

Malawi Visions Monthly Newsletter June/July 2020



The “first” group of 60 primary school students

To say that 2020 has so far been a time of sweeping challenges is clearly an understatement! In our home lives and of course, to our programs in Malawi. Nevertheless our plans of development, while a bit more complicated, are proving sustainable through the manner in which we operate.

Our greatest joy at this time has been seeing the groups of young children and teens embarking upon a new journey, hopefully a life changing one, by the Teen Life Internship Program, employing infrastructure we have developed and built over the past 10 years!

Finally, on June 23, a most significant event occurred in Malawi. More than a year after the highly contested 2019 presidential election, ultimately overturned by the Malawi Constitutional Court, the incumbent was turned out by the opposition leader who received 60% of the vote. The Inaugural Speech by the new president is included at the end of this newsletter as it so strongly signals promise of very significant change in a country many of us consider our “second home”, and is so congruent with the aspirations of Ministry of Hope and Malawi Visions. I hope you will take the time to read it!

Paul

From The Malawi Visions Centers

During June, children have continued to attend library programs at the Malawi Visions Centers. This month at Khwamba, an average of 340 children were coming each



day to read books, including both primary and secondary school kids. The high school and college kids are helping read to the younger ones, as well as to helping organize and keep the books clean. The Bibles and Bible story books have been an active part of the school and Bible studies have been conducted 3 days a week.



COVID-19 preventative measures are being rigidly adhered to at the libraries.

As Milca cannot be traveling to Khwamba during her pregnancy, a local youth Esau has taken over the teaching of laptop classes there, which includes 10 students. Another college graduate, Austin, will be initiating computer class instruction at Matapila, as well as overseeing the libraries at the 3 “southern” MoH centers of Matapila, Selengo, and Katondo, reporting to Milca upon library op-



erations. We are thrilled and so encouraged to see the hand of God working in all of these circumstances! At Khwamba and Matapila, children of all ages are attending, although at the other centers only the high school and college students have been coming to read and study, due to COVID-19 considerations.

Work goes on!

While we will not be travelling to Malawi this year, we seek to keep Malawi Visions development programs moving forward. We will rely upon Daniel, Milca, and our other skilled Malawian “family members” Lamech, Frank, and Peter, to continue our work. Toward that end hard working groups have been gathering here at home to prepare items and construct shipping crates. We will be shipping 3 crates of materials to Lilongwe this year, our 9th shipment in as many years. Included will be 5,000 books, 2 treadle sewing machines, 200 girl’s skirts and an equal number of boy’s shorts, library curtains, battery boxes, chalk boards, wiring, light fixtures, 2 drawer file cabinets, and much more. Our Malawian counterparts are very capable of continuing on independently, and we will communicate well as needed. This is so encouraging as we have planned and worked toward achieving such sustainability from the beginning.



**Two completed crates on trailers, and
the 3rd in construction**



**Joe and Isabel from Living Word Alliance
Church, Hewitt , NJ, loading our crates**

Teen Life Internship Program Highlights



The Khwamba Teen Mentors

The long awaited Teen Life Internship Program (TLIP) has been launched at the Khwamba Malawi Visions (MV) Center. This is the name Daniel and Milca have chosen for the program they are fashioning upon the principles so successful to the New City Kids (NCK). July saw the initiation of training of the 6 “gap kids” and 12 high school teens who will be the key players in the program’s operation. As Milca articulated: “the program is a ‘chain of transferring knowledge’: the MV Staff will mentor the gap kids who will mentor the teens, who will in turn mentor and teach the primary school kids.”

Daniel and Milca made it clear that the objective of the program is to empower the teens, all first year high school students, developing them academically and spiritually, as they are mentored in personal and leadership skills. Training focused upon these three themes, as it was explained to the teens that they will assume the primary role in the program. They were reminded they must do well in their own studies while at the same time provide effective mentoring to the younger children to perform equally well in their schools.



Half of the Khwamba elementary students

TLIP, continued

Following the initial training, 2 weeks of practice sessions were held as the teens created personal development plans, learned presentation and teaching techniques, and improved their public speaking skills. The teens learned that many of the elements of this program are from the NCK program in America, and that their “fellow teens” there have benefitted greatly from it.



The enrichment classes begin!

Just a week after actual classes began with two 60-child (Monday-Wednesday, and Tuesday-Thursday) groups of 5th, 6th, and 7th grade children, the government announced a significant increase in COVID-19 infection, and our the program was placed on hold to evaluate going forward. We are suggesting to MoH that perhaps temporarily cutting the class size in half may be a suitable way to keep the program in operation while better maintaining distancing during this pandemic crisis.

