

# Fishermen Reflect Malawi Life

Standing near the lake early in the morning, one can see life challenging forces that would seek to destroy. Watching fishermen struggle to get their tiny dugouts and small-motorized boats beyond the turbulent surf, one quickly realizes they are not prepared to succeed against these odds. But during the day, the fishing fleet reaches unseen sights beyond the distant horizon, casts out their nets and near dusk they return to the quiet little village with some small measure of success from their intense labor.

## Nation Faces Similar Struggle

It is the same with much of this tiny nation, deep in the heart of the African continent. It is ill prepared to survive; yet at the end of the day these quiet, non-pretentious people are still holding on, still surviving in spite of the odds.

## Project Grows Each Year

Each year it would seem the Malawi Project experiences its greatest year in the efforts to help this tiny nation, yet every year it seems God has propelled the Project to new heights, with objectives none of us could have imagined, and success stories we could not have foreseen.

## Reaching Sixteen New Sites

In 2008 the Malawi Project, expanded to new sites, 16 in all, in order to blanket the nation in assistance. New challenges abounded, new opportunities sprang to life, and new horizons came into view as paths never before traveled felt the footprints of the Malawi Project.



# 2008

The Malawi Project



## Director's Letter

### It's About The Children

On one of our earliest trips to central Africa, Carolyn Pettit, a nurse traveling with us, spent two weeks looking at the nation and its people, then made the observation, "It's all about the children." As we looked around at a nation where over 50% of the population is under 18 years of age, it was easy to agree with her. The present, as well as the future, depends on what the nation and the world decide to do about the children.

Since that trip, whenever new problems arise, we often repeat the statement Carolyn made, "It's all about the children." We then press forward to overcome whatever obstacle is standing in our way.

In the past few months a worsening financial situation is confronting the industrialized nations of the world. When that happens people usually tighten their contributions and face a little more inwardly. For this to happen is catastrophic for the nations that are already on the edge of collapse and the millions upon millions of people who were on the edge of starvation and death, even before the west started feeling the effects of a downturn.

The Malawi Project has seen an unprecedented expansion in outreach and success in the past two years. It is unlike anything experienced since the beginning of the Project. We have gone from a local project, to a regional one, to a national one in a very short time. Now we are looking across national borders to expand programs that will help the people of the sub-Sahara to get on their feet, provide for their own future, and no longer depend on nations in other parts of the world. It is our prayer that just as these programs are taking root our hard-pressed supporters will reach to the challenge and continue to help us enlarge this effort.



*Richard E. Stephens*

Richard E. Stephens  
Director of the Malawi Project

## The Name Rings Beauty, as well as Pain

Malawi is the name of a country few in America have ever heard. But to those who have walked its red dusty roads, passed through its mud hut, thatched-roof villages, looked into the faces of its smiling, vibrant people, and experienced the warmth and receptiveness of its captivating children, the African nation of Malawi has burned an indelible imprint into their hearts for a lifetime. Some who know the people refer to Malawi as "the most pro-western nation in Africa," while Malawi itself concludes proudly that it can be truly referred to as, "the warm heart of Africa."

### Kindest, Gentlest People

As the wide eyed visitor treks through the traffic snarled cities, the tiny trading centers, and the quaint villages that dot the landscape, they add another obvious tag line, "the kindest, gentlest people on the continent." This tiny country, about the size of Pennsylvania in the U.S., is nestled inconspicuously in the south central part of the African continent. It is neither a threat to its neighbors, nor a major power broker in the world. Because of the absence of political instability, and because it makes few demands on the rest of the world, not many people even know of its existence. The people live as they have lived for hundreds of years in tiny, remote villages.

### Awaking to the World Outside

With the introduction of modern communications, however, cities once locked in the past are moving rapidly into the twenty-first century. They are becoming inseparably attached to the world's umbilical cord of cell phones and computers. The tiny nation of Malawi is awakening, and they are calling for the world to discover them. Malawi is one of the poorest and least developed nations on earth, and it has a population with over 90% of its people living in the rural villages, and remote trading centers. Unemployment runs in excess of 50%, and the average family earns only about \$100.00 a year.

### Ignore Them no More

The time is long past when the world can sink its collective head in the sand and fail to recognize the existence of this land and its people. A decision has to be made to make the investment to help them survive the plagues of death, disease and poverty that have too long overwhelmed their lives and robbed them of their lives, liberty and happiness.



# Listening to their Hearts

This effort to assist the nation of Malawi has a unique approach and vision. The Project was established in order to institute successful programs by working side by side with the Malawi people. When success is achieved the Project shifts its focus to a new location.

## Success Through Personal Endeavor

The Project was not created to establish a permanent mission in a single, or even in multiple locations. Its focus is to empower the people to achieve success through their own endeavors. Each time a program is able to become independent of outside assistance, the Malawi Project has succeeded in its mission.

## You Walk Beside Us

A former member of the Malawi Parliament lists three important differences between Project workers and other aid groups he has been associated with in the past: (1) "You walk beside us and not ahead of us," (2) "You listen to our ideas," and (3) "We drink tea at your tables."

