

African Training Schools Report

by Jerry V. Hogg

The Malawi International Bible Institute - Lilongwe, Malawi

The country of Malawi has become a very special place for me because of my involvement with the people of that nation. It all started with a few students who came to the *Southern Africa Bible College* (SABC) in Benoni, South Africa, for training. One particular student was **Moses Khombe**. He was a dedicated student with a strong desire to help the church grow and develop in his country, Malawi. During his last year at SABC, he reported that there was a serious famine in Malawi and that his family, in particular, was severely being affected. I was invited, along with **Al & Donna Horne** from SABC, to speak at the lectureship in Zomba, Malawi. While there, we heard of a number of serious situations with brethren, with many at the point of starvation. We were taken to a couple of villages to see first-hand just how grave the situation really was and what could be done to help. I made the decision that something must be done about the terrible plight of the Malawian people especially for our brethren.



Jerry Hogg is giving dehydrated vegetables to a young man in Malawi, witnessed by a crowd.

That decision led us to become involved in a major fund-raising campaign once I returned to the States. With the help of many churches and individuals, we were able to purchase and ship almost 1200 metric tons of white maize from South Africa to Malawi. Once the trucks began arriving in Malawi, I spent time there helping with the food distribution and preaching in different villages. Many were baptized, over 100 one weekend.

It was obvious from these experiences that the church in Malawi needs a good, strong evangelistic training program. Sometime ago, brethren from the Green Valley church in Noblesville, IN met with **Chris Swinford**, director of SIBI, to explore the possibilities of working together to form an exciting study program. It was agreed upon and a number of plans have already been accepted, with the school probably starting in 2011. The Green Valley congregation will be stateside sponsors, working with two Malawian congregations: the local Broad of Trustees and the Area 14 and the Red Cross churches. The local brethren will be heavily involved in both leadership roles and helping to fund the school.



Green Valley elders & Jerry (right) met with the Malawians to discuss the training school.

Every year since the mid-'70's, brethren have held an annual lectureship during the 3-day Easter Weekend using various venues: different cities in South Africa or in neighboring countries. Last year, it was held at Witbank, just east of Benoni. I have been privileged to be a part of that yearly

event and got to visit many brethren I have known for years from other places; folks I don't often see. This year, the **Annual Southern African International Lectureship** was conducted in Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi. I was invited to speak, along with **Scott Gordon**, an elder from the Green Valley church. We announced the formation of the **Malawi International Bible Institute** (MIBI) to the 1200+ Christians who had gathered for this exciting Lectureship. The Board of Trustees was selected, and the Dean of the new school was also announced. The more we talked, the more excited everyone became. We are now off and running!

With the plans now beginning to unfold for the starting of the Bible School, we were without any property upon which to establish the school. **Scott Gordon** and **Mike Farris** (who had accompanied Scott from Green Valley) and I went to look at two pieces of property. Both were ideal. The one was priced at \$35,000 for 20 acres. (Green Valley has \$25,000 available!) The other property was further away from the city of Lilongwe, but was still a very nice piece of land. After I left Malawi, the Green Valley brethren and some of the local Christians were invited back by the tribal leader to discuss the possibilities regarding this second piece of property. The tribal leader then increased the size of the property to approximately 175 acres.

Now, the wonderful and unbelievable news..... as the brethren sat with the local village people discussing the different aspects of the land, the costs, and possibilities for the school, the tribal leader made the astonishing announcement, ***"I want to GIVE this property to God!"*** This meant that the property was being given to MIBI at absolutely NO COST! The only money that would be exchanged would be a small monetary gift to the tribal leader for his generous gift. Green Valley brethren said they would arrange for this to be done, but the Malawian brethren (leaders from the Area 47 and Red Cross churches) said, "No, WE will pay that!" How could things get better than this?

Highlights for the proposed study program in Malawi:

1. The plans have been in the works for several years.
2. The brethren in Malawi are excited about the proposed training program.
3. Property has been given to MIBI by the tribal leader for development of the school.
4. The Board of Trustees has been organized, with Malawian churches agreeing to assist.
5. The Green Valley congregation of Noblesville, Indiana, will serve as stateside sponsorship.
6. Green Valley will be supporting the Dean/Director of the school.

Present Needs for the Malawi brethren:

1. Setup costs for the school: Study material and equipment (DVDs and DVD player).
2. Monthly Student support while they study full-time.
3. Construction costs for classrooms, offices, student dorms, and library.
4. Daily Operational costs for the school.

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