

Volker & JinHyeog GLISSMANN

MALAWI

Location: Zomba

Mission: Theological Education

Grassroots Training in Malawi

A friend recently asked me, what is God doing through Theological Education by Extension Malawi (TEEM) at the moment? First, I was hesitant to use the word 'exciting' to describe what God is doing. God uses the ministry of TEEM to empower his people. And that is exciting indeed.

In TEEM, we were recently reflecting about God's faithfulness and our ministry for the future. TEEM was founded in 1978 and started grassroots training the following year. Which means, next year (in 2018) TEEM will celebrate its 40th anniversary. 40 years is a remarkable achievement for a grassroots training programme in Malawi and is a wonderful sign of God's faithfulness to the ministry of empowering all of God's people. Unfortunately, sad news reached us that the former PCI missionary, Dr Jack Thompson passed away. He was the Director of TEEM from 1980-1983. As the current Director of TEEM, personally there are two main things that stand out from Jack Thompson's time with TEEM. Firstly, he was a pioneer – pushing grassroots training when it was not fashionable. Secondly, he was also an educator at heart, who continued throughout his time to write home-study material for our students. This is something that TEEM continues to do, and as the song goes, 'God is the same, yesterday, today, forever'.

I returned recently from a course writer training workshop with the All African TEE Association in Mozambique. It was exciting to hear about grassroots training programmes across Africa trying to address



world views and various cultural issues in the light of the gospel. Here in Malawi, we were inspired by the power of stories, thus developing an Old Testament course solely based on biblical stories. After the writing was complete, a missionary working with the Malawi Bible Society approached us asking if we had a course that could be used to improve Biblical literacy among the Ellomwe speakers in southern Malawi. This new course was translated so that the Ellomwe speakers could hear the gospel in their heart's tongue. When we planned the course, we decided that an audio recording would be most helpful, as Ellomwe is more a spoken than a written language. We knew that it must be possible with modern technology to do it reasonably professionally without breaking the bank. We have just released the audio recording for the course. Currently, there are 200 learners enrolled in this course. There are always new ways to empower the church.

Next month, we will have our first graduation of 11 pastors from the CAP (the former Blackman's Church) in the far north of Malawi, in Chitipa. Two new groups will start in the central and northern region where we work with a small Malawian denomination with on-the-job training of pastors who minister in the rural areas. We are writing a new follow-up grassroots course on Jesus Christ using methods of training that we know work best here in Malawi.

Indeed, it is good to pause and reflect and see what God is doing, as indeed he is the same, yesterday, today, forever.

Prayer Points

- Pray for Volker and the staff at TEEM, and for all students taking their courses.
- Give thanks and pray for TEEM's ongoing work.
- Pray too for the Glissmann family based in Zomba.