

Malawi Amoto 'Youth Extra'

SIM Malawi

Pursue the Unreached
Build the Church
Reach Children and Youth
Impact the HIV/AIDS Crisis
Advance Mission



The 'bride and groom' are greeting by the 'bridal party' at the Sports Friends 'Mock Wedding' fund raiser

When two cultures meet!

Weddings are big, and often loud, in Malawi! Whether it is the traditional *Chinkhoswe*, or 'betrothal', celebrated mainly in the rural areas, or the ribbon-bedecked motorcade which tours the city centre with headlights on, horns blaring and the bride and groom sitting on the window frames while the whole thing is filmed from a flatbed truck.

Another important aspect of weddings here is that people tend not to buy gifts for the bride and groom but they do shower them with money at the reception or after-party. So it seems logical that if you want to have a fund-raiser then a 'Mock Wedding' will be a good idea; and so it has proved for Sports Friends Malawi!

"I would never have thought of it myself, but this is the greatness of the Body of Christ coming together," said Luke Voight,

Sports Friends Malawi Director. "I asked the local Malawian brothers and sisters who are sports ministers what would be the best way of encouraging the local churches, having a good time and raising support, money and awareness in the local churches, and they all said "Mock wedding, we have to do the mock wedding!" So we said all right!"

The Bridal Party was made up of Sports Friends Malawi coaches while the bride and groom, for their 'second wedding' were Fostance and Esnat Mtolo – Fostance is Sports Friends Malawi Staff Trainer – while the 'guests' came from across the Africa Evangelical Church as well as friends and neighbours of the Voights.

'Invitations' went out far and wide to see just how the Body of Christ would "chip in and donate their

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'Malawi Amoto' editorial

Welcome to this special edition of *Malawi Amoto Youth Extra* in which we focus on some of our youth work and young people. 'Reach Children and Youth' is one of the main focus areas for the work of SIM Malawi and we have a number of ministries.

Sports Friends is bringing sport and Bible teaching to boys and girls.

Youth work with partner AEC is also developing with many youth workers being trained.

For more information about *Malawi Amoto* please contact: malawi.communications@sim.org

When two cultures meet!

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time and resources to make this happen, and it has been amazing to see what God has done,” said Luke.

The money raised at the event is being divided up and used in two ways, as Luke explained: “Two thirds of it is going to go towards buying Bibles and balls for the church-centred sports ministries in the Southern Region of Malawi. This will be a huge blessing to many of them who are struggling to come up with one or two balls every few months, so this will really encourage them in what they are doing; it will tell them that they are not forgotten and that the larger group of the Body of Christ is with them.

“The other third is going to go towards the ladies’ netball camp, the first one ever, and it is going to be in Blantyre in June.

“We wanted to encourage the churches in the Southern Region of Malawi which are very established in sports ministry but which might be struggling financially and thinking they are forgotten in one way or another, whether support-wise or because



Bouncy castles are popular with children the world over ... and Malawi is no exception! Fun for all the family at the Mock Wedding



**Luke Voight,
Director, Sports Friends Malawi**

the wider Body of Christ doesn’t know what they are doing.

“There are also other churches in the Central and Northern Regions, where we have recently done some basic training, that are just

starting, so we will let them get going and see how they can get their churches behind them, with the hopes of also doing similar things.”

And as a fund-raising event, is this a one-off or will we see more Sports Friends Malawi Mock Weddings?

“I think we will definitely do it again. It was a success, although timing-wise we didn’t know when the best starting time would be so we just left it up to the local sports ministers; but it has been a great success and we will be doing this at the local-church level and also encouraging the local sports ministers to organise this sort of thing with their pastors and elders in order to generate funds and prayer warriors for sports ministry,” said Luke.



Wedding tradition in Malawi is to give money rather than gifts to the bride and groom which made the Mock Wedding such a good fund-raising idea!



To support the work of Sports Friends Malawi, please quote Project MW 96754

Calling 'Young SIMers' A date at the Palace?

After 18 months' hard work, Peter Wheatley is awaiting news about a possible date at Buckingham Place and a meeting with HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, when he and the family are back in the UK for a few months later in the year.

Peter has recently completed his Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award after combining the three key areas of Skills, Physical and Community, and this has involved him in working not just in Malawi but in Mozambique as well. One area of the Award, in Peter's case the Physical aspect, was worked on over the full 18 months while the other two had 12 months each. In addition there was a four-day expedition and a five-day community-based project to be completed.

"I have really enjoyed the whole experience and it has helped me to develop a range of skills such as personal development, teamwork and leadership which will be useful in the future," said Peter. "For the Skills section I was able to develop my clarinet playing and use this in a variety of ways, including helping to lead worship in the church I attend. The Physical element was playing rugby and the Community part was helping to teach sports and



also helping in a primary school in Mozambique."

But it is not just the direct benefit from honing skills in the three areas which has helped Peter; he has found other important attributes have been improved or have had to be developed.

