



PTI Prayer & News – August 2005

Malawi Pastors' Conferences

We rejoice that the first two PTI pastors' conferences of 2005, at Blantyre and Dedza in Malawi, have been completed. Timothy Alford has provided the following report from the Blantyre conference, which was held from 18th – 22nd July:

“Three hours ago the first conference ended with a most impressive closing ceremony and book presentation. Those who took part did so with considerable thoughtfulness and heartfelt expressions of appreciation. The week of ministry has been well received, and as ever it was very moving to witness the joy with which the sets of books were accepted. Thirty-one different evangelical church groupings were present during the week, and the interaction was very stimulating. Peter Jeffrey's 'Christian Handbook' and workbook provided a good basis for the afternoon sessions, and it was fascinating as well as rewarding to see how they tried to grasp the doctrines of Justification, Sanctification, and Election. As with many other Christians, including those in the UK, these fundamental truths are poorly understood. But isn't it a joy too when the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind and these precious things are grasped? I really believe this was going on, resulting in some very searching questions. Their spiritual perception must not be underestimated, and we should not hesitate to provide them with the best resources to enhance it. I really believe that British believers could learn much from the spiritual hunger, understanding, and relish for the things of God evident here. What a privilege it is to know, love, learn from and serve such people.

“I am glad also to report that my studies in Titus were given close attention and appeared to be very relevant to the situations faced by those present. Andrew Docherty's series on preaching and pastoral care also aroused good interest. The problem of demonism is very real, and is seriously affecting some church life. It therefore became necessary to give a session over to this, and I was simply amazed at the way Abraham Folayan dealt with this. It was superb powerful preaching in the best African style. He is a great treasure, and it is my fervent hope that PTI will benefit from his gifts and vision.

“Pansy is well, and engaging in sweet relationships with the ladies attending the conferences. How gracious the Lord is to grant us the privilege of continuing together in this service for His church.”

Conferences in Zambia

This month, 9th -12th, Timothy is to conduct another conference for pastors at Petauke, Zambia, near the border with Mozambique.

The conference that was due to be held at Ndola in early October has had to be postponed until next spring. We still plan to conduct a conference at Kasama, Northern Zambia from 10th -14th October. At very short notice Rev Alan Levy from Swansea has agreed to conduct this conference, and he goes with the full support and encouragement of his church.

Please pray for Alan's preparation for this time and for all the pastors from the rural areas of Northern Zambia who will attend this conference.

Pray for clear guidance from the Lord for the conferences in Zambia that we would like to conduct next year.

Other Matters for Prayer and Praise

1. Please pray for the safety of packets in the postal system. In recent weeks we have become concerned that some packets sent to Francophone Africa as well as other parts of the continent have either not arrived or have taken an exceptionally long time to reach their destinations.
2. Please also pray for the safe arrival of a further consignment of books to North West Myanmar.

Books continue to be sent out to many pastors. Here is a comment from a brother in Mauritius who has just received 'Preaching Pure and Simple' by Stuart Olyott:

"I have just finished the book on preaching. That's really the best treatise on the matter I have ever read; though being a small book. It contains so much practical, wise and essential elements of preaching that often preachers do not take into consideration (including me of course). I have learnt much than I have in years of ministry. The book has changed my whole perspective and has given me a fresh vision of the ministry behind the pulpit. I have given a new approach to sermon preparation and especially a new discipline and reverence to the Word and its application."

This past week has brought news of the Lord blessing brothers who have received books. Here are two brief testimonies from Zambia:

"I have used much of the books called 'Holiness' (Ryle) and 'Knowing God' (Packer) and many more such as the 'Christian Handbook' for my teaching and preaching. When I read this book, 'Holiness' my tears come down. I am in a better position because of your books."

"I have already started the book 'A Summary of Christian Doctrine' (Berkhof). About three weeks ago I started teaching on the nature and attributes of God. This book has very important information on the same topic. I thought I should start with this book."

We are grateful to the Lord for his good hand upon us in recent weeks. This has meant that many opportunities are coming before us. **Please pray** that the Lord will give us much wisdom in all the decisions that we have to take in coming days.

'Introduction to PTI' Video

We now have a short video (24 mins) that gives an introduction to PTI's work, including footage shot during Timothy Alford's pastors' refresher courses in Malawi during 2003 and 2004. If you would like a copy to show to your church at a missions evening or another occasion then please write or email to the addresses at the top of this prayer letter. It would be helpful to know (i) the name of the church(es) where you plan to show it, (ii) approximately when you would like to receive the video, (iii) whether you would like it on VHS or DVD, (iv) whether you would like to keep it afterwards or return it to us, and (v) if you would also like some copies of our 'Crying Need' leaflet to give to any interested people.