

## Christmas in Malawi

I planned to ask my Malawian friends how they celebrated Christmas. How is Christmas celebrated in the villages? Are there decorations? Christmas lights? Something we might think about as we observe our own Christmas traditions here in America. I found several Internet blogs that provided some insight. I hope my friends will join in to this discussion.

“The most obvious difference in Malawi is the weather. Christmas falls in Malawi’s “summer”, the “hot and wet” rainy season. The temperature may be in the 80s; rain comes for several hours almost every day.”

“December is a difficult time of the year in Malawi, because the staple crops of maize or cassava were harvested the previous April. Families stores are running low and the next harvest time is months away. This is the “Lean Season”. At Christmas time families have little, maybe even nothing left.”

“Slaughtering a goat is a regular custom. Others will enjoy chicken or beef, a rare treat for most people living in a village where the typical diet is nsima, vegetables, and beans. Some people might enjoy a Coke or a Fanta.”

“Since it’s often difficult for many Malawians to support themselves during December, it’s easy to understand why giving of gifts hasn’t been adopted by most parts of the country. If so, it’s mostly in the larger cities where people are wealthier and more exposed to western culture. There are no Christmas trees. Malawi has long suffered heavy deforestation.”

So after you take away the Christmas songs, the decorations, and the presents, the result is a Christmas different in many ways than here in America. But although to us some things may “seem” to be missing, the important ones aren’t. People are aware it is the birth of Jesus Christ. On Christmas morning, many Malawians will go to church. People visit their friends and family, and they often eat special meals together.

**And these are the things that matter the most to all of us.**



## Learning Center Programs Begin



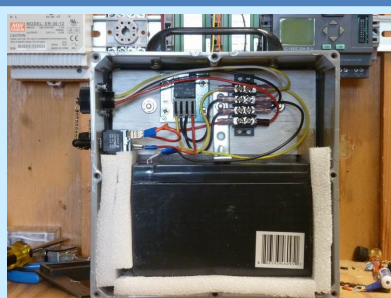
Under our representative Milca’s leadership, our programs at the Khwamba center have begun employing the New City Kids model, where older kids are working as group leaders. So far 110 kids from Grades 5 thru 7 come to the center after school from 2:00pm to 4:30pm. Milca says “*The kids are being kept busy with school things and they are also learning how to speak English. Normally kids that learn in schools that are in rural areas are not good in speaking English, because they are only taught how to write English.*”

## BATTERY BOXES CHANGE THE LIFE OF FRANCISCO

Francisco Mountain is 15 years old, is in 7th grade, and he and his parents live at Mawanga village close to Khwamba. In his family there are 8 children, 4 girls and 4 boys. Francisco has both parents but they are very vulnerable and live in extreme poverty, and as a result 5 of the 8 children have dropped out school. Upon assessing the vulnerability of this family, the Ministry of Hope (MoH) center manager for Khwamba together with the local village chief enrolled Francisco, when he was 5 years old, and his younger sisters in the MoH feeding programs.

Despite his enrollment, over the next 10 years Francisco's school performance was not good, in part because he lacked some basic needs at school such as books. His grades were below average to the point that he has repeated 2 grades as a result of his failure. In 2018 when Malawi Visions programs introduced power battery boxes, Francisco's family was one of the families who were given one. Not only have the battery boxes helped in lighting Francisco's home, but they have greatly improved his school performance since last year, because he is able to study and do his homework during the night, what he could not do in the past. Life has changed for Francisco as they also sleeping in light.

Francisco sends his joy and thanks: ***"I would like to thank the Ministry of Hope and Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church for bringing to us the books and the battery boxes. I personally would like to thank you so much because now my life is not the same. I would like to wish a Merry Christmas to all the people who are contributing this much to my education."***



### Battery Box Assemblers!

There is a huge demand for more battery boxes!

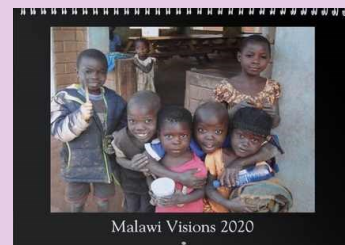
Our teams will begin building more battery boxes during January.

Watch for announcements!

### Available Now: Malawi Visions 2020 Calendars

Price: \$20

Free  
with all donations  
of \$100 or more



# HOW CHRISTMAS IS CELEBRATED IN MALAWI

Greetings from Malawi, “ The Warm Heart of Africa”!!!

This is Rabeca Blessings Moyo a Malawian by nationality. I am honored to share with you what this amazing season of Christmas is like here in Malawi. As I am writing this I can hear Christmas celebration songs being played loudly in our neighborhood! Walking around town today took me several hours to get back home because the town was just too crowded with people buying various things in preparation for Christmas Day.....

