asked, the ones who'd brought only a few, knew better, and brought more and bigger stones?

A pastor friend recently asked me where to find this story in the Bible, as he had heard it circulating. I had to tell him that he won't find it, and we surmised that it must be an invention of the health and wealth preachers. Many of the pastors here do not have any formal Bible education, many haven't finished high school, and some don't even own a Bible! Imagine preaching if you don't know what the Bible actually says... Training pastors was the original reason we came to Malawi, and it has always been close to my heart to continue to disciple and teach pastors in the Bible studies I lead, as we continue our agricultural ministry. But we have been wondering (and praying) whether God might open a greater opportunity to reach more pastors. Recently, one of the pastors who attends one of our Bible Studies asked me if I could do a training for a group of pastors that he oversees. I was thrilled, and asked him what the training should be about. He replied, "Anything!" Everything is needed. He also told me that many churches only have one Bible and some churches have none. So, in May we set up two training weekends that were attended by about 50 pastors and lay leaders each time. We talked about how to interpret the Bible, and discussed the nature of salvation - what does God save us from? And what is His goal in saving us? We contrasted that with the culture's idea - that the "salvation" most people are looking for is all about temporal needs, and how that impacts both the rampant use of "charms" (witchcraft) and the wild popularity of the health and wealth "gospel." And then we explored Bible passages which would be helpful in leading people to Christ. At their request we also did some teaching, followed by lengthy and animated discussion, on how to have healthier marriages and families. One of the main highlights for our friends there was the Bibles that we sold well below cost. Praise God, more pastors can actually teach from God's Word now! They were all very appreciative and are hoping we will come back to teach more often.

Our regular Bible Studies and farmers trainings have also continued, and exciting things are happening there as well. Last year we began a program in which each attendance at Bible studies or trainings earns a further discount on the purchase of a Bible. This year we gave out the first free Bible based on frequent attendance. Also, a Muslim man in the farmer's group, who has always been very interested in both the Bible lessons and the farming lessons bought a Bible! And a government "agricultural extension worker," whose job is to train and encourage farmers, has also joined our group. He is excited about what we are



Machinga Pastor's Conference



First recipient
of a free Bible.

teaching, and feels that this is exactly what Malawi needs! He plans to encourage the group to continue in what they've been learning and said, "you will see changes when you come back."

My new translators have also told me how much they have learned through our work together, and how much they have personally benefited. With all those good things happening it seems wrong to go back to Canada again so soon, but we need to complete our mandatory days in Ontario to keep qualifying for OHIP (free health care), school for the kids, and other benefits. What we are most excited about, though, is seeing our boys again! God is reuniting the four Babcocks from Malawi, with Christopher who will be returning from Italy, and Jonathan who is coming from New Zealand. What a crazy life! We have much to be thankful for.

And we are so thankful for your faithful prayers and support. There are times when we know you've been praying for us as God carries us along, arranges meetings or circumstances, protects us, or works in surprising ways.

Please pray for us as we wrap up our work here and prepare to leave for Canada next week. Pray for protection over us and our ministry, helpers, animals and home. We wish you all many blessings, and a really great Summer! May you find time to connect in deeply meaningful ways with God, family, friends.

Yours in His love,

*Dean and Stephanie Babcock,
Sarah, and Elianna*

Instructions for sending support can be found at:
www.JesusLovesMalawi.com



Within this frame there likely live about a million people. Thank you for praying for Malawi.