



Ferguson Report



Vol. 3 No. 7

“Go ye unto all the world”

July 2006

The Graves of Bandawe

Few missionaries to East Africa have not read nor been deeply touched by a book written by Claudene Connally entitled, *I Walked by His Side: Our Adventures in the African Bush*. Our tattered copy was considered basic equipment when we were trying to prioritize what to bring to Tanzania and what to leave behind. In her book, Claudene tells of the adventure she and her husband Andrew experienced during their three tours as missionaries in East Africa. The following article in Claudene’s book was written by Andrew following a trip to Malawi that has always touched my heart as I’m sure it will yours. Howell

* * * *

“On the western shores of beautiful Lake Nyasa stands a sobering testimonial to the faith and sacrifice of some twenty-three missionaries. These are the graves of Bandawe.”

“A few days ago, as I stood among these graves, my thoughts went back some seventy-five years when these men and women left their homes in Scotland with high hopes of dedicating their lives in service to the Africans of Nyasaland. No doubt their enthusiasm was great and they were eager to begin their new life in another world. Perhaps their good-byes and farewells were saddened as some realized that they were seeing loved ones and families for the last time. Africa, then, was virtually unknown and unconquered. Slavery, disease and war were rampant, yet these men and women went willingly and courageously with a firm faith in God and their mission. They spent months traveling to their destination, enduring untold hardships and danger to press on to Bandawe, the chosen site for a new Church of Scotland mission.”

“Dr. Laws, later the founder of Livingstonia Mission, was a man among men and an able leader in every respect. Under his direction, houses were built, buildings erected, and a church begun. In the years 1896 and 1897 this church was finished. A school was begun and hundreds of Africans were converted to their beliefs. Their work was a success. Yet, as always, a price had to be paid. Malaria and Blackwater fever, two of the most dreaded diseases of the tropics, were

making themselves felt. First one then another of these young people began to die. In a scant few months and years, twenty-three men and their wives and children paid the supreme price. These people were in the beginning of their lives, their early and latter twenties and early thirties. As one gazes at these graves, he is filled with emotion realizing the heartache and sorrow that was suffered here and at home as word finally was received that another had passed away. One small grave bears but one word on the marker, “Baby.” What joy and expectation this little one must have brought as he came into the world, and what heartache and longing must have been felt as he was laid to rest, surrounded by those just recently gone. The oldest one who was laid to rest in this graveyard was thirty-three years of age.”



“What spark of fire was kindled in the breast of these souls that led them to such sacrifice that cannot be rekindled in us today? Why would they leave all they held dear to spend and be spent in their devotion to their cause? What excuses did they overcome that we cannot overcome in matching their faith? What type of love did they have for their lost fellowman that we cannot have today? What had Christ produced in their hearts and lives that He has not produced in ours? What possible influence was brought to bear to bring them willingly to such an untimely end? What singleness of purpose caused them to persevere in spite of the chilling hand of death that turned these young lips to clay? What vision of tomorrow made the trials of today so easy to bear? What hope of future blessedness robbed death of its sting? And, O Lord, what did they have that I lack and what were they that I am not!”

By Andrew Connally

Ferguson Sponsoring
Congregation

Please send all contributions
to:

**WESTSIDE CHURCH
OF
CHRIST**

3235 HWY 54 WEST
BROWNSVILLE, TN 38012
(731) 772-3810

“Ferguson Mission”

Monthly commitments and one-time
donations still needed

**Bear Valley Bible Institute of
Denver**

A work of the Bear Valley Church of
Christ, 2707 S. Lamar St, Denver, CO
80227 (303) 986-5800
<http://www.bvbid.org>

Howell Ferguson, Ext. Coordinator
Chimala, Tanzania, E. Africa
Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver
22 Tanbark Cove
Bells, TN 38006
(731) 984-7409
hferguson@bvbid.org

The Price of Progress

Recently during one of my presentations at a supporting church someone asked me how long it would take for a new student with no church work experience to finally be able to begin teaching in the Chimala Bible College. My reply was approximately six years. This is due to three factors: 1) the undergraduate Bible program lasts two years; 2) the graduate Bible program lasts another two years; and 3) the graduating student needs at least two years church work experience before he can teach in the college. Obviously, special circumstances could alter things, but six years is the estimated time.

Following that answer I further explained that the concept of the extension program is not a “quick fix” with immediate and large numbers of conversions. Naturally, we want our students to be involved in evangelism and expect there to be conversions along the way from those with whom they study. But the overreaching goal of the extension program is to train local brethren to teach themselves, to become leaders among their own people, and to do this eventually without American assistance. That indeed is a long-term goal and will not happen overnight. In the meantime, the BVVID extension program requires that its staff travel and teach courses in the extension

schools on a regular basis. The Bear Valley elders believe this is the right approach and are doing all they can to promote this effort; but it takes money.

The conclusion of this month of July marks the second year of my work with the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver as the stateside coordinator for the Chimala Bible College. God has more than blessed my efforts in the role that I have in the extension program. However, after this next teaching trip to Chimala in September, my work fund will be depleted. I am not worried about it, but I do want to be responsible for keeping my end of this boat afloat. I have absorbed operating costs several times because I do not believe I can justifiably ask for your help without sacrificing for the work myself. I do not currently have a yearly work fund raised, but have been able to “coast along” for the past two years with previous one-time donations. This has allowed me to travel and teach in our classes as well as organize and promote CBC, but that momentum is ending.

As a congregation, would you please consider making a one or two year commitment to assist with my work fund? My sponsoring congregation, the Westside church of Christ (see above) receives the funds and reports in a professional and timely way. In behalf of the Chimala Bible College, your assistance is greatly needed and appreciated. Howell