## Holding A Support Position

The Malawi Project remains in a support position with local groups. Some aid groups see the importance of having paid foreign nationals on hand, as well as owning property and vehicles. The Malawi Project has taken a different approach in that it owns no property or vehicles in either country. Project staff is all volunteer, and the organization holds a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) status with the U. S. Internal Revenue Service.

## Borrowed Cars and Houses

Project members live in borrowed homes and drive borrowed vehicles in order to carry out their mission. No member is paid a salary from Project funds and administrative expenses are borne primarily by the members of the Board themselves through outside income. Nearly every penny of the funds and "gifts in kind" are directed to the poor in Malawi.



# True to the Objectives

Cross-cultural programs have perplexed the best of minds for years. They befuddle everyone for it can be nearly impossible to find a central meeting place when neither side knows what is motivating the other and why. Goals are different, but even more than goals; the way to reach them can confuse the best motives.

## Working in Another Man's Yard

From the beginning, one of the foundation principles of the Project has been to understand who owns the yard that is being planted. For those who come from the western world, Africa can be a place of intrigue, confusion, and misunderstanding. Hearts can be broken from cultural differences that unexpectedly shatter long-standing dreams. To the African, those who come into their land can be suspect. After all, colonialism is not far in the past, and too many people come with ideas of how to solve the problems. In the end, it appears they are taking over and controlling what really does not belong to them. The Malawi Project holds dear the fact that it does not own or control the programs it helps to assist. Malawi management is critical to the wellbeing and survival of all of its programs.

## Listening is Critical

Listening comes first in any effort to reach the same goals. Listening is critical to the Malawi Project in being able to share the objectives most Malawians hold dear in their hearts. The independent programs being assisted must be allowed to set their own course, chart their own way, climb to their own successes, or plunge into their own defeats. To advise, suggest, and then let them determine their own course is another foundation principle of the Project. Freedom of choice for the Malawians signals a basic element in any program in which the Project participates.

## Accountability and Decision

The Malawi Project walks the line of responsibility and accountability between the contributors of aid and the programs in Malawi who receive the aid.



# Agriculture Reaches Major Focus

After the great famine of 2002-2003, the Project set out to assist farm communities establish programs to help them get on their feet. Increasing crop production, gaining market share, and becoming independent of past methods that did not work, were among the chief goals.

## Modern Farm Techniques

In order to accomplish these goals, the Project purchased and shipped thousands of drip irrigation systems, followed by training programs, and incentive gifts to encourage increased farm production. To assist the handicapped, elderly and orphans, the Project helped spawn a food production plant that is currently processing and distributing enough food to feed over 75,000 a day. With the production facility in place, the focus turned to a farm training community designed to train 200 farm families at a time in improved farming techniques.

## V-Tractor Makes Debut

In 2008, another major step in farming performance took place when the Project joined with the L.T. Rich Manufacturing Co. of Lebanon, Indiana, in the development of a new, small, innovative farm tractor. These units replace the simple hand held hoe used to cultivate the fields in the past. They offer a vast increase in crop production. After an initial test unit in 2006 proved successful, two production models arrived in the country in mid-2008. One was positioned on a farm near Dedza, in the central region, and the other in Thondwe, in the south. Field tests with Tom Rich the inventor proved extremely successful and, with some slight modification, two more units will be shipped in 2009.

## Thirty Acres Set Aside

With the success in the new farm programs, a 30-acre plot is being set aside for testing new farm methods, products, and ideas. This new program will begin in 2009, along with the delivery of two more tractors, one near Lake Malawi and the other in the northern part of the country.



# Distribution Sites 2008 – 2009\*

## North

- Mzuzu Bible College – Drop Site
- Mzuzu Central Hospital
- Ekwendeni Hospital
- Rural and district medical facilities

## Central

- Malawi Government Central Stores – Drop Site
- Dzidaure Development Agency – Drop Site
- Dedza District Hospital
- Kamuzu Central Hospital
- Bwali (Bottom) Hospital
- Clinic at the Gate
- Sacred Promise Healthcare
- Kamuzu Academy
- Rural and district medical facilities

## East Central

- Kuchandiza Osayenda Disability – Drop Site
- Clinic at the Gate
- Salima District Hospital
- Community Library – Senga Bay
- Rural and district medical facilities

## South East

- Namikango Maternity Hospital – Drop Site
- Zomba Central Hospital
- Rural and district medical facilities

## South West

- Kachere Orthopedic Center – Drop Site
- Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital
- Red Cross church HIV/Aids community program
- Rural and district medical facilities

\* Some of the listed sites have received Malawi Project site evaluation in 2008, but supply shipments to these locations will not begin until 2009



# Foundation For the Future is Education

Whether in a remote area of China, the halls of Oxford in England, or the classrooms of a ghetto in Chicago, education is the key to the future. The same is true in Africa. While some would choose to leave the continent bogged down in the ways of ancient cultures, the truth is the African continent is not and will not remain outside the realm of the future. It is stepping into the twenty-first century with both feet, and it must be given the chance to adapt to a world community that has failed to bring it along as an equal partner in the community of man.