Daniel provided us portrait photos with names of each of the leaders, and the teen mentors, which have been organized on the following two pages.

Please pray for them.

The Khwamba TLIP Leaders



**Esau Laurent
Team Leader**



**Bright Banda
Leader**



**John Misinde
Leader**



**Omex Banda
Leader**



**Chipiliro Saulosi
Leader**



**Faith Simoko
Leader**



**Boniface Mtutu
Leader**

The Khwamba Teen Mentors



**Blessings David
Mentor**



**Verediana Paul
Mentor**



**Ellen Mateyu
Mentor**



**Zikiel Zibule
Mentor**



**Amon Jailosi
Mentor**



**Mayeso Master
Mentor**



**Chrissy Finiyasa
Mentor**



**Cornelius Nason
Mentor**



**Archangel Raphael
Mentor**



**Faith Kantondo
Mentor**



**Enelles Raphael
Mentor**



**Geoffrey Harrison
Mentor**

Memories of last year's jazz fundraiser



We all have such great memories of last year's Malawi Visions jazz fundraiser; June 8, 2019! Great time, and terrific music!

We particularly remember horn player Frank Grasso, who earlier this year passed away on February 27. Performers included Chris DeVito, piano; Greg Sundel, drums; Curtis Lundy, bass; Frank, flugelhorn; and special guest vocalist Roseanna Vitro.

We hope to bring Chris' group back again once the COVID19 pandemic is behind us.



Answered Prayer

Four donors came forward to support purchase of 6 large chalkboards (4 x 6 feet) we can include in our shipment to Malawi for our learning centers



An update on Chisomo

In last month's newsletter we told the story of Baby Chisomo. Since then, Catherine Thom, Manager of the MoH Crisis Nursery sought and received an update on Chisomo so powerful that we decided to repeat the story.



The latrine pit

Chisomo was rescued from imminent death from a pit latrine where it is believed she was thrown by her mother to die after her birth. A young boy, entering the latrine, heard a baby cry from below, and called his friends. But by then the baby had stopped crying. The boys threw stones into the pit until the baby cried again.



The day Chisomo was rescued

A man, passing by, observed the boys' excitement, heard the baby cry, and summoned additional help. People came, demolished the concrete covered pit latrine and rescued a beautiful baby girl. The baby was taken to a nearby hospital where for 2 weeks she received treatment for neonatal sepsis.

The baby was named Chisomo which means grace. Everyone who witnessed the rescue said it was only by grace that she survived. After hospitalization, two week old Chisomo weighing 6 ½ pounds, and was admitted into the MoH Crisis Nursery who fed and cared for her. Three weeks thereafter Chisomo was doing very well, where she had gained almost 4 pounds!



**Chisomo
5 weeks later**



Chisomos story, continued



Chisomo with Patricia at 6 months

Four months later, an amazing thing happened, Baby Chisomo was adopted by the nurse who welcomed and first cared for her when she came to the hospital after being rescued from the pit latrine. Her adoptive mother Patricia said “Since the baby came to our nursery ward I never rested as I felt she was my God-given baby. I talked to my husband and he felt the same.” The family did not have a child of their own. “Now our lives are complete!”



Our story wasn't completed last month because Patricia wanted to include photos from Chisomo's first birthday party, on June 25th. Catherine's follow up revealed the grace filled life Chisomo is now living: well cared for and very beautiful in a happy Christian family!



Chisomo's 1st birthday
June 25, 2020

Could any words be more appropriate?

He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to
stand.—Psalms 40:2

The MoH Crisis Nursery saves lives of abandoned and orphaned babies; provide initial care and love; and eventually link them to God-given families. Since 2002 the Lilongwe nursery has rescued and cared for over 470 babies.

Catherine Thom
Crisis Nursery Manager

Something happened in Malawi recently that serves as an example to all free states, worthy of celebration and hope. After a year of strife and prayer, a re-run election was held on June 15, and the results have been proclaimed as an example to all of Africa, if not the world. Inaugural speeches come and go, but following are words worth considering. The words of a Christian minister thrust into office to change direction of a stagnating nation which many of us have come to feel as "2nd home"! Plans so much in line with the hopes of Malawi Visions for our families here. Going forward together is the hope we feel God's direction to labor toward. Following is a statement of hope worth reading :



**INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY
THE STATE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI,
HIS EXCELLENCY DR. LAZARUS MCCARTHY CHAKWERA.**

6TH JULY, 2020

My Fellow Citizens,

Two score and sixteen years ago, our nation was born. It was a birth that I myself bore witness to, for not only was I a young boy of nine on that day; I was also one of only 4 million people to have gone to bed a Nyasa the night before and rise the next morning a Malawian.

