

CHILENJE CHURCH OF CHRIST

PLOT NO. 58/4586

LUWEMBU ROAD NEW CHILENJE

By Elder Rabson Watson Mhango (MHSRIP)

DATE: SEPTEMBER 25, 2011

SUBJECT: THE HISTORY OF CHILENJE CHURCH OF CHRIST

OCCASION: DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH BUILDING TO THE LORD

A brief background of the Church of Christ in Zambia:

It is believed that a brother called **Peter Masiya** by name brought the **Church of Christ** doctrine in Zambia which was then Northern Rhodesia around the year of 1907. He is believed to have come from Malawi or Mozambique. It's not clear exactly where he came from.

He came to Livingstone and arrived at the Village of Chief Mukuni near the Victoria Falls. At that time there were no schools in that area, but this brother started preaching the word of God as well as teaching those who believed in Christ how to read and write. Since they were already old, they were learning together with their children.

However, around the year 1912, another man came with the Church of Christ Mission School. He was a teacher who brought the School first at Chief Mukuni's area. His name was Mr. Bulawayo Kukana. Thereafter he got married to one of his pupils. This teacher came from Zimbabwe, the then Southern Rhodesia. From there he became old and moved to Ngweze area, with his family and eventually he died there. His grandchildren are still with us to date.

From there the Church and Mission Schools spread to Nsinde, Ngweze, Sianalumba in Livingstone. Then Kabanga Mission was set up in Kalomo. Then in 1923 the Namwianga Mission was set up.

CHILENJE CHURCH OF CHRIST:

The history of Chilenje Church Christ dates back in the early 50s.

1. BY BROTHER LEONARD MALINDI SIANZALU AND VARIOUS OTHER BRETHREN:

In **1951** six Students came to Munali School from Namwianga and found no Church of Christ in the area, in fact at this time the Church of Christ had only reached Kalomo area from Livingstone. Fortunately brother Sianzalu and the 5 other students located two men, a Mr. **Chirambo** who was a printer at Namwianga and had come to join the Government printers, and Mr. **Kambimbi**. These two people both were staying in Chilenje and when they found them they said this is good let us plan on how we can start the church in **Chilenje**.

The Church was started in Brother Kambimbi's house. *(In passing, the late Brother Mulele did mention that brother Kambimbi's house was the same one brother Chimbukuma was staying in.)*

"Thereafter we received two more families from Malawi, brother **Chikandira** and Brother **Malinda** and we became too many to fit in the house, so we thought of assembling under a tree but it was illegal to worship under a tree at that time. So we went and requested for a classroom at a Suburb School, fortunately we found that the Head teacher at the Suburb School was also a Church of Christ member but he did not know where the church was.

So he gave us a classroom, and that is where we started worshipping from here at Chilenje."

"That was in 1951 between February and March. So in April we wrote to Namwianga for support."

However other brethren did say that at sometime during this period they did worship under a tree which was just about here where we are standing.

2. REPORT BY BROTHER J.L. DAKA(2002):

Meanwhile there was a Doctor already working at the African Hospital (Present day UTH) who heard about the Mission at Namwianga and in 1952 he went to Namwianga and came with H.E. Pierce who settled at Freedom area in Chilanga. It is believed that, it is this Missionary H.E. Pierce who came and introduced Dr. Murphy to the Congregation at Chilenje which had already been established.

At this point we have no record of how long they worshipped in the class room, but it looks like they did not stay long in the Class, before the Church was given this plot.

Apart from the pioneers who started the Chilenje congregation, Dr Murphy worked closely with other brethren like Chikwibu senior, Wilson Mulele, Musa Mufuzi and Nchena just to mention a few.

CHILENJE CHURCH BUILDING CONSTRUCTION:

It is reported that this Dr. Murphy was a very *“Energetic and Enthusiastic Christian,”* whose interest was to try and help establish churches in Lusaka, and he worked with the brethren.

Every day after knocking off, Dr. Murphy went in Chilenje and Matero compounds trying to establish congregations. He did not change his clothes when baptizing to the point where he contracted a disease of Bilharzias. Despite all this, he worked tirelessly using his financial resources in the service of the Lord.

“A good example is that about 1953 – 1954, he *hired* a contractor to erect a church building which now houses the Christians at Chilenje, all from his pocket!”

“I used to visit Chilenje Church building with Brother Pierce from the foundation up to the completion. He did this single-handedly and yet he was not a missionary!”

CHILENJE CHURCH BUILDING UPGRADE:

The first ordained elders at Chilenje:

Since the 50s the church continued up and down. Various leaders came and went. However it was on the 22nd August 1993 when the first scripturally ordained elders were installed at Chilenje. The three elders who were ordained were Elder Billy Siamunenge (late), Elder Adale R. Mukemu and Rabson W. Mhango.

During this period we still had veterans like Wilson Mulele, Musa Mufuzi, Chikwibu senior and a few others.

As time went on the Chilenje membership started growing to a point where the leadership resolved to plant a church in Bauleni as a number of members were coming from there. Still membership continued to grow such that late coming members could not fit in and ended up standing by the windows to follow the service.

In view of that, the church leadership resolved to increase the capacity of the church building.

1. First option was to demolish and rebuild. This option was quickly shot down due to the Dag Hammarskjold Stadium story. *(That if you start by demolishing an old building, chances are that you will fail to bring it up)*
2. Second option was to build a new building and leave the old for the Sunday School and other activities.

A Buildings committee was set-up to fully implement this Project from Scratch to completion. The elders expected the project to be complete in 10 years time.

FUND RAISING:

Early in 2002 the elder and sister Mhango were invited to USA to attend the Jabulani Celebration, marking 100years of Mission work in Africa by the Americans. The Chilenje leadership resolved to go and try fundraising for the building from the American brethren. However when the Mhango family got to the hosting Church, and saw the splendor of the church building, resolved that if the God that we worship can bless the Americans like this, then He can bless us too.

*Especially that earlier in the year one of our preachers (Dcn Kalaba) taught us that "Blessings do not come from **Abroad** but come from **ABOVE!**"*

Brethren this is our testimony; that this building has been built by the members of Chilenje Church of Christ. That in this building project we have not solicited for any building fund other than from the local Christian family of the Chilenje congregation.

We have trusted in our God for all our needs and He has not failed us! Haleluya!

GROUND BREAKING:

On 21st September 2003 the church leadership sank in the first pick to launch the new building project! This ceremony coincided with the engagement of brother Shanika to Sister Ireen Shankoti.

This was after all the paperwork was done, ie. The Drawings, and approval from the council.

MEMBERS, great and young everybody committed themselves to contribute something towards this building to what it is today.

However the building is not FULLY completed as it still needs a lot other facilities both inside and out, however we felt it was appropriate to call for this Dedication as the Buildings Committee officially hands it over to the leadership and the congregation (*As they occupied it illegally from the small building*)

DEDICATION OF THE BUILDING TO THE LORD:

- ❖ Recognizing God's Providence
- ❖ Believing the Lord for all our needs
- ❖ Desire for the Church to be relevant to the Community
- ❖ Desire for this Church to be a sending Church