

“It looked rather official...”

As the days drew on toward the end of 2017, it was on my mind to visit the post box as the *mother-in-law* (she who must be obeyed) had kindly sent me a Christmas pudding – one of my favourite Christmas treats. Christmas was only a few days away and I was thinking about sitting down in an armchair to watch the Queen’s speech, with a bowl of Christmas pud topped off with loads of double cream (yes, we had managed to find some cream which is very scarce here). In the post box I found a brown enveloped letter addressed to me. It looked rather official, and as I drove back to the house I debated whether to open it or leave it until the New Year. I don’t receive that many letters, so curiosity won the day. The letter had taken over three weeks to be delivered and was from a group of five congregations in the Southern Region of Malawi – right down the bottom of Malawi close to the boarder with Mozambique. Earlier that year we (the staff and students) had travelled down to the Southern Region to plant a new congregation. Myself and two of the teachers drove further down to meet a group of church leaders. These leaders had heard that Mzuzu Bible College was travelling up and down Malawi with the students preaching the gospel and planting congregations, and were keen to have us work with them; but they were also not sure about what we teach. The following are some excerpts from the letter (reproduced as written):

“This is the request from all brothers who attended that lesson you taught... Not only from the attendants but also those who did not attend but have seen the fruits which have been produced by that lesson are also in need of another meeting. The church has completely changed after your lesson... Now, the brothers are not satisfied, that is why they ask you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ to come here again and delivery another lesson. These brothers are commenting that have learnt to lead the church by the Bible and not by people’s mind. Indeed, it is a real defeat to devil since we are together as one and allowing a Bible only to guide the church...”

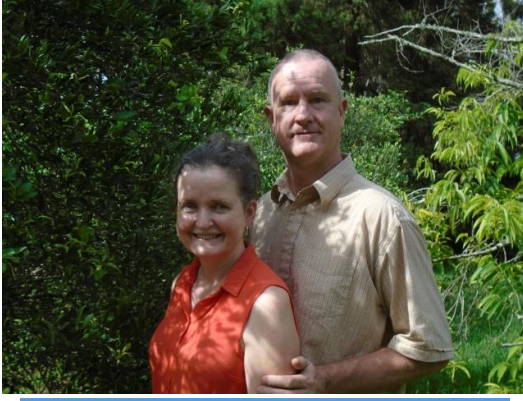
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Marc and Christine Veary

What an encouraging letter! What a great end to 2017! What greater hope and optimism it inspires for 2018! When we first came to the College, there were just eight students from the Northern Region. One of our goals was to make the College more accessible and inclusive for brethren across the length and breadth of Malawi. We now have teachers from both the Central and Southern Regions; lessons are now taught in Chicheŵa (the national language of Malawi) and English (the business and legal language of Malawi),

and our catchment area now encompasses the whole of Malawi – 60% of our students for 2018 come from the Central and Southern Regions.

Graduation

At the end of October 2017, we graduated both the Mzuzu School of Preaching (MSOP) and Bear Valley Bible Institute of Malawi (BVBIM) students (our first group from BVBIM).



We are all so proud of what these students have achieved in their studies over the past two years, and we are already hearing good reports of the work these graduated students are doing, with the good news of two new congregations having been recently planted.

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Hope and Optimism

Lord willing, 2018 will be a great year. Our academic year starts on the 5th February and we will have a cohort of over **50 students** studying with us. Twenty-seventeen was one of our most fruitful years for preaching campaigns with over **280 souls saved**.

This year, we have six major gospel preaching trips planned – two in each of the regions of Malawi.

Our hope and prayer is that the Lord will continue to use us this year to reach those who are lost. Last year saw our preaching campaign plans beset with problems regarding transport, this year these issues are now behind us with our newly acquired coach. We are very thankful to our Heavenly Father and to all those who made this coach a reality.

This year is shaping up to be a great year and we are full of hope and optimism for the future of the work here in Malawi. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to make this work what it is today.

Now is the time

As we look to this new year we should remember that tomorrow is not guaranteed for any of us. As Christians, we have the hope of eternal life burning in our hearts; but there is a work, the Lord's work, to do here and now. This is the time. This is the place. This is the moment. We continue to urgently need your support, particularly regular monthly contributions. Funding the Lord's work is so important; when we are out preaching, you are preaching with us; when we are teaching, you are teaching with us. The lost are reached with the gospel and the Lord's church strengthened because we all working in fellowship together – each supplying what the other lacks. There are also other ways to contribute: why not visit us? Are you a tailor or seamstress and willing to pass on your skills? A carpenter/joiner wanting to help others learn a trade? We have a growing *vocational training programme*; we need your help. Beekeeping, sub-Saharan farming, first aid, vehicle mechanics, welding and fabrication. There's a place and job for anyone who has the skills and desire to be involved. Contact us for more details.



College staff and the newly-acquired coach

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