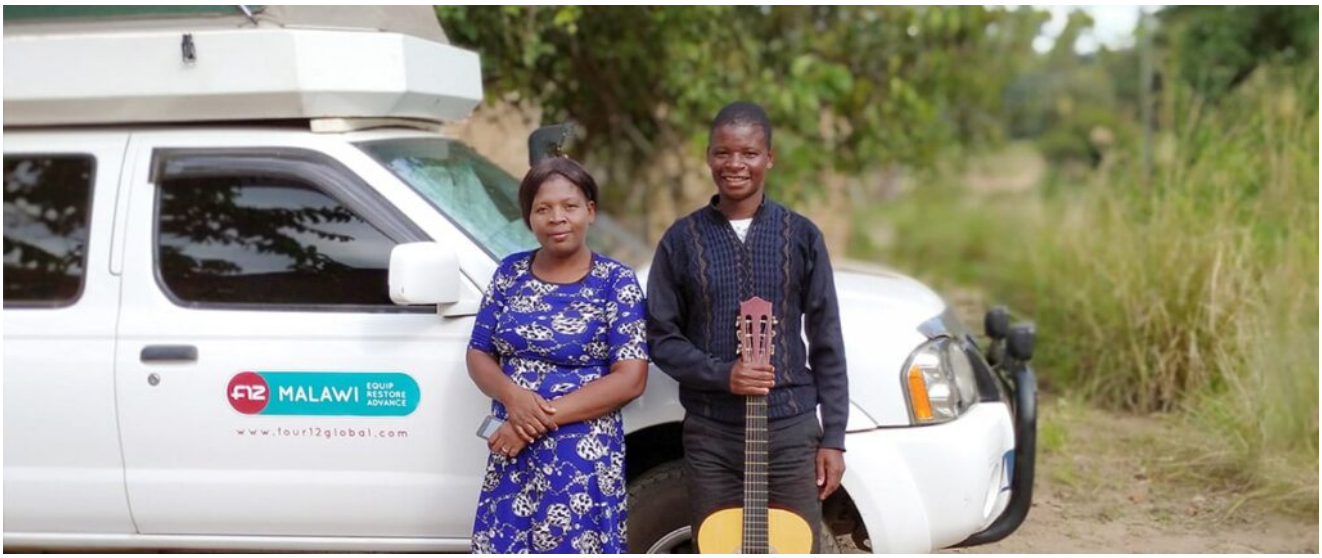
# Adventure of a Lifetime

Lance & Sue McIntosh 5 November 2020




2020 was one of those years when normal planning had to be set aside as we all waited for the impact of the restrictions placed on us as a result of COVID-19. But Jesus knew everything was going to happen the way it has, and our level of trust has grown as we have seen the Holy Spirit working deeper, rather than wider.

> **In a faith-based culture, the Malawian response was typically, 'We don't believe COVID is real. Show us a body?**

In a faith-based culture**,** the Malawian response was typically, 'We don't believe COVID is real. Show us a body? We have people dying every week from Malaria – we understand that is a danger. We have prayed and we believe COVID will stop at the borders.'

When the official lockdown was announced, it was prevented by a court order that declared Malawi a democracy and churches essential. With this news, the Four12 team decided to travel to individual churches only and to close the leadership training school and Four12 Equip. We seriously missed our visiting international teams this year, but have continued to have some amazing experiences that we can't wait to share:

**Our Volunteers**

Nerina and Sebastian arrived in February, and their experiences changed their lives. During their time with us, we saw many healings, salvations and momentum growing in the churches we

visited.

> **Volunteering under the leadership of Lance and Sue…really helped me to see…how the apostolic is a necessary and irreplaceable gift to the church.**

Nerina shared the following, 'Volunteering under the leadership of Lance and Sue – watching their marriage, learning from their teaching at the Leadership Training School and watching them minister to leaders and pastors – really helped me to see, up close, how the apostolic is a necessary and irreplaceable gift to the church. Serving as part of the team has also helped me to see the practical (not just theological) way in which an apostle keeps other leaders accountable, bringing direction and correction, and how they build up the church with the truth and with the gifts of the Spirit (sometimes healing, prophecy or casting out demons). I've learned that when we live in God's design for His church as it is written in the Bible, there is much blessing and growth. Furthermore, my time in Malawi has been a time of rest, a time of escaping from the rat-race of life and revisiting my priorities and goals. God uses the quiet to speak, to shape and direct.'

