



# Dehnerts in Malawi

October 12, 2007

Moni Onse – Greetings everyone,

We have reached Mid-Term! The students are up to their ears in preparing papers and exams. It has been a good semester so far.

**Finding a Wife:** As we drive to Chimoka village for outreach one of the female students (maybe mid to late 30s) has been instructing the young men in the group in finding a wife. Most of the time they speak in Chichewa, so I have to ask for a translation periodically to find out what they are talking about. It seemed to me that she was mostly pushing them to get a girl and I thought that strange as she does not have the greatest of marriages herself. However, much of the discussion has been in dealing with the men's attitudes towards girls with a promiscuous past.

According to doctors and the average Malawian that we have talked with, women (by college age) have been the most sexually active of the two sexes. I was asking the students why that was and there were a couple of reasons they gave – poverty and peer pressure. Many of the girls become sexually active at a very young age with a man, or men, that may provide some kind of financial support to the family. I don't get the impression it is really what we would normally see as prostitution as they don't stand on the street corner...they are maybe more particular about their men. Also, the tribal religions have a number of traditional sexual practices that force sex upon young girls. This may (I don't really know) create an atmosphere that it is just normal within the culture for the girl to be sexually active outside a committed, marital relationship.

In any case, the men were bemoaning the lack of virgins to marry. The ladies in the group were questioning the men's understanding of 2 Corinthians 5:17 – *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* Are they willing to see girls who have a sexually active past as *new creations in Christ*? The question came up whether they are willing to forgive the girls for their promiscuous past. But, really they are not the ones who are to forgive! We discussed that they are both rejecting faith in Christ's forgiveness of the girls and failing to recognize their own sins that can be brought forward by the girls!

But, another issue that puts more of a ply in the ointment is the fact that many of the girls may have HIV/AIDS as a consequence of either their promiscuity or rapes. So, does a man/woman require of their friend a test? If they do have AIDS, do they reject the idea of marriage? Knowing that if they have children the children may likely contract HIV and die and the wife/husband will certainly die within 10

years of being married and not be there to raise the children? A rather difficult ethical question and challenge to our compassion.

Please be praying for Connie as she may be headed to South Africa this coming week.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support everyone!

Kelly & Family

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