Books, radio, television, classrooms, buildings, and supplies are in short supply to a continent awakening to opportunities for those who are educated. In order to provide for themselves, nations like Malawi must be given the educational resources that will help them get on their feet and learn to survive, thrive, and compete in a world that treasures the value of education.

## Two Thousand Text Books in 2008

Through a joint program with the Malawi Paratroop Battalion in Senga Bay, a community library has been completed and nearly 2,000 brand new textbooks were supplied for the education of the community. Additionally, large numbers of new school textbooks were donated to secondary and primary schools, as well as books for the Kamuzu Academy in Kasungu. Large numbers of medical books have been sent to assist the medical community.

## Tens of Thousands for Character Building

Literature to combat HIV-Aids has been translated into Chichewa and over 100,000 printed and distributed. Thousands of Bibles in Tumbuka, the language of northern Malawi, were purchased in 2008 for delivery and distribution early in 2009. Thousands of correspondence courses, and other pieces of literature were shipped into all three regions of the nation, with the purpose of building strong, moral Christian character.



# Expanded Medical Programs

They started with Project members carrying small amounts of basic first aid supplies on each trip to the county and its villages. Each trip the supplies grew and the requests grew even faster. By 2001, a hospital was completed north of the capital, and medical supplies were being shipped to the country by the 40-foot trailer full.

## Hospital Fully Operational

By 2006, the 100-bed hospital was fully operational with state of the art equipment and supplies. Additionally, two large warehouses made it possible for medical equipment, supplies and medicines to be sent to 144 Malawi hospitals and medical facilities from the single location.

## Program Expands Locations

In 2006 and 2007, after careful evaluation and research, new medical distribution sites were identified. Expansion started with four trailers of supplies arriving at sites in both the central and southern regions in 2008. Site evaluations were then conducted for the northern region, and by the end of the year plans were in place to begin shipments in early 2009.

## Plans for Critical Care Unit

In the fall of 2008, a needs evaluation was conducted at the Dedza District Hospital, south of the capital. An offer of supplies and equipment was extended in order to create a trauma/critical care unit. In keeping with establishing programs that are incentive based, the plan calls for the community and hospital personnel to build the needed buildings. The Project will then ship the equipment and supplies to make it a full critical care unit.

## Medical Supplies Top Thirty Million

During 2008, over \$23,000,000.00 in medicine, and an estimated \$4,000,000.00 in medical supplies and equipment reached the country through Malawi Project programs. An additional \$4,000,000.00 in medicine was contracted and scheduled to arrive early in 2009.



# Mobility for a Nation

As one watches large numbers of old and young walking along a relatively empty stretch of road, a long time missionary observed, "It's a nation walking. One cannot imagine where everyone is going. It is like this all over the country. Everyone is walking."

Malawi is truly a "nation walking," but not by choice. It is a nation so poor, there are few bicycles, and fewer cars, so therefore, walking is the only option for most people. Not only do they walk everywhere they go, they often do not have a good pair of shoes, or a wheelchair or crutches for those in need. In recent years, the Malawi Project has focused on mobility in a number of areas.

## Wheelchairs

With the successful distribution of over 1,100 wheelchairs between 2005 and 2007, the Project contracted another 550 wheelchairs for arrival in early 2009. Three other trailers of medical supplies in 2008 contained a large number of wheelchairs, crutches and walkers.

## Shoes

Thousands of shoes have been distributed in incentive programs for:

- (1) Better attendance and grades in primary and secondary school.
- (2) Increased farm production on small family farm plots.
- (3) A major tree-planting program for the nation.

Near the end of 2008, a 40-foot trailer containing nearly 8,000 pairs of shoes left the U.S. for Malawi. Distribution in new incentive programs will value both the nation and individuals.



# Transportation is Critical

Imagine raising a good crop of tomatoes and then not being able to get them to market. Imagine an entire village of children who must walk nearly 10 miles to school each day because the village does not have a single motorized vehicle to get them back and forth to their classes. Imagine a pregnant woman who needs to be rushed to the hospital in time for the delivery, who must be transported on the back of a dilapidated bicycle.

These examples are not imaginary to the people of Malawi. They are everyday situations that in some cases can be matters of life or death. In a third world country where the infrastructure is nearly non-existent, there is little transportation and this includes ambulance, fire and other forms of emergency equipment.

## Two Units Purchased for Central Region

In 2007, members of the Malawi Project met with the management of a small manufacturing firm in Indianapolis that focuses on producing affordable basic transportation vehicles for third world countries. Funds were made available for the purchase of two of these units. One unit was configured to offer inexpensive transportation for the movement of food and supplies from place to place. The second unit focuses on the transportation of people.

## Units Arrive in Mid-Year

The utility vehicles arrived in Malawi in mid-2008 and were immediately put into service in the central region of the country.

## Ambulance Unit Contracted for 2009

A third unit contracted late in 2008, has been configured to serve as an ambulance for the Namikango Maternity Clinic in the southern region. This unit will arrive in the spring of 2009.