Of that generation, only half of us remain, and with each passing year, our numbers fall as we continue to pass the baton of turning our land into a great nation to the next generation. To facilitate this transfer, four men and one woman from among those of us who were the last to be called Nyasas have thus far been entrusted with the presidency of Malawi. In joining that cohort as the sixth President of Malawi, I am fully aware that I may very well be the last member of that fading generation to hold this office. I am fully aware that it has fallen to me to complete the transfer of this mantle of nation-building to a rising generation of Malawians born free. I am fully aware that while our founding fathers and mothers accomplished their goal of national liberation and their sons and daughters accomplished their goal of political liberation, it is your generation that must accomplish the goal of economic liberation.

It is no secret that this goal has been elusive for 26 years. It is no secret that we have had one administration after another shifting its post to the next election, promising prosperity but delivering poverty; promising nationalism but delivering division; promising political tolerance but delivering human rights abuses; promising good governance but delivering corruption; promising institutional autonomy but delivering state capture. And now, after 26 years of false starts and stale finishes, it is no secret that my generation has not only left our homeland unbuilt, but also in ruins. It is because of these ruins that our first task in building a new Malawi is clearing the rubble.

Before we can begin to rebuild, we must clear the rubble of corruption, for it has left our taxes in ruins; we must clear the rubble of laziness, for it has left our infrastructure in ruins; we must clear the rubble of passivism, for it has left our rights in ruins; we must clear the rubble of donor dependency, for it has left our dignity in ruins; we must clear the rubble of regionalism, for it has left our nationhood in ruins; we must clear the rubble of negativity, for it has left our resolve in ruins; we must clear the rubble of impunity, for it has left our governance institutions in ruins; and we must clear the rubble of unprofessionalism and incompetence, for it has left our services in ruins. The ruining of national treasures of both nature and state is a sin of my generation that I am bound by God to confess and bound by you to correct.

For this reason, we must not imagine that it is possible to make these corrections without pain. We must accept that the national bones we have dislocated cannot be corrected without suffering. I was reminded of this truth three months ago when my 12-year-old grandson suffered a greenstick fracture in both arms after falling badly in school. To straighten the bones, an orthopedic surgeon at Kamuzu Central Hospital had to apply enough pressure to the arms to administer healing through pain and tears. In our quest to heal our fractured nation and governance system over the next five years, we must do the same. We must have the courage to face and endure the pain of systemic surgery if we ever want to enjoy wholeness as a nation. We must have the courage to inflict necessary pains on the fractured attitudes and actions of those around us if we ever want to see them whole as citizens. In this transaction, we must each accept that in the context of Malawi's recovery and transformation, we are each a patient with a bone that needs straightening and each a physician with a duty to straighten the bones of others. We are each in some way part of Malawi's problems and must each in some way be part of her solution. We cannot absolve ourselves of responsibility for the maladministration we have allowed to happen on our watch for close to three decades any more than we can renege on our responsibility to make amends.

If this collective sense of responsibility over our national sins and national solutions seems unnecessary to you, then I put it to you that it is not only a necessary path, but the only path. I put it to you that there can be no new Malawi if the only people deemed guilty of ruining this country are those who lost the recent election. I put it to you that there can be no new Malawi if the only people deemed responsible for fixing this country are those who won the recent election. I put it to you that there can be no new Malawi if the only people to build it are Chakwera and Chilima. No! So long as I am President, I will insist that no new Malawi must be built except that which is built by Malawians.

The collective ownership of our problems and collective participation in fixing them is the bedrock of our Tonse philosophy. When we promise to create 1 million jobs, we do not just mean that we will create programs to employ you, but also that we will challenge you stop seeing yourself as a job seeker and start seeing yourself as a job creator. When we promise to ensure that every household is able to eat three meals a day, we do not just mean that we will give you cheap fertilizer to increase food production, but also that we will challenge you to work three times as hard in your fields as before. When we promise to increase your earnings, we do not just mean that we will increase the minimum wage and remove income taxes for those at the bottom of Malawi's pay scale, but also that we will challenge you make yourself competitive in the workplace. When we promise to build new homes with a solid roof, electricity, and tap water, we do not just mean that we will bring investors to make this happen, but also that we will challenge you to work towards owning that home. When we promise to give 1 million youth and women capital to start their own businesses, we do not just mean that we will link them to markets and banks to leverage their gains, but also that we will challenge them to pay back the loan so that another person has access to the same opportunity. The Tonse philosophy is not a campaign gimmick, but a governing philosophy that says: we either build together or crumble together.

