

PARTNERPLAN

Gary Brough - Malawi September 2021

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Dear friends,

The brick wall around our house has succumbed to the heavy rains and has become something of an allegory for our present season. For the second time this year a section has fallen, revealing a lack of firm foundation. Brick fences as they are known here are a common sight in urban areas. They are often erected long before the house is even finished and separate family and public life. They also stop chickens from wandering out and stray dogs from wandering in.



A happy carrot farmer

We've become quite used to being surrounded by these walls during our arrival quarantine, when schools were closed and when working from home. Malawi's third COVID wave is decreasing and while there is no strict lockdown, we've made efforts to minimise our risk and those of others. We're incredibly grateful for secure home and spacious garden in which to find some refuge.

As normality has returned with the school run, office meetings, church gatherings and the like our time beyond the walls is expanding again. As is the case in many places, that means an adjustment to not only routine but to interacting with people face to face again in greater numbers and with greater frequency. There are joys in those interactions as we gather as church to

sing praises to God, as project teams meet to work in greater unity and to be sharing food together as friends.



Queuing for an "MOT" certificate

There are also inevitable challenges. In addition to the wall falling, in the last few weeks, we've been dealing with a broken-down vehicle, delays in getting visas and difficult tax processes. These very average day to day challenges seem to cast a longer shadow as we adjust to dealing with things face-to-face again.

It's been a welcome reminder that as we live life, with remaining restrictions and with rediscovered freedoms it's important that we do keep moving. More so that we keep interacting with others. As a Mission Partner, I'm conscious that the tasks that make up my working day are not the sum of my role. The relationships are just as, if not more important in bringing growth, learning and opportunities for fruitfulness.

In church we reflected on our freedom in Christ. It seemed such a timely reminder to consider Galatians 5:1: "That It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let

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yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." Christ has done the work of setting us free, but it is our responsibility to continually claim and live in that freedom.



Engaging school pupils on the issue of Child Marriage

It's a privilege to work alongside colleagues in promoting freedom, life in all its fullness. In a country where 80% of people would say they are Christian there are many areas where the freedom Christ has secured is not being realised. Young people aren't always free to participate in decisions affecting their lives and communities. Girls are often not free to attend school and pursue their hopes for the future. Women all too often aren't free from violence in their own homes.

Malawi has enjoyed greater political freedom, with the last presidential elections being rerun and the new government operating in a climate of peace. Steps are being taken to bring freedom from corruption, albeit this will be a long road.



Most of the Church & Society Programme Team

For all the challenges, we hold on to the joys and have much to be thankful for. In work, we're making good progress with work on child marriage and access to justice which give us hope for the future. We've been able to grow consultancy activities beyond what we expected for this year which is helping with financial security.

Talking of walls, it was a delight to work with our local church and bring some support from Scotland to help support a local family in financial need. The family, grandparents and x grandchildren were living in cramped and rundown conditions when their story made it into

the Guardian. The focus was Gift and his efforts to provide for the family since his parents left, making and selling charcoal stoves while still trying to finish school. It was great to see the local church respond quickly to this news from their own community.

They provided food, blankets and household supplies and rallied support to help the family finish building a new house. We were able to connect some well-wishers from home to provide roofing materials but were delighted to be in the background with the local church leading the way.



The Malawi Mission Partners together – Rev Ken Ross, Dr Linus Malu and the Broughs

For the family, the girls have returned to school and nursery with great enthusiasm. We all continue to enjoy good health. The prolonged rains and warming temperatures have meant a particularly productive spell in the garden. After welcoming Temwa ("love") the cat at the beginning of the year, we now have puppies, Mork and Mindy, too. They help exercise the children and our patience in equal measure! We recently enjoyed a visit

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from Rev Ken Ross another Mission Partner working in Malawi and a family from our home church, Kirkintilloch Baptist, who are now living in Lilongwe.



Gift's old house (left) & new house (right)

We value your continued support and prayers. If you'd like to know more about the current child marriage work, there is a video you can watch here: <https://youtu.be/oX1izzFbtsc>. We are also praying that you are remaining encouraged and fruitful as we watch restrictions ease, but uncertainties remain. We're so grateful that, whatever our present circumstances, "if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed".

Every blessing,

Gary, Jacqueline, Eilidh and Morven (and Mork, Mindy and Temwa!)



Family photo at the top of Kaning'ina hill, Mzuzu



Mork and Mindy



Temwa



Mindy (I think!)