

December 2003

Dear *F*riends,

Laston our Seminarian is dead. He was 29 years old.

Laston should not have died. His internal bleeding was a result of bilharzias contracted in childhood from washing in infected water. Our health facilities were not able to save him.

Ephraim, a teenager, longs for education and go to school, but he cannot. He has no one to pay his school fees. Ephraim has no parents to support him. He is an orphan. He is loved and cared for by his extended family, but he is a financial burden on an already overburdened family. So he draws and paints small, vivid, and attractive postcards of scenes from Malawi life to pay for his schooling.

Frank is keen to begin a small business. Instead he spends his weekdays at home because he is unemployed and his weekends as a day watchman in our Diocesan Office where he earns \$17 a month. It's a little more than 50¢ a day to live on.

Space does not allow me to tell about Nixon and Mercy dying of HIV/AIDS; of Wisdom who died last month, leaving a wife and five children ... of the young fisherman from Likoma Island who fishes three days a week to pay for two days of schooling ... of friends and relatives who spend more time visiting the sick and attending funerals than they do at home or work ... and the thousands of others who daily struggle with poverty, disease, hunger, poor housing, ill-equipped schools, and hospitals that run out of drugs.

Laston, Ephraim, Nixon, Frank, Mercy, and Wisdom are some of the people behind the statistics of life in Malawi. In every home the bright futures of young people like Ephraim and Frank are blighted by the constant fear of death and disease and a paucity of resources which turns dreams into nightmares and where survival daily rivals success.

+ Christopher



A postcard painted by Ephraim, who sells his artwork to raise money for school fees.

All gifts to the DIOCESE OF NORTHERN MALAWI go directly to Bishop Boyle without deduction for administrative costs. Please make checks payable to the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, with "Northern Malawi" in the memo line.

**The World Mission Committee
of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth**

www.fwworldmission.org

**2900 Alameda Street
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FRIENDS OF
NORTHERN MALAWI

CHRISTMAS 2003 NEWSLETTER



The Rt. Rev. Christopher Boyle
Bishop of Northern Malawi

with the
**World Mission Committee
of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth**

Last month, with Canon Leslie Mtekateka, Fr. Raphael Mponda, Fr. Hannock Ng'oma and Mrs. Catherine Matayataya, it was a privilege to be guest of the Diocese of Fort Worth and other friends in the U.S. and Canada and tell the moving stories of young people like these. They mirror so graphically the lives of many of our diocese whose lives are challenged in education, health care, employment and church growth.



Many of those we met have told us how changed and humbled they were by what we shared:

- In EDUCATION, where of the 40 percent of students who gain entry into secondary education only 10 percent complete because they fail to secure schools fees, which can be as little \$33 a term;
- In HEALTH CARE, where in a nation of 12 million we have only 100 qualified doctors, and our hospital, St. Peter's, has been without a doctor for



Bishop Boyle greets some of the children of Likoma Island.



Fr. Leslie, who is, according to Bishop Boyle, "the tallest priest in Malawi," has a cowboy hat placed on his head.

nearly two years, and on Likoma Island we struggle to secure qualified staff because it is so remote;

- In DIOCESAN ASSESSMENT, from a diocese in the third poorest country of the world we will collect \$2,180 for 2003, while our monthly budget is \$12,000.

SO WHILE IT IS TRUE that

- many of our people live on less than a dollar a day and most have only one meal;
- in some areas we have more than 50 percent illiteracy;
- and perhaps 30 percent of our population is HIV-positive, which is to say that if 30 percent are infected then 100 percent are affected;

YET DESPITE THESE SOMETIMES INSUPERABLE ISSUES daily can be seen the infectious joy and tangible faith of a people who have rightly earned for themselves the accolade

the Warm Heart of Africa.

God bless you all in this holy season.

Comments from the visiting priests:

from FR. RAPHAEL MPONDA:

I am very happy to have the chance of visiting the Diocese of Fort Worth for the second time.



This trip has been an interesting and educative one. It was like Jesus Christ going up the mountain with the three disciples. They saw the glory of God. This trip has applied the same to me: We came up the mountain, and I have seen the good things God is showing to us. (Diocese of Northern

Malawi and Diocese of Fort Worth) What remains to do after returning to Malawi is to share this with others in the diocese. They are in the valley and wait to hear from us. I am thankful for the hospitality and love which was rendered to me during this visit.

God bless you always. *Zihomo Kwambiri.*

from FR. HANNOCK KATONGA NG'OMA:

A few observations:

- People in the U.S. are very rich; you have plenty of everything

• The visit to Diocese of Fort Worth is my great spiritual and mental development

- I'm very impressed by the way you keep your vegetation and pots

• Americans are very patriotic people

• I especially enjoyed the evening Eucharist prayers

- American love and your warm welcome has impressed me

• I enjoyed going to different parishes and visiting many places