**Leadership Training**

So much deep work was done in the lives of men and women during our Church Leadership Training modules at The Base. Many were filled with the Spirit, learned how to study the Bible and learned about the foundations of the faith, how to lead worship, how to build healthy New Testament churches and more. Since then, their churches have grown in number, and they have experienced the Holy Spirit like never before. Some of the leaders had the following to say:

- **Mary and Kennedy Mafuta** of Glad Tidings Area 36 saw their church baptised in the Holy Spirit and about 16 people baptised in water this year. They also came with us to Connections Church in Kande for ministry, catching the heart of partnering.
- **Jombo Rice**, who cycled 280km for training, said: 'I learned that you can't speak with your forefathers, because at first, I was worshipping these dead people.'
- **Blessings Kabanda** said, 'Through the ministry of Four12, I have learned that if you want to be a leader, you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will lead us not to rely on religion, but He will open the eyes of people to do the will of God.'

We are also excited to see **creative songs** being written by the groups, with one of them being sung in most of the Four12 churches!

Leadership training continued in **central or outlying churches**, with the team doing 35 days of leadership training in total. The most exciting was seeing a whole group of pastors and wives

forgiving one another, confessing their sins to one another and restoring unity. Since then, they have testified of transparent relationships and that the Holy Spirit is filling groups of leaders in their churches.

**Salvations & Healings**
It has been incredible to see many salvations and healings at The Jesus Movie showings, along with the with Covid information sessions. We saw a child healed from Malaria and many responded to the gospel in Dwangwa.

> **At Chambwe, the whole church of about 40 responded to the gospel… 'They have never understood salvation, faith and repentance before. Most of them were living by laws.'**

At Chambwe, the whole church of about 40 responded to the gospel, including the pastor and his wife. When we asked the translator, Enoch, whether they were all genuine first-time salvations, he replied, 'They have never understood salvation, faith and repentance before. Most of them were living by laws.'

In that same church, we were able to teach them all to care for a little boy in tatters with such bad eczema that the flies were settling on his body. Lance shared from Acts 2:45, 'They sold possessions and gave to those who had need.' The people were expecting us to pray for a miracle or to take the child to the clinic, but we asked that the pastor sell his second tie and that the people cut off a third of their pieces of soap so that the boy could be bathed in salt water with soap twice a day. As we prayed for him, we saw the compassion of Jesus settle on the church. Watch this space for further news of a church transformed by the gospel!

**Marriage Counselling (and an Impromptu Wedding)**
Harold and Mulembeni Makebo, a pastor and his wife who had been married only by tradition, came back to The Base for marriage counselling, and we had the privilege of organising a wedding during lockdown. They also worked with us to tweak the marriage manual, which we have translated into Chichewa. It is a great challenge to bring the Biblical culture of marriage into an extended family system.

**Pastors Training on Apostolic Partnering**
In June, we gathered 13 of the key pastors and wives (who lead multisite congregations) in the north, south and central regions at The Base. Lance spoke about casting vision, and we watched Andrew Selley's teachings on partnering, appointing leaders and mutual submission. Much discussion and prayer followed each video. Pastors said they now understand the model from the Bible and they have no fear in explaining it to their leaders and making the changes.

A new couple, Maxwell and Grace Chembezi, from Mzuzu in the far north, were looking in during this time. Altogether, we have five new churches looking in, and the growth extends to the far north, including a church in Tanzania.

> **Altogether, we have five new churches looking in…including a church in Tanzania.**

**Other Highlights**

- We visited an unreached people group (the Yao from Mangoche area on the lake) and built a friendship with a South African family who are leading a team translating the Bible into Chao.
- Ministry to youth leaders in the central area.
- Hearing of a child raised from the dead by one of our Four12 pastors in Ngabu area.
- Visiting and praying with lodge owners along the lakeshore who have lost their staff and income due to COVID-19.

Please continue to pray for us, and better yet, come join in on what God is doing in Malawi – be it a long or short stay. It is an adventure of a lifetime!

*Since this was published, Lance & Sue have relocated back to South Africa and now serve on the eldership team at Joshua Generation Church in Sunningdale, Cape Town. The church in Blantyre has become a Gospel Central church and is led by Luke & Lizzy Kawala.