"Teaching sport under the Community element is a good example of how things have helped me as I have worked with others," he said.

"It has helped me to develop leadership skills but also to learn to have patience when dealing with people. Most of the people I was teaching were Malawian and sometimes there were obvious language problems which could have caused friction, but we got through it!"

And his language skills were further tested in his time on the five-day Community project



which Peter accomplished in Mozambique. Before coming to Malawi, the Wheatley family served with SIM in Mozambique and it was through contacts with former colleagues in that country that Peter was able to work in a school for a week.

"The week in Mozambique was a very humbling time," he recalls.

"Malawi is a poor country but Mozambique, or at least the area in which I was working, is the poorest of the poor.

"Fees for the school in which I worked come out at about \$1.50 for the entire year, but parents still

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Top: Peter working with children and Mozambique

Left: Honing his rugby skills with St Andrew's International School





Main picture: Peter Ong, SIM Malawi's Youth Ministry Co-ordinator leading one of the training sessions.

Developing the 'neXGen' of youth leaders

Some two-and-a-half hours' drive south of Blantyre lies the town of Bangula, and it was here that a group of Youth Leaders from Africa Evangelical Church (AEC) congregations in Southern Malawi met for training. Under the title of 'neXGen', the training event was the first in a series that will be run across Malawi over the course of 2014. Peter Ong, SIM Malawi's Youth Ministry Co-ordinator developed the training programme with Pastor Chisoni Bridge, the AEC's National Youth Co-ordinator, and this year's training is based on the Book of Colossians.

"This year, as we develop the training, we want to affirm our youth leaders in their faith and also in their relationships, and Colossians helps us to do this," said Peter.

"For many of the young people who are leaders, life can be tough just to be accepted in their own church set-up. By bringing them together at events such as that in Bangula, we can help to show them that they are not alone and help to build them up. I am confident that when they go back to their home churches they will be more able in themselves and also in the work they are doing."

This was echoed by two of the

delegates who spoke to Malawi Amoto.

Monica Malesi is a youth leader at Ndirandi AEC on the outskirts of Blantyre. She said: "The conference has helped me to know how to preach to our youth group and how to be strong in my faith. I will tell my members to work hard, to study the Bible and how to understand Bible Study."

Isaac Kalima from the Chikwawa AEC said: "I am going to teach them what I have learned here. I want to teach them how to study the Bible and the quality of good leadership."

Also attending the training in Bangula was Pastor Louis Ndekha, General Secretary of the AEC.

When asked about the importance of youth work to the AEC he said: "Youth work is very important for the ministry of the Church because the youth are the largest population in the Church in the first place. They constitute over 50% of the total number of church members. Secondly, they are the future of the Church and therefore youth ministry is a very critical part of church ministry"

"The current training is very, very important to the ministry of the Church because it is preparing the youth leaders in how they can actually lead the youth groups. Generally we had a youth ministry where they would just meet for choirs, for example, and nothing much beyond that. However, this training is preparing youth leaders

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to see how best they can nurture their friends into mature Christians and basically that will have a significant impact on how the youth ministry will be run at the local church level and across all in the structures of the church. “What I would like to see as fruit of this training is youth leaders who are discipling others and that resulting into changes to Christ-like character in the youth in the local churches, and that even impacting the whole Church because being in the majority in the membership of the Church; if the youth are discipled and they grow and mature in their Christian life, and they live a Christ-like life, I think the impact is wider even beyond the Church where society can be impacted and the Lord can be glorified as a result of that.”



*Abusa Louis Ndekha,
General Secretary of the AEC*

Please consider investing in the future leaders of the AEC by supporting more youth leaders to attend the upcoming neXGen conferences in the Central and Northern Regions of Malawi by donating to SIM Malawi Project MW96658 AEC Youth Department

A date at the palace?

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struggle to raise even that much. But the kids were great; it was a very rewarding week and it helped me to brush up my rusty Portuguese!” So what would Peter’s advice be to other young people who are thinking of taking up the challenge of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme? “I would say it is well worth it and would recommend people taking up the challenge,” he said. “I started it because we had a talk at school and were told that the Award Scheme is a major thing to have on your CV for university or when looking for a job. “But as I worked through things I realised it was much more than that. It helps to develop you as a person, makes you look at things in a different way, and develops skills that you can take forward. I would say if you have the chance to take part then do so because it is well worth all of the experiences you will come across.” But Peter is not the only one on this trail. As he awaits his date at the Palace, three more Young SIMers, Joshua and Chris Hammond and Sarah Wheatley, are all embarking on the Award Scheme and, thanks to St Andrew’s International School introducing this in year 10, there will be even more working towards this standard in the years ahead.



Youth workers in deep discussion at the Bangula training event

Calling all Young ‘SIMers’

Do you have a story to tell about your school or church or things you are doing in Malawi?

Please get in touch with Ian:
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