Malawi has almost 80% of people who are Christians. And therefore like most countries, Christmas day matters a lot in our country as we commemorate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. However let it be noted that it's not only Christians who value this day. Almost everyone in Malawi looks forward to it.

People have different views concerning this day. Some view it as a day they can drink beer and party like nobody's business. Some view it as a day they can remember the great gift God gave to this world through Jesus. What is common for both views though is that special food is eaten on this day. And it must be noted that there is slight difference in the way the celebrations are conducted in rural and urban areas. By the grace of God being raised in the village and living in town now, I have witnessed both celebrations.

Nsima is common staple food in Malawi and mostly eaten with vegetables and small fish. But on Christmas it is commonly replaced by rice and meat. I remember when in the village, my parents raised local chickens. My mother would choose a chicken not to be slaughtered during the year because we were going to eat it on Christmas. So by the time Christmas day came, the chicken could be really big!

I remember also that I and friends in the village would do piece work in people's fields to source money to buy new clothes to wear on Christmas. With any money remaining we would buy foodstuffs to cook for ourselves on Christmas day and to share with our parents. In the afternoon on Christmas day, either people watch soccer games or traditional dances.

Living in an urban area now, to make this day special, we either travel to the village and join them in the celebration, or invite family friends so that we can at least be together and make the day different from any day. In town houses are decorated with Christmas trees and other decorations unlike in the villages, and special cakes are baked for this occasion.

Both in rural and urban areas, Christians go to church on Christmas day for a Christmas special service. Some churches in urban areas conduct Christmas carol service a night prior to Christmas day. During Christmas season people share various gifts to friends and family as well as the needy. Some visit the prisoners, sick people in hospitals and orphans just to share some love with them

Having a chat with our daughter Joanna who is 5, she told me Christmas is the birthday of Jesus Christ. And we need to bake for him a very big cake and we will eat on his behalf. She said she is grateful for Santa who came during her class party who gave everyone a sweet as he wished them Happy Christmas! She told me we need to prepare something to share to the needy as well during this Christmas season because sharing is good and Jesus will be happy. Isn't that amazing??

I have just highlighted few of the things about this day in Malawi. There are too many to mention them all. Otherwise I wish you Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Rabeca and Joanna Moyo



## Books: The Initial Need

What is a book to a child living in the poorest of countries? Who has never traveled beyond their isolated village or looked through a book? Will they discover something new?

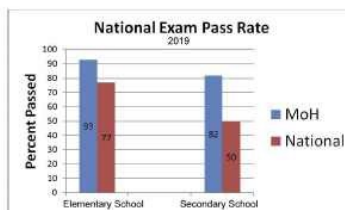


Over the past three years, Malawi Visions has constructed six libraries at our partner Ministry of Hope's community centers in Malawi, Africa. They have been stocked with 20,000 books we collected and shipped. Will books ignite hope for change?



**YES !**

Already we've received reports of standard test scores in these remote villages surpassing country-wide averages: our Malawian partner attributes these changes to the libraries!



## Can We Do More?



Most village schools have no books, no electricity, and average 80 children per teacher! School attendance is poor!

### Malawi National Statistics

40% complete elementary school

20% Enter secondary school

10% complete secondary school

## After School Learning Centers



We now wish to expand each of our six library facilities into three-room Learning Centers where children can receive enrichment studies, mentoring, and homework help, after school.

**Our goal is to enhance the appeal of learning, and keep kids in school!**

## Reading, English, Math & Science

We believe these key subjects will enhance ability and create life curiosity.

Our programs will meet two days a week after school, in four 1-hour long sessions.

### After School Program

Library & Reading	English	Science & Math	Music
1 hr	1 hr	1 hr	1 hr

Our programs will follow a model that for over 25 years has been tremendously successful in American low-income inner cities. Not only will this method complement and encourage school learning, but at the same time will develop teen leadership!

## New City Kids

loving kids for change

### After School Program

- For kids 5th to 7th grade
- Students taught by teen mentors
- Compliments & strengthens school.
- Homework assistance
- Learning is made interesting and relevant by turning into fun

### Teen Life Internship

- Teens of secondary school become teachers & mentors of kids
- A paid, part-time internship
- Learn leadership through responsibility, job and life skills training
- Must stay in school and keep good grades
- Mentored and academic help by college students on weekends

## How to Help

### Purchase Standard Curriculum Books

Malawi schools use standard books, but only the teachers have a copy! Curriculum books are needed for our Learning Centers.

A gift of \$100 will provide 12 books!



### Support a Teen Mentor

A Teen Life Internship is a 12 hours per week paid job! Equivalent to 50¢ per hour, a teen's annual salary is \$350. Each center has 12 teen mentors



### Support Milca, our Coordinator

We support a full time coordinator of our library and learning centers, which costs 4,000 annually



## Contact Us:

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Thank you for your support this year, helping us bring hope and change to over 6000 orphan children in Malawi, Africa.

### Malawi Visions Leadership Team

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