

A Time for Prayer



Votes and rocks. The first were cast on the 21st of May, 2019. The second were cast for days after. Ballots and bullets. Tempers and tear gas. Clashes and chaos. Fires. Roadblocks. Armored vehicles. Welcome to Malawi's tripartite elections!

Seven total contestants. Three main contenders. One final winner: Incumbent of the ruling party, Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika. He was declared winner with 38%+ of the votes. This is now his second term.

Even though the 21st of May 2019 was the official election day, many people "voted" again afterwards with stones and fists and demonstrations. Disappointed with the results and disapproving of the way elections were handled, hordes of people were angry. Oh, so angry. It's not just familiarity that breeds contempt. So does anger.

Consequences? Things are thrown, words are said, deeds are done that just aren't right.



In many cases, the ones hurt or harmed are innocent people. How evident in these recent days in Malawi! To my knowledge, and thanks to God's grace, none of our LCCA members or WELS missionaries or family members were harmed in any

dangerous predicament. However, a vehicle of one of our LCCA pastors was purposefully and violently damaged by incensed thugs. Thankfully the pastor himself was not injured in the fracas.

As you might expect, with the final declaration of the presidential winner, there was jubilation and celebration in some areas, and outrage and violence in others. The newspapers and phone messages reported that people were burning tires, blocking roads, smashing windows.

The Consular Section Chief of the United States Embassy in Malawi had her finger on the pulse of Malawi. She sent out security alerts often and advised all USA citizens to hunker down, lay low, and be extra vigilant. Schools and shops closed for a few days for precautionary measures. Even the Embassy closed early on a day it would have had normal working hours.

Now in the recent aftermath of this election and inauguration and in the next five years ahead, His Excellency Arthur Peter Mutharika has a big responsibility on his hands. As Christians, we have a big responsibility on our *knees*! In other words, we have an opportunity now to do what God tells us to do: pray! The Apostle Paul encourages this in 1 Timothy 2:1-3a,

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority...”

This includes Malawi and her leaders! So in addition to giving obedience and showing respect and paying taxes, we have a wonderful privilege in Christ to faithfully pray.

Let us do so! Take heart, our words are not just blown adrift and lost in the wind! God hears and He answers our prayers as we confidently pray in Jesus name and according to His will! As James says in 5:16b, *“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”*

Powerful and effective?

It may not always *seem*
so. Have you ever prayed for something
and haven't gotten it? Asked for *this* but got *that*? Pleaded for *one thing* and yet
received *another*?

Me, too. But that doesn't mean God is not listening. He is. And He knows what's
best. If He didn't give us what we asked for, just think...He gave us - or is giving us -
something better! Talk about Someone having His finger on the pulse, not only of
Malawi but of this world! On your life and mine!



Jesus Christ is not only *aware* of what's going on in each country and in each of our
lives but He's in *control* of it all! Jesus Christ has been "...seated at God's
right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and
dominion... and God
placed all things under his feet..." (Ephesians
1:20-22a)

All things.

Even governments?

Yes, good and bad.

Even leaders? Yes, corrupt or honest.

Even citizens? Yes, violent or respectful. Even seven-man presidential races?

Yep, no matter who wins.



All things are under His feet, under His sovereign control. *“In Him all things hold together!”* (Colossians 1:17). Nothing can thwart God’s plans – we have God’s Word on that! Whether you’re a citizen of the USA, a resident in Malawi, or a person from some other country, will you join with me in breathing the words of prayer found in vv 2-4 of hymn #620 in Christian Worship:

*The pow’rs that you ordained
With heav’nly wisdom bless;
May evil be restrained,
Replaced by righteousness.
O Lord stretch forth your mighty hand
And guard and bless our native land.*

*Give peace, Lord, in our time.
Oh, let no foe draw nigh
Nor lawlessness and crime
Insult your majesty!
O Lord stretch forth your mighty hand
And guard and bless our native land.*

*Though vain and foolish, still
We are your people, Lord.
Oh, bend us to your will;*

*We'll serve no other God!
O Lord stretch forth your mighty hand
And guard and bless our native land.*

If you've taken the time to pray, whether or not you used the words of the hymn above, thank you.

Thank you for remembering Malawi and her leaders. Thank you in advance for including this country and President Mutharika in your prayer life. Thank you for offering your "requests, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving."

I appreciate that the Apostle Paul gives the reason why he says to pray "for kings and all those in authority:"

"That we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good and pleases God our Savior who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:2a-4).

Such is the blessing in lands like Malawi. Even though there may be flare-ups come election time, we can still live in peace. The Word can be still be preached, the gospel shared, and the Good News of Jesus spread! God is in control. He bends His ear to His people.

Yep, it's a time for prayer.

In Jesus,
Your Malawi Mission Partner,

John Holtz