

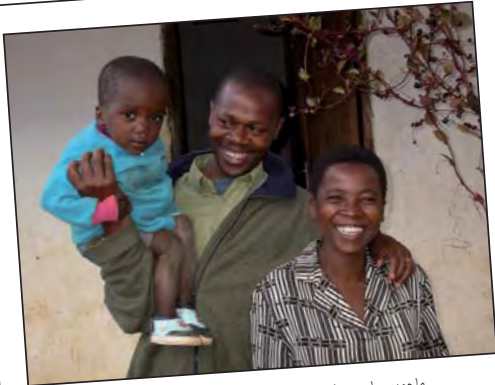
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Emmanuel International UK News
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OCTOBER 2009

Gospel Partnership Much More than a Loose Connection!

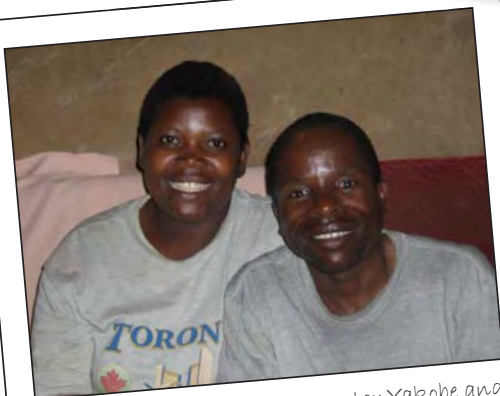
Scott and Lorilee MacLean have served with EI in Malawi from 1997 until 2009. It has been their privilege to partner closely with the Evangelical Baptist Church of Malawi and, as a result, to have experienced first-hand the mutual benefit and blessing that Gospel partnership can bring. They are currently working with EI Canada.



Beatix and Rose Wachimwa, the church planters Scott and Lorilee worked with closely for the past four years.



The MacLeans making bricks with the people at Chisomo Church in Lilongwe.



The MacLeans worked with Pastor Yakobe and Falesi for the past 12 years. He heads up the Leadership Training Program and the EBCM's first Bible College.

The jolt of the aeroplane wheels signalled our arrival in Malawi. Tired and feeling vulnerable to everything, the thought came to mind, "What have we gotten ourselves into?" It was more like a whimper coming from a broken-down, dog-tired, fresh-off-the-boat (plane in this instance) new missionary, than a serious questioning of our call. Twelve years have passed. That mist-like state that shrouded that first confused cry has given way to a clear-minded answer: Gospel Partnership—that is what we have gotten ourselves into!

We were well into our 12th year in Malawi and sitting across the table from me was the EBCM (Evangelical Baptist Church of Malawi) General Secretary, Pastor Justice Chikwindile. We began with what was to be a run-of-the-mill discussion and the writing of a project proposal. The canyon of visible differences between us was obvious though by now we had known one another for a long time. To the casual observer of our discussion, I was Canadian, English speaking and wealthy. Abusa (Pastor), on the other hand, was Malawian, Chichewa-speaking and definitely not wealthy! What could possibly bring us together? How could we hope to connect on any significant level given the massive differences in our upbringing and life experiences? Out there, somewhere, was there a cord of commonality that we could both grab onto, strong enough to enable a genuine, deep partnership? We both knew and believed there was. Nevertheless, it had to be stated again and again by both of us, clearly and unashamedly, if our Gospel partnership (this time expressed over the writing of a proposal) was to have any depth and longevity. Our conversation went something like this:

Abusa Chikwindile*: *"I believe God wants the believers in the EBCM church, though they are poor, to be good stewards with their gifts, talents, time, opportunities and money (though small) and to use these for God's glory and for the help of brothers/sisters and neighbours."*

Missionary: *"I agree; God put you in Malawi and me in Canada for a reason; it is not an accident."*

Abusa Chikwindile: *"Eeeeeehhhhh!"* (Rough translation: "Yeah, that's right!")

Missionary: *"Without this confidence, you and I might as well quit."*

Abusa Chikwindile: *"Eeeeeehhhhhhh!"*

The Apostle Paul, in a different meeting of the highest court of Athens said: *“Men of Athens... From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live... For in him we live and move and have our being”.* (Acts 17:22, 26, 28a) Faith in this truth, that God does not randomly locate people in particular nations, is a thick enough cord to support Gospel partnership in the midst of significant challenges and testing of all kinds.

Our birthplace is no accident. Our time, gifts, opportunities and money are all gifts from the same God. Yes, there are differences, but these differences do not need to hinder the outworking of Gospel partnerships where all parties can be on equal footing, regarded with equal esteem. Gospel partnership, with faith firmly rooted in this conviction, is more powerful than other noteworthy professional partnerships rooted in common allegiances. As significant as the Hippocratic Oath is to doctors, and it is, and as significant as the engineer's ring to the engineer, Gospel Partnership is to run qualitatively deeper than all other partnerships. Professionalism, and in particular partnerships forged entirely on professional values, insists on boundaries, suitable/proper protocol with defined and limited expectations. With Gospel partnership there is no fine print but rather a bold expectation to give our lives to God and one another freely and in a costly way. We all know this to be true, but we fear what it might mean to live out.

Ajith Fernando helps us move toward a more complete embrace of genuine Gospel partnership in contrasting Biblical stress and other not so biblical kinds of stress. Here is what he says: *“One of the results of opening our lives to others and yearning for them is stress. Paul described this in 2 Cor 11:28, 29: ‘Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?’”* ... A lot of our stress, then, is unbiblical. Biblical stress comes out of a love for others, not a lust for achievement. It is the inevitable result of identifying so closely with people that we begin to bear their burdens.”

Let us not shrink back from the Abusa Chikwindiles of the world, but rather with the strength and love that God provides in Christ, unhesitatingly partner, “till death do us part.”



The MacLean family (fltr): Jessie, TJ, Scott, Will Lorilee and Mitch.

** Abusa Chikwindili has just lost his wife of more than 30 years to complications with malaria. They were a team and she was one of our most godly women leaders in the church. This is a painful loss for everyone but especially for the Chikwindili family. Please pray for them.*

Highlights of the partnership between EIM and EBCM that Scott and Lorilee had the privilege to be part of:

- More than 190 leaders trained in a two-year theological training program
- 62 pastoral training booklets published by SEAN (UK-based) translated into Chichewa
- A house purchased by a UK donor which is used for income generation for the Leadership Training Program
- The Leadership Training Program is now a 100% nationally run program under the leadership of Pastor Yakobe.
- A large church centre built which is now used for youth/women's/leadership events.
- An addition to the church which is now the national Bible school for the EBCM
- Support for several Bible school students who are now serving as pastors/leaders in the EBCM
- And so much more... mentoring, spiritual formation retreats in their home, etc.

New Grants Manager in Malawi

We are glad to announce that Steve Koop has just taken up the post of Grants Manager in Malawi. He is the eldest son of Marv and Pat Koop who have a long-standing relationship with EI.

NEWS FLASH!

We are very pleased to announce that Andy and Angela Sharpe's application for visas and residency permits to live and work with Emmanuel International in Tanzania has been approved! Thank God that He answered our prayers in this regard. Please continue to pray for Andy and Angela as they prepare to go and do God's work. They are planning to go to Tanzania in January 2010.

Tim and Rachel Monger are at the point where they are applying for their visas and residency permits to work in Tanzania. Tim is on the EIUK Board of Trustees. We would appreciate your prayers for their application.



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