



FRIENDS OF
NORTHERN MALAWI

SUMMER 2003 NEWSLETTER



The Rt. Rev. Christopher Boyle
Bishop of Northern Malawi

with the
World Mission Committee
of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth

July 2003

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Mzuzu and the Anglican Diocese of Northern Malawi. Thank you for so many loving greetings and continuing to remember me, my work, and all the dear people here.

JANUARY

The opening of our Community Day Secondary School in Karonga District, Tirola, on Jan. 13 will remain one of the high points of the year.

The appointment of a head and four teachers and the enrollment of 80 students (with many more who could not be enrolled coming each day to sit around the school perimeter) has been a great talking point around the diocese. We have plans and some funding for an administration block, science laboratory, and a borehole and are hoping to obtain further funding to help



The elders in Karonga District have founded a day secondary school.

with self-boarding. This project has been driven by community spirit, cooperation, and determination, with the support of the diocese and funds from USPG, the Scottish Episcopal Church, and many of my personal friends. Right Hand Trust volunteers and others from overseas who simply wanted to come and work with the



diocese are assisting the school as well.

Through its link with the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth this diocese was approached by the Rotary Club of Grapevine, Texas, wishing to assist our work of famine relief. Rotary (whose motto is service before self) by their Revolving Fund and international membership turned a diocesan deposit of \$20,000 into \$75,000 for famine relief. This was a tremendous response and has been used in our general relief work. Initially, however, it had a particular focus in the urgent relief sent to Phoka in Rumphi district in late March and April (see below).

February

The Clergy Retreat on Likoma Island went well; our time with the Bishop of Matebeleland was very good. It was followed by a one-day workshop on church schools and worship in schools and a clergy conference on the last day.

March

Our famine relief work has continued unabated, with up to three deliveries a week – about 40,000 lbs. of maize, plus beans, salt, and Likuni Phala. Drought is now affecting some areas in the north, and unbelievably we have floods in other areas. So the next harvest is already under



Seminarians at the cathedral on Likoma Island

All gifts to the DIOCESE OF NORTHERN MALAWI go directly to Bishop Boyle for hunger relief and other programs. There is no deduction for administrative costs. Please make checks payable to the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, with "Northern Malawi" in the memo line.

The World Mission Committee
of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth

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threat and in some cases non-existent. However the huge grain silos in Lilongwe are full, which is a great blessing.

On March 25 we held our diocesan Standing Committee meeting, and it was so good. Some excellent reports had been written on work in the diocese, which prompted robust and creative discussion.

There is openness and a strong sense of direction coming from all our departments: Youth, Relief, Health, Education, Sunday School, Mothers' Union, Adult Literacy, Projects & Purchasing, and Finance. Throughout I felt there was a clear sense of what we were seeking to achieve for and on behalf of our parishes. All this was subsumed in our wish to serve the Lord and to proclaim his Gospel.

April

On Maundy Thursday a report reached me of torrential flooding in Rumphu District. It told of a disaster in Phoka, about 40 minutes' drive north from Nchenachena, where we have our St. George's Church. I visited there April 23. Torrential rain had devastated the area and affected over 1,150 farm families. Among the population of about 6,000, there were four deaths, four hospitalized, and 97 homes completely destroyed. They were appealing for food, blankets, plates, cooking pots, and clothes. We held an emergency meeting with the Mzuzu Rotary and (through the Grapevine Rotary and Rotary International) have assisted all these families. In doing so we

have called heavily on our already existing famine infrastructure and funds.

During my visit I saw some of the effects of the deluge and spoke to some of those affected and a local Village Chief. One man had been buried up to his neck in mud and miraculously was found and survived.

There were the immediate effects to deal with, but the long-term effects are also considerable. The infrastructure is almost non-existent, and the threat of soil erosion (and its implications for food security), where great swathes of forest have been washed away by rainfall of such ferocity and duration, beggars belief. It rained intensively for 11 hours on March 29. The Chief told me it sounded like many cars driving down the valley.

Our nine seminarians joined me on the Friday before Palm Sunday, and we spent Holy Week and Easter together. It was a time of prayer, reflection, study, and worship. I wanted them to experience together the vividness of the liturgy, and to feel something of the cosmic nature of the events in which we share. They were very patient. It is a bit of a sweat living so close to the Bishop.



The service on Easter Day, at St Mark's, Mzuzu, would be near impossible to describe. At points it seemed to reach ecstatic heights, with people singing and dancing in the aisles. It was so wonderfully joyful; indeed you felt the Lord's Resurrection.



A mother attends an adult literacy class.

May

Our demonstration garden, Chiwowa Chisala, is showing some positive results. We had two Open Days during April, which have been a huge success. At a meeting in May we planned the next stage, including the teaching program for September, to show the principles of soil and water conservation, crop diversification, agro-forestry and natural composting. Many of those who live near the garden are already copying what they see.

June

The bishops of our province, Central Africa, gathered in Eastern Zambia for the consecration of the new Bishop, William Murchombo.

There are many exciting opportunities and obstacles for all of us in the province. Amongst many things that are noticeable is our expansion. In the last year three new dioceses have been added: Upper Shire in Malawi, Luapula in Zambia, and Mashivngwo in Zimbabwe. I personally pray every day for

our fellow Christians in Zimbabwe and indeed for the nation.

During June we made a difficult decision to bring our famine relief work to a close by the end of July. The crisis of a year ago has eased, and we were beginning to see a shift in people's needs and perceptions of what we were doing. We felt ourselves moving away from famine relief into poverty relief. The one was an urgent humanitarian response, while the other is a response to an endemic problem, which we are not equipped to resolve. More importantly, should the need for famine relief return, any future request for emergency help would not be creditable if we allow relief work to simply become another department (as critical as it has been in the last 12 months) of the diocesan office.

Here, in Northern Diocese, life is well, with



Mothers' Union members leaving church with a song of praise.

many opportunities and difficulties. Even so everyone is in good heart and there is a very positive attitude to work, a sense of ownership of the diocese, and a good buzz of activity, for we know in our hearts and see in our lives the truth that our

God is the God of the impossible who makes all things new.

God bless you,

+ Christopher