

Bill and Cyndi's March Newsletter

Habari za Leo (News of the Day),

We hope this letter finds everyone doing well. We are back in the states for a few weeks doing some work on preparing the next container for shipment and doing some fund raising. Things continue to go well at the mission. We are in daily contact with them. Garry Hill and Rebecca Benson are there working full time with the Bible Schools. We have also been working on getting the next Challenge ready to be published and that should go out in the mail in the next couple of weeks.

Below I am including a letter I received from Rebecca this weekend. It tells of an experience that just happened and reminds of us of the dangers that we can face sometimes. Now, I do want to say that the mission has very distinct rules and this incident reminds us why we have them. **We never allow any of our personnel to travel at night and this is one of the reasons why.** I have had people question why we are so strict about this, but I think now some will understand why.

Late last night, a group of Malawians was traveling from Dar-Es-Salaam back to their home country. Their route passed through the Chimala Mission. While driving through a forest between Iringa and Chimala, they came upon a roadblock of big stones across the road. A man dressed in a police uniform waved down the first car in the caravan. As the cars slowed to a stop, bandits armed with clubs and knives surrounded the three cars.

The second car attempted to drive around the barricade, but ditches had been dug on either side of the road. The car dived into the ditch and wrecked. The third car took a chance and drove straight over the rock barrier. They were able to drive on to the nearest police station.

The other Malawians were dragged from the remaining two cars and beaten with the clubs and knives. One man suffered a severe cut across his temple. They all suffered from multiple contusions and scrapes.

The police finally arrived only to find the one car still in the ditch and the other car stolen. The victims lay bruised and beaten along the side of the road. The police ushered everyone away from the scene of the crime, telling them to leave all their passports, visas, and over 60 million kwachas (about 40,000 US dollars) behind. One Malawian, who had just returned from Texas, left behind his American visa. The injured men were dropped off at the Chimala Mission Hospital.

Early this morning, hospital workers called the Malawian students attending Chimala Bible Institute. The students rushed to the hospital to meet the victims and attend to their needs. It turned out the victims were from the same village as Samuel Tambala, a first year student at CBI. Disturbed at their countrymen's plight, the students left to report the incident to Garry Hill, CBI's administrator. Garry saw the distress on the students' faces, and gave them a Bundt cake to calm them down. Then two girls who were attacked along with their brothers walked up. The students immediately handed over the cake and explained the police had given them neither food nor water since the attack.

Garry was able to give the Malawians enough money to fill the tank of their remaining car to get across the border. There, friends would meet them and help them on their way.

Garry and I have agreed to travel to Malawi before the end of the year to hold Bible studies and seminars in Samuel Tambala's hometown, where the victims were from. There is a serious opportunity for evangelism and the growth of the Lord's church originating from this tragedy and we intend to take full advantage of it. Praise God no one was killed before they could hear the truth of God's word!

Another providence of God is seen in Garry and my own protection from such a disastrous event. We planned this morning to travel to Iringa, through the very forest the robbery took place, to visit the American missionaries living there. We were unable to because a new tire failed to be delivered to Mbeya in time for the trip. Yesterday, we were frustrated and angry at the inefficiency of the African way of life. Today we are grateful. Not only were we able to use the money for the trip to get potential Christians safely home, we avoided unknowingly traveling through a dangerous area. Praise God for His amazing acts of kindness and compassion! I cannot wait to see what other good will become of this tragedy.

As I said above, these types of things do get your attention, but it also shows that there are so many ways we can serve and help when we live in third world countries and it is amazing how God opens doors for us to share his Gospel. I have traveled through this area that they are talking about literally hundreds of times without incident. I am sure that the police will crack down on this and get these people arrested. It does cause us some concerns when you hear of such things, but then I think of the souls that may come to know the truth when Garry and others travel to Malawi into their village. They have already received many comments back from Malawi and this village thanking them for their help.

Thanks for your continued support and prayers,

Bill and Cyndi