

Mission Happenings & UPDATES

“Off-roading” is not a recreational activity

For some, “off-roading” is a recreational activity. For us, it is the daily commute to work. For more than a year, there has been major construction on the road between Blantyre (the nearest city), and Namikango. It seems to be nearly complete, reducing the travel time from two hours to around 45 minutes.

In June, Ryan, Amelie, and I made our official move into the town of Zomba – 10 miles north of the Mission and about 15 minutes travel time. But, alas, construction has been extended to this section of the road and has now turned this journey into an “off-roading” adventure. We bump and jostle between fields of maize now flat after harvest, over mounds of upturned dirt, and around piles of fresh gravel waiting to be laid. Large CAT machinery is dotted along the way as we drive home from Namikango, and enter Zomba town.

We’ve heard that construction will carry all the way through town, and anticipate many changes in the coming months as trees and buildings are marked with a red “X” indicating they are selected for demolition. Temporary road signs are placed all along the road, providing pictures of what to expect. Large exclamation marks are a foreboding sign to slow down, roll our windows up, and brace ourselves for whatever lies ahead. We know it will be nice to travel when it is completed.

Justine Hayes



Slow Going

Vehicle Thanks

Justine and I send our gratitude for your support and for the approval of the vehicle so Justine will be able to have transportation while I am at work. We are deeply grateful for each of you for your love, support, and prayers.

Ryan, Justine, & Amelie Hayes

Mozambique Visit

We have for the last four years promised a preaching visit for the Mozambican brethren but never fulfilled our promises due to logistical problems, including a lack of transport . . . until this year; we made the trip in a big way. A team of four drove deep into the Zambezia province in Mozambique to teach, preach and encourage our brothers in that area. Symon and Chitani were already there, they went ahead a week earlier on public transport (part of the way that is).

The rest of the trip saw them traveling 150 miles over dirty and dusty roads on top of trucks loaded with people and goods in areas where there are no buses. Symon and Chitani taught in five places before

Bisani and Moses caught up with them a week later. The team would rise early and teach until mid-afternoon before departing to the next meeting where hundreds waited to hear the Word taught. The teaching lasted until 10:00PM there; then these soldiers retired after a long day’s work. The cycle would repeat itself at the next location each day.

The climax of the visit was August 15th when eight diligent students were awarded their diplomas for completing their study program. This was a historic and colourful event which took place at Gurue. One student (with his wife and baby) walked some 20 miles to receive his certificate.



This Brother & his Family Walked 20 miles to Graduate...



Some meetings were so large we meet under the trees



Thanks to our donors for a fine vehicle that made this 665 mile trip possible.

This visit was very significant; it provided plenty food for thought for the future work in this territory. The Mission sends teachers and study material for the 15 Study Centres in Mozambique and we rejoice with the eight men who have sacrificed much in order to complete the four-year course.

We are grateful to our contributors for supporting this good work and for providing the vehicle which made this trip possible in an area where the harvest is very ripe but workers are so few. Bisani



Concluded from last month . . .

Ann Theisen's Travel Report

May 30th found me teaching at a village 50 miles from where John and I raised our family at Lubagha Village. I led a lovely class under the trees with many women sitting on mats. They gave me a chair to sit on and I was so glad - I did not know if I could get up off of that mat. I think sometimes those ladies have more endurance than I do. I also met several of the preachers at that village who had been supplied with bicycles they use for going out preaching. They travel to distant villages and it is such a good help to them to not have to walk. These bikes were supplied by churches in Mobile, AL and Buffalo, MO. This is also the village where Kemelton Harawa lives and is a chief. He was my husband John's secretary for some 25 years. He and my son Mark Thiesen made the arrangements of contacting preachers in the north to get these studies set up for me since they know all of them very well.

I had the privilege of meeting Dickson Gondwe an elderly preacher in his 80s that John had worked with for so many years and he set up a study for me in his village. May 31st was a bittersweet time for me since this good friend of John brought back many memories. It was an awesome day for me even if I was teary eyed part of the day. The class went well and at the end of it many took pictures and even hugged me - which they never did in the past; I can see their customs are changing. They seem to be more westernized now. They knew I have a favorite song in the Chitumbuka language and they sang it that day. It really made my day and touched my heart! What a wonderful time that was. I felt so at home.

I worshipped with the church at the town of Ekwendeni June the 1st and was asked to teach a ladies' class there in the afternoon which I did. Davis Ndhlove is the preacher there and he had called women from several different churches to come so we had a very good study there. I taught them on "Praising God." They always have lots of questions to ask after the class.

