



Salt Malawi

A Christian project saving lives in Malawi
Supporting the work of Julian & Caroline Lott

Newsletter

July 2016

Julian writes:-

As many of you will know earlier this year (and in the last 2 months of 2015) Malawi experienced a long period of hunger. This was due to the drought of 2014/15. Many families will not recover from this for many years. Their situation has been made much more difficult by an even worse drought during the usual rainy period of 2015/16. Of course this affected the great majority of Southern Africa too. A considerable challenge for us personally is that we know many people who have been so affected. One of the consequences of the recent hunger season was that a lot of people died in our area in April and May. Six people known to us quite well died in one 5 week period (4 in just 2 weeks). What our response should be to such a state of affairs is a constant matter of prayer and discussion.

We have previously reported on what our ministry team were able to do earlier this year in the face of the hunger season which has just finished. That crisis over, we have had to react now to the impending new crisis, since this is the only opportunity for the next 12 months to find food to buy to help the local people and the church. Dedza had poor rain compared to most years, but it fared better than many other parts of Malawi. Consequently, traders have poured into our area during the past 4 weeks trying to buy food to take back to their region. Why now? The maize has just been harvested. This is the principal time in the year when the local subsistence farmer can sell his produce in order to find cash with which to buy items such as clothes, sugar, cooking oil, blankets, etc. and pay for school fees, hospital bills and the like. Imagine the pressure that forces a family to sell food that they know that they will need later in the year. The radio reports that over half of the entire population of the country will be in need of food aid this year. The people know that this is the case, that food will be almost impossible to find, and yet they still sell some of what they have! And most did not grow enough to support themselves for 12 months in any event.

Our choice has been to join the hordes buying maize. We have done this with two principal objectives. Firstly, as before, in order that we might continue to help the vulnerable groups of the infirm, the elderly and orphaned who will be unable to find piece work which might give them the possibility of surviving the coming hunger. Secondly, and more shockingly, we anticipate that within the next two or three months there will be no maize within the region for people to buy even if they have the resources to do so. The traders have offered tempting prices - twice what was paid this time last year. Large amounts of maize have been taken from Dedza to other parts of the country. We have recognised this and have



Weighing maize in a village

bought nearly twice as much maize as we had done last year. The majority of this we plan to sell back to the people from whom we bought it, at a fair price, from December to March. We expect that the traders who have also bought to sell during the hunger season will expect a price of about 500 kwacha a kilo – during the peak of the recent hunger the price had reached 300 kwacha a kilo. We have bought just over 60 tons of maize.

Provisionally we managed to complete this purchase before the recent fall in value of the Pound which will inevitably cause a big hole in the buying power of our money!

Although we have bought a huge amount of food we know that what we have bought will not be enough for everyone.

May God have mercy on this nation.

We have spent 4 weeks travelling around neighbouring villages, visiting people, talking, buying maize, weighing it, bagging it and carrying it. Over the past years we have developed many relationships with people in lots of different villages. Several of these men were of great help to us this time in helping to source maize from different places. This has shown that there is a significant benefit to working in a single place for many years!

Our team is physically exhausted. The pickup broke a leaf spring under the pressure of what we expected of it! No such trouble for the Malawians who rely on the oxcarts to move their maize.



The pickup laden with maize outside the extended store



An oxcart at Mphalale

Now begins the work of treating the maize. Untreated this crop would be destroyed by weevils within 6 months. It will take our team of 10 women 4 weeks to complete the work.



Women treating the maize

Our new store (left), which we built last year to cope with that season's crisis, has had to be extended this year in order that it might double in size. Our garage (below) has become a maize store too!



For those of you who are interested here are just 2 key scriptures that influenced our planning:

The parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25: 34-46. The key verse here is, "*Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me*". This is Jesus speaking of himself. This is worship indeed.

1 John 3:16-18, "*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth*"

Of course there are many other really important scriptures on this subject too. If anyone wants to know more you should feel free to ask and we can let you have a list!

Let me finish this note by thanking everyone who prays for us, and secondly for those who make this side of our work possible by your kind donations. May the good Lord bless you. Proverbs 22:9, "*A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor*".

Julian & Caroline

You can email Julian & Caroline at - lottsinmalawi@gmail.com

Financial gifts can be made via - SaltMalawi Ltd Charitable Trust, Featherbridge, Ford Lane, Langley, Stratford upon Avon CV37 0HN Email – treasurer@saltmalawi.org

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