

# Dehnerts in Malawi



February 17, 2008

Dear Friends,

It has been over a month – pepani (sorry). Maybe it has given you a chance to read your other mail as I know this is first priority! ☺

Thank you so much for your prayers and periodic updates on your own lives. It is always good for all of us to get our mind off our own circumstances and pray for others in their difficulties. We really have a pretty sweet life here and it is all too easy to live a life of ingratitude. Connie and I always say we have *learned to be discontent in whatsoever state we are in!*

Every time a short-term missionary comes to ABC and we have the opportunity to talk about Malawi in general and ABC in particular it gives us a fresh perspective on our new home (aliens though we be). Sometimes it is a very uncomfortable perspective. As an example, we recently spent time with a couple pastors from the US, one of which is African-American. He was raised during the civil rights movement in the US and is very sensitive to race relations.

What he saw here in Malawi was a lot of white faces ruling over black faces. This makes apparent a difficult ethical issue in Malawi. Much of what separates the races is education, but what is visual to the visitor is this imbalance in the workforce (we get used to seeing it). Those who are educated in Malawi are the ruling “class”. It doesn’t matter whether they are white European (us included in that classification), Malawian black or Malawian white; those who are educated are the bosses of mission organizations (religious or not), the government, farms and larger businesses.

It is the hope of many foreign organizations working for the development of Malawi that more and more Malawians, who have lived in poverty, become prosperous building the middle class. Though we know this can make life easier (in some ways) and indeed safer (health-wise), financial prosperity is not our first priority at African Bible College. Though we want to educate the whole person, likely making them more employable in good paying jobs, the goal is growing the individual in his relationship to God and man, not wealth. The results may be material wealth, but not our primary goal.

Recently, Connie and I have been reading “*The Rare Jewell of Christian Contentment*” by Jeremiah Burroughs, a Puritan pastor in the 1600s. Burroughs was writing during a time when many people would be living much like Malawians – completely dependent on the year’s rainfall and the kindness of the neighbor when down and out – not like us Westerners with the ease of import goods!

He said, “*A godly heart enjoys much of God in everything he has, and knows how to make up all wants in God himself.*” Ah...if you unpack that statement you have an unbelievable comfort in whatsoever circumstances you find yourself. It means *it don’t mean a thing if it ain’t in Christ*. The comforts of this world cannot and should not be our comfort; a gift and kindness of God, yes, but no more than when we have little in the way of creaturely comforts (friends, money, things). For in those times of lack, we should find all we need in God Himself, not in things.

We will pray for your contentment if you will pray for ours. This kind of contentment helps us to deal with those both greater and lesser in wealth in ways of both grace and generosity.

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**In addition would be praying regarding the following things:**

**Britney to Malawi:** Britney is going to be traveling to Malawi in early May after school. She will be here to do short term mission work with ABC Christian Academy, tutoring students struggling at the end of the school term. She is an elementary education major and will be getting excellent experience and helping tremendously at the Academy as there are many students who have English as their second language. However, she will not have a paying summer job for college! We view it as part of our mission here and an opportunity to spend time with her. If you would like to help support her, please let us know or send to ABC designated to Britney Dehnert.

**Instruments:** African Bible College needs band instruments for the music program. We not only need to replace old instruments, but need to add to our inventory due to the growth of the band program. We expect to have between 45 and 55 students involved in band next year. If you have one to donate, please make sure it is in excellent working condition (we have little ability to make major repairs) and send it to:

African Bible College  
Music Department  
5343 Clinton Blvd.  
Jackson, MS 39209

**ABC Christian Academy Teachers:** Please pray that the following positions are filled for the Academy next year –

- Two Pre Kindergarten teachers.
- Two Second Grade teachers
- One Third Grade teacher
- One Sixth Grade teacher
- One Middle School Science, Math teacher...primarily Science
- One Computer Teacher – Pre Kindergarten through Ninth Grade. IT (Information Technology) experience would be very helpful. This could possibly be two people, a teacher and an IT person.
- One PE teacher –pre kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- One Special Education teacher / leader Pre Kindergarten through 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

By *God's Grace*,  
Kelly, Connie, Britney, Joel, Shea and Janelle