That same afternoon I wanted to go by and visit a worker that had worked for me for so many years. He washed our clothes by hand since we did not have a washing machine - we didn't even have electricity. He and his family were happy we came by. That same evening I had many come to visit and to tell me goodbye since I had plans to drive 500 miles the next day to Namikango Mission where our missionaries, Ben and Becca Hayes, had set up several ladies groups to study with me.

The next day we told my dear friends goodbye and left at 6:00AM for the nine-hour trip to the south. We had a very good trip and arrived by 3:00PM at Namikango Mission and were met by Ben and Becca, as well as Ben's brother Ryan and his wife Justine. I had a very good visit with them that evening as well as with B Shelburne - who was there on a teaching trip. John and I knew Brother Shelburne as a missionary in Malawi when he was here. He and his wife Ruth were missionaries for some 20 years. Such wonderful memories.

The next day I taught at Chilobwe - a suburb of Blantyre. I had taught there several times before so this was another homecoming for me. I gave them a lesson on "Choices and Their Consequences" as well as "Bringing Up Children." They always want lessons on raising children. After the study, my driver took me back the 35 miles to the Mission for visiting with the missionaries . . . and for some rest.

My last day of teaching was at a place called Chilimba - another suburb of Blantyre. It was a wonderful climax to my two weeks of teaching with 85 excited, happy women in attendance. At the end of the day they served cold cokes to all of us which were so good. I was quite thirsty and I don't dare drink water unless it is bottled. They even took one out to my driver. They sang a spirited song as they marched up, hugged me, and told me they loved me. As I said earlier - this is unusual and I felt honored. They count me as one of them. This is a great thing to happen to a missionary.

June 6th I had to leave my wonderful, adopted homeland where I lived for so long and where John and I raised our family and even had our daughter Kimberly born there. I reached the beautiful USA on June 7th, my birthday. What a wonderful way to celebrate the day. Most of my children met me at the Springfield airport and came back to my house for supper they had brought and to catch up on all the stories of their beloved home in Malawi.

I want to mention I had ladies from a total of 17 congregations in the north who attended the classes. I give God the glory for the wonderful experiences I had teaching and trying to help.

It was also wonderful getting to know Ben and Becca better. I appreciate their labors there so much as well as their hospitality to me. They have two precious children, Braylon and Brooklyn, who I enjoyed getting to be with. I was also happy to meet Ryan and Justine and their beautiful new baby girl Amelie who was born there.

God willing, I hope to repeat this trip next year. I am very thankful to all who made this possible for me. I appreciate it more than words can say.

Ann Theisen





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Ryan, Justine & Amelie Hayes

are settling into their new home in Zomba.

The Maluwa Family

The Maluwa family has been hit with 3 major events in the last two years. Any one of these is enough for a lifetime.

A major vehicle accident. Falless, Rodrick's wife, was riding public transport back from her distant home when the driver fell asleep, the vehicle rolled, and she was thrown from the vehicle. **Half a year later,** Rodrick was driving home from a village seminar when he was hit head-on by another driver. He has been slow to heal. **Then, most recently,** Falless was again traveling home and, not far from the previous accident, the bus she was riding in lost its brakes, the bus rolled, and she was again thrown from the vehicle. A month later, after several x-rays and examinations by different doctors, Falless is recovering with no major injuries to speak of (though there is still some pain) and Rodrick is alive and well, able to assist her in recovery as she did for him while he recovered.

When we visited Falless the night before leaving for the US, we heard an amazing story from Rodrick about the accident. He arrived at the scene many hours after the accident, but one of the ladies at the scene told him that when the bus lost control, Falless was heard crying out the name of "Jesus." When the accident was over and people were being taken to the hospital, it did not go unnoticed that Falless and many others were still alive, when they could have been killed.



**Falless & Rodrick Maluwa
after his head-on accident**

Rodrick decides to Retire

When any employee retires in Malawi, the government requires severance pay be paid by the employer based on the years worked. For someone like Rodrick who has worked 11 years at one place, that figure is fairly substantial. When it's all said and done though, we do not mind paying it as the work and service that we have received was so valuable. We are all so grateful for the godly dedication Rodrick has shown to the Mission all these years.

The day of Falless's accident was in the middle of Rodrick's last week of work at the Mission, which is not the way you would hope to end 11 years of service to a work you love.

Even so, the Maluwas' story is an amazing testimony to the power of prayer and God's kindness. All of us at the Mission and so many others feel so much gratitude to God for bringing this family through these events.

Rodrick and Falless are stepping into a new phase of life, and as it would be for any of us in similar situations, there can be concerns of many kinds, not least of all financially now that he has received his severance pay and is officially retired.

He asks us to please pray that God continues to provide direction for them, including partnering with the Mission on the occasional special project. We join him in that prayer and ask you all to continue to pray for Falless's recovery as well.

Ben Hayes