



Stephen & Marion Spencer

MISSIONARIES TO MALAWI: "THE WARM HEART OF AFRICA"

Dear Friends of Stephen & Marion,

My oldest son, Stephen, his wife Marion, and their four month old son, left the comforts of America 20 years ago to serve as missionaries at the African Bible College in Malawi, Africa. At that time, all there was of a college was 50 acres of maize fields, tangles of trees and thorn bushes. I recall stories of snakes, chop chops (huge spiders), hyena and the nights Stephen would walk around with a baseball bat because of a lone leopard stalking the grounds.

They first built their home and then set out to build a college that would teach the African people a way of life that would not only benefit them academically, but spiritually, as well. That's what ABC does – training Christian leaders of Africa, in Africa and for Africa, through a four-year, liberal arts, Christian university curriculum.

It was, obviously, very hard saying goodbye to my son, his wife, and my first grandson, David, knowing it would be 3 years before we would see them again. It was heartbreaking to realize that my grandson would be almost four years old the next time I would see him again.

Over the years we were able to see Stephen and his family every four years when they came home. You can imagine how difficult it is to see your grandchildren grow up like this, so in 2002, Julie and I decided to go to Africa and to see first-hand what Stephen and Marion were doing.



I wish you could have been with us on that first visit in 2002. It was a life-changing experience. Our 747 landed on a narrow strip of runway in the middle of nowhere and we taxied towards a small building which was the Lilongwe International Airport. A shuttle bus brought us to the terminal where Stephen, Marion, and all the children were standing on the upper deck waving and yelling. I looked at Julie and said, "Well, we finally made it to Africa!" Our welcome to Malawi was a celebration. It didn't even matter that we were missing half our luggage, of which we finally received four weeks later (the day before we returned home).

I can't tell you how amazed I was to drive through the gates of the African Bible College and see the beautiful campus set like an oasis in the desert. The story of ABC is a real miracle - three

college campuses in Malawi, Uganda and Liberia. And the miracle continues on a daily basis through the teaching, mentoring and ministering to the needs of the local people.

On one occasion, Julie and I had the opportunity to spend part of the day in the village and help with feeding the orphans. The picture of the little boy with the sad eyes is a child I will never forget. He held my hand as we walked through the village not wanting to let go.



Since our first trip in 2002, we've been back two more times. The last time we traveled with my business associate, Ardith and her husband Gordon. And in these 20 years, Stephen's family has grown to eight children – David (20), Jonathan (18), Nell (15), Caleb (13), Samuel (10), Charlotte (7), Stephen Jr. (3), and Esther (6 months). We have been so blessed to have experienced Africa and African Bible Colleges. We have seen the smiles of the ABC students, knowing they are graduating to a higher purpose in life - to serve God and the people of Africa. The African Bible College mission is truly making a difference by sharing the love and hope of Jesus Christ.



It's no secret that these are tough economic times. I wish I could say that Stephen and his family, and the ministry of ABC have not been affected. But they have and I know that a few churches have cut or dropped their support. As a Father, Grandfather and supporter of ABC this troubles me greatly. Even though Stephen and Marion wouldn't consider these last 20 years in Africa a sacrifice, it has been for our entire family. As I write this, Samuel is being treated for 2+ malaria.

I said earlier that I wished you could have been there with us to experience the ministries of ABC. Well, you can experience it and be a vital part of this family and ministry. I would like to encourage you to pray for the safety and health of my African family. I would also like to encourage you to support Stephen and Marion for the next 12 months, especially during these tough financial times (the home office address is listed below). The small sacrifice you make is an investment in the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Africa.

Thank you for your prayers and support of my loved ones. May God bless you richly

Sincerely

Hal Spencer
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