

# Jesus Loves Malawi Update

## Summer, 2016

“Find out where God is working and join Him there.” Maybe you have heard this advice from Henry Blackaby before. As we are celebrating being back in Malawi for 2 years we would like to give testimony of how we have seen Him at work and how He placed us right in the midst of some very exciting things. Not by our own cleverness, but by His grace!

On a couple of occasions we have mentioned our colleagues. They are a team of five families from Europe and South Africa, all with different gifts, but working together to spread the Kingdom of God and help the poor. We don't all live near each other, but we recently had a wonderful team get-together. Our colleagues are a real blessing and inspiration to us. And God is doing amazing things in their lives and ministries.



Our Malawi team

The Bos family lives right around the corner from us, and from day one they have been extremely helpful, encouraging and inviting us to partner in their work. They have been in Malawi for many years and have laid a lot of ground work. God gave them the name **Maluwa** for their ministry, which means flowers, because they want to see people blossom and flourish both spiritually and physically. Shortly after choosing this name they started ministry in an area where people were very eager to learn about Foundations for Farming (FfF) (aka Farming God's Way). Later they discovered that the name of the chief and the village is... Maluwa! It was a wonderful confirmation that God is at work. Chief Maluwa has seen first hand the positive improvements that FfF is making and has given Maluwa ministries a large plot of land in the village where they are now not only having demonstration gardens and fields, but are also starting to build a training center! We have become more and more involved in that village through Maluwa Ministries, especially Dean, who has been going there almost every day.

Awhile back a big open day for the ministry drew many people to learn about Foundations for Farming and to see what God is doing there. When our colleague, Johannes, explained how the chief had donated the land to show better agricultural practices, someone from the village joked: “Yeah, because this is the worst piece of land.” However... even though it is not great farm land, that small field produced 10 bags of corn, while surrounding bigger fields yielded only 3 bags this year!!! People are beginning to see the difference, and God is at work. The original 7 farmers that they trained and disciplined for two years have now been training over 80 other farmers!



Ladies learning about vegetable gardening in Maluwa

Dean had a wonderful opportunity to help some of those original farmers introduce Foundations for Farming in another village. The best part is that it was all at their initiative. They had told some friends about their success, and were asked to come and teach these “new” methods. That's when they asked us for some help with transportation and showing some videos. So Dean provided the wheels and equipment, spoke very little, and watched with thanksgiving while Malawians shared with Malawians,

in their own language, how God has already provided so many resources that we overlook, and introduced the basics of FfF. The people there were eager to get started, and invited us back to teach them how to make compost. We are excited that these farmers want to share what they have learned and that they are now teaching others!



Learning about bees

Christopher, Steffi and Dean also received some training themselves, when they attended a course on keeping bees and growing mushrooms taught by our team leader, Johann van der Ham. Our hope is that Malawians will thrive both spiritually and physically. Thriving physically means that they need to have more than just adequate nutrition (although that is a very necessary start!), but they also need to have an income stream to pay for their kid's school fees or medicine when they get sick! In order

to help them find ways to make money our colleagues have taught various skills such as sewing and jam and juice making. We are hoping to add honey and mushrooms to the list of things which can be sold for profit or to supplement their own diet. A few weeks ago Dean hung the very first beehive in Maluwa. Since you can't buy bees here in Malawi, you hang the hive in a location that you hope the bees find attractive, and wait for wild bees to move in. This process can take weeks or even years. Imagine everybody's surprise when a swarm of bees moved in that very afternoon!!! God is at work!

Dean also started construction on a mushroom house in the village where we can teach others how to grow mushrooms. It is a small building made of local materials and lined with plastic, where temperatures and humidity are beneficial for growing mushrooms. Since we needed shade, it was decided to build the house around poles that will sprout again and become trees, making the whole building process a bit of a learning curve. (Dean jokingly refers to it as his tree house). But some of the material was provided by the chief himself. And another chief, who is also a carpenter, has been helping a lot. This chief happens to be a Muslim. Pray that he and Dean will develop a good relationship through their work.



Chris helping build the Mushroom House

Dean was also privileged to help at an intensive training put on by our team leader in Blantyre. It was a wonderful opportunity to teach future trainers on "What is the Gospel."

As we look back we are deeply thankful that God placed us in such a great team, that we get to join people that have been laying a foundation for several years already, and that we continue to see Him at work!

Thank you so much for all your prayers and support. We are so blessed and thankful that you are part of what God is doing here in Malawi.

Yours in His love,

*Dean and Stephanie Babcock,*

*Christopher, Jonathan, Sarah, and Elianna*



Guess who?