I know that this Tonse philosophy is the key to our success going forward because it has been the key to our success thus far. To reach this inauguration as State President and State Vice President, Dr. Chilima and I have ridden the wave of indispensable contributions made by fellow Malawians who each rose to the occasion in different capacities to lend their hand to the cause of justice. Without the patriotic efforts and sacrifices of these Malawians, none of us would be here. If it were not for the courage of over one hundred Malawians who toiled through the night to gather evidence of electoral fraud so that our court petition against the 2019 election was built on facts, none of us would be here. If it were not for the courage of over twenty witnesses who submitted testimony to the court in the face of death threats, none of us would be here. If it were not for the courage of over a dozen lawyers who stood up to the abuse of office and misuse of the law by a politically compromised Attorney General, none of us would be here. If it were not for the courage of the five judges of the Constitutional Court to do right by law despite attempts to bribe them in the interest of subverting justice, none of us would be here. If it were not for the courage of the Human Rights Defenders Coalition galvanizing citizens across the country to sustain protests for ten months straight despite the constant threat of arrest and cloud of teargas under which they marched, none of us would be here. If it were not for the courage of the Supreme Court to uphold and buttress the just ruling of the lower court in correcting both a constitutional anomaly regarding how a mandate to govern is secured and a constitutional crisis fashioned by one of their own, none of us would be here.

If it were not for the courage of media houses to broadcast the election court case in the face of government threats to close their stations, none of us would be here. If it were not for the courage of dozens of legislators and warding off ridicule and payoffs to reform our electoral laws, none of us would be here. If it were not for hundreds of businesspersons and workers donating their own resources and money to give wings to our campaign so that we could reach voters in far flung places, none of us would be here. If it were not for the courage of thousands of volunteers going door to door, village to village, city to city, to reach voters that Dr. Chilima and I could not, none of us would be here. If it were not for the courage of the new leadership of the Electoral Commission to deliver a credible election with limited resources and limited time, none of us would be here. If it were not for the courage of soldiers and police officers in uniform defying political orders to fulfil their oath to defend the constitution and protect citizens, none of us would be here. If it were not for Dr. Chilima and the other party presidents of the Tonse Alliance forfeiting their political aspirations to forge an unbeatable partnership at the polls, none of us would be here. If it were not for thousands of knees scraping floors across this country in night long prayers that gave heaven no rest until God's kingdom came, none of us would be here.

I could go on and on, but the point would remain the same, that it is the Tonse Philosophy of collective responsibility that brought us to this milestone and it is that same philosophy that will bring us to the next. Building a New Malawi will have to be a team effort every step of the way. And when we have differences, we will still have to listen to each other and accommodate each other, for we have no other compatriots in all the world than each other. And when you see another citizen who is not doing their part in the work that is in front of us, accept it as your duty to the country to rebuke them and help them reengage in the process of nation-building. In the same way, when you see another citizen who is making great strides in transforming their home, or their neighborhood, or their village, or their workplace, or their business, or their country, accept it as your duty to the country to celebrate and reward them without succumbing to jealousy and mudslinging. In equal measure, whether you live here or abroad, when you see a foreigner exploiting any of your fellow citizens or trashing the country you call home, accept it as your duty to the country to stand up for the flag and speak of the unsung beauties of this land God has preserved as our national inheritance. We must each give our best for Malawi and do our best for Malawians.

Today, I too promise to give this country my best and do my best for you as your servant. More importantly, I promise to set a good example of submitting myself to the constitutional processes, provisions, and institutions that are designed to ensure that the President and Vice President are always at their best. This means that as required by law, I will make a full declaration of my assets each year; I will go to Parliament to be questioned by the People about my handling of state affairs; I will propose legislation to reduce the powers of the presidency and empower institutions to operate independently, including Parliament and the Anti-Corruption Bureau; I will meet with the Leader of Opposition personally every three months to listen to alternative ways of running government affairs; and I will operationalize the Access to Information Act in order to end the era of government secrecy and usher in the dawn of government accountability.

As I seek to be at my best through these measures, you can also count on me to challenge all of you to be at your best. I will challenge the leadership of the judiciary to do more to root out the culture of corruption and selective justice that has shipwrecked too many of our lowest courts. I will challenge those who sit in Parliament to act professionally, put away childish ways, and repeal and replace the bad laws that remain on our books. I will challenge civil society organization to maintain a culture of robust protest, not just against governance institutions, but against any entity that is on the wrong side of justice. I will challenge our development partners to respect our vision and plans for our own country and to partner with us in ways that respect our dignity and sovereignty, not ways that undermine it. I will challenge all of you as citizens to work hard, work hard, work hard, work hard, and work hard. The time of giving free handouts and rewarding noise makers and handclappers who are too lazy to work is past. We have a country to build and not a moment to waste. So, let's all get to work.

Thank you for your attention. God bless you and God bless our Republic.

Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera

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