



March 2009 Newsletter

Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.
James 1:27

NGO Status Nearing Completion

Today we received word that CONGOMA, Council for Non Governmental Organizations in Malawi, gave final approval of our membership application. We received the certificate along with the email. This is the next to last step in the lengthy process of becoming an NGO in the country of Malawi but the last step is really a formality.

The only step left is to register with the NGO Board of Malawi and pay our initial fees along with an annual subscription fee and we will finally be a government approved NGO in Malawi with all the benefits and privileges that go along with that auspicious title.

This has been a long, time-consuming process both here and abroad. However, as far back as 2000 and then again in 2004 and later in 2005 and 2006 the LORD has been leading us places we never suspected we'd be going and preparing us for where we are today.

We have been working with Malawians now for about eight years and have seen churches planted, people come to the LORD, and now children being fed in three locations of Malawi and I feel like we have just now really begun in earnest. No matter where one turns in Malawi, there is always more to do. It's like the old catchphrase two steps forward and one step back. And we mustn't slow down, the children of Malawi deserve better. With your continued prayers and support, we will feed the children that have been overlooked and forgotten.

JUST IMAGINE...

What do TB, HIV/AIDS, malaria, cholera, poverty, acute shortage of health professionals, and floods that seemingly wipe out crops every year have in common? Answer, Malawi!

Yes Malawi, a country the size of Pennsylvania. TB is one of the top killer diseases in the country, together with malaria and HIV/AIDS. Every year, estimates are that up to 30,000 people are treated for TB, and 8,000 die of the disease. The 2008 WHO data estimated that there were more than 50,000 new cases of TB in the country last year. And the national health department estimates TB/HIV co-infections to be 77 percent. And if that were not enough...

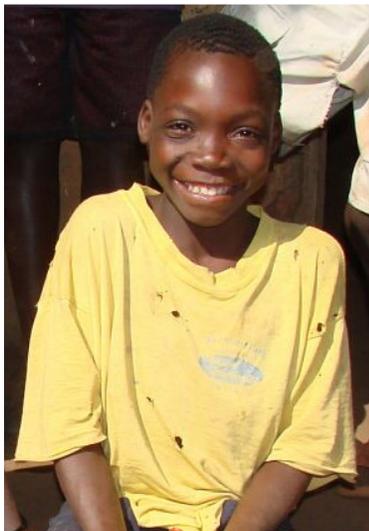
According to the United Nations, up to 85 percent of Malawi's population lives in rural areas where about 60 percent of the people live below the poverty line of \$1 per day. It is difficult for them to seek medical care when they need it, especially if public health facilities are far away from their villages and they don't have the money to pay for transportation. And if that were not enough...

The AIDS crisis has affected all sectors of society in Malawi. Studies show that a quarter of the country's adults are malnourished, and 75 percent of these people are HIV-positive. Also according to the UNAIDS 2008 Report on the global AIDS epidemic, the epidemic has heavily affected children. At the end of 2007, an estimated 91,000 children in Malawi were living with HIV, and over half a million children had been orphaned by AIDS. Nurses in Malawi (NONM) revealed in 2008 four nurses are lost to HIV and AIDS related illness every month. And if that were not enough...

Hospital waiting times are usually long because Malawi is facing acute shortage of health personnel. The Department of Health indicates that up to 120 registered nurses leave the country per year for better-paying jobs in the developing world. Currently, 50 patients are looked after by only one nurse, while one doctor is responsible for 64,000 patients, according to health department figures. And if that were not enough...

Over 3400 families have been affected by floods in southern Malawi because of persistent rains that have soaked most parts of the country. Of the total, some 680 families have been displaced in 31 villages. And the flush floods (known to us in the US as flash floods) have also destroyed 1360 hectares (over 3,000 acres) of cotton, maize, millet and sorghum fields. Fortunately this has not occurred around our centers this year but has in the past. And if that were not enough...

The country has so far registered 4,697 cholera cases resulting in 104 deaths, the Ministry of Health has said. The most affected areas include urban areas such as Blantyre and Lilongwe while other smaller areas have also been hit. From March 8 to 15, 215 new cases were registered with two confirmed deaths from Lilongwe and Ntchisi. Cholera is said to be fast spreading because vulnerable households are using unprotected water sources. And remember, all this is happening in a country a little smaller in area than Pennsylvania. Isn't that enough?



Owen Banda

Most of the kids that come to the centres' normally perform extremely well in their end of year exams. For instance, Owen Banda, pictured left, got position #2 one year while Jilian Kameta was positioned #5. These kids deserve an education filled with learning, not the all-consuming thought of nothing to eat.

You've heard it said '*a mind is a terrible thing to waste*'. With these kids, it's all they have for a hopeful future!



Jilian Kameta

These are reasons why we must keep doing what we're doing. Good nutrition helps the body maintain defenses capable of resisting the effects of HIV and TB. It also allows kids to be in school and concentrate on school work instead of worrying where the next meal will come from.