

January Newsletter:

Howdy All!

Things have been busy here this past month, which in many ways is good. Of course that also means that I'm later sending my newsletter out.

Beginning of Classes

We began classes again on January 8. In the school now are 36 new first-year students. I have all of them in "Studies in the Pentateuch" classes. Some of them are very bright and capable, some of them are struggling a lot with English. I can see potential for fruitful ministry in several of them that I've had occasion to talk with personally. These men (and woman) come from across this small country, and one from just across the border in Zambia. **Please pray that these students would both grow in their ability to understand English and the other topics they are studying. Give God thanks for the fact that we have such a large class of incoming students, some of whom are already leading in various ways in their home settings.**

Our third-year students are only 9 in number, but all are capable of the level of work we ask from them. I have them for two classes- Reformation and Protestant Church History, and Doctrine of the Church. I think they are becoming able to grasp more abstract concepts, and analyze the theological positions of others. Like America, we have both some very sound churches that are growing here, others (like Jehovah's Witnesses and indigenous churches) that are looking for souls as well. My dream as always, is to see that these men are able to correctly explain the truth of God's word clearly and simply that even the uneducated in their churches would recognize the difference between true Christians and those who are following heresy. **Please pray that these men would continue to grow in their understanding of the truth and ability to discern truth from falsehood. Give God thanks for the growth they have experienced thus far in their seminary experience.**

Visits to the Villages

I've been able to visit our new village churches several times in the past month. We had a leader's training weekend the Saturday after Christmas. About 25 men and women showed up from a number of different churches. I was able to teach for nearly 2 hours (through a translator) on living as a disciple, one local pastor taught for 45 minutes on stewardship, and there was a Q&A time for around 45 minutes before lunch. One of the interesting questions that came up during that session was "if we have a man who is a very able leader, but a drunkard, can we call him as a pastor?". Needless to say, I ditched my planned afternoon lesson on leadership from Nehemiah, and spoke instead from 1 Timothy 3 on the qualifications of a pastor. These kinds of issues are very much something these young churches face here in Malawi. This is also one of areas of concern for the BACOMA (Baptist Convention of Malawi) leadership. While I have much that I'm excited about with our young churches in the Kasiya area, this and one other area also give me cause for concern. **Give God thanks for the interest in growing in the things of God on the part of these young churches. Please pray that they would be single-minded in**

their commitment to Christ, and grow in the knowledge of what following Christ means in their lives.

Well, I didn't take too many pictures this past month, (in addition to the above, I preached at an International Church here in Lilongwe for seven Sundays in Dember and January). I did attach a shot with one of my favorite scenes here. Each time I go to visit the village churches I enjoy seeing this acacia tree at the begining of the dirt road to Kasiya. This new year, God has been speaking to me about being attentive to hearing His voice. I hope God has blessed each of you with an awareness of an area He wants to grow you in your own life this year.

As always, thank you for your prayers. The fact that these students area at the seminary, and that these churches are in exisistence are answers to many people's prayers. *Tiona nabe*. (Talk to you later)

In Kingdom Service,
Andrew Rittenhouse



An acacia tree at the beginning of the dirt road to Kasiya.