

At this time in many ways life in the UK appears to be on hold. This is true for Julian and Caroline, who are currently living back in the UK. Last year they handed over full leadership of the work in Malawi to John Seda and 3 other trustees of the church. Their plan has been to support that team through regular contacts, providing teaching and training materials, and in particular to make visits to Malawi to actively encourage and teach the church. Last year they made two lengthy visits. They had expected to repeat that again in 2020. But lockdown and restricted travel has curtailed those plans. Please pray for them as they seek to establish a new working pattern to continue to support the team in Malawi. We hope in this mini newsletter to be able to give you a brief update on the current situation on the ground in Malawi.



### Church planting



Over the last 2 years the churches within this group known as the church of the Disciples of Jesus has grown from 23 separate churches to 51 today. These are in the main located within Malawi but there are now an increasing number which are based in neighbouring Mozambique.

One area that has seen great growth is the northern midlands in a district known as Kasungu. You may recall a request to pray for two men there, Innocent and Patrick. Each have been involved in church planting for some time. In the last few months they had both moved from their home villages to live in the rented homes within the villages where they were leading their church plants. They had previously traveled by bike, taking most of the day to get their destinations. Unfortunately during the worst of the recent famine both experienced

thieves breaking into their homes who stole all their belongings – leaving them with nothing. For the sake of his family Innocent has moved back to his home area in Chinkhoma. He had sold his former home and is now settling into a new house. His wife and his 3 young children are reportedly at peace now, but you might be able to imagine some of the grief that they have been through. Innocent continues to travel back to the other village in order to develop the church. His heart is still fixed on this work. Transport issues are the major obstacle to this being a permanent way ahead. Don't be surprised to hear more on this subject in the future!

Patrick on the other hand has remained in his new village where he is now starting a new church in yet another neighbouring village too. Such is the hunger for Christ and the Word of God in that part of rural Malawi. Thank you for your ongoing prayers. These two men need much prayer as there is much work to do to see the churches established and to train new leaders.

This is a small picture of the reality of church life in rural Africa today. There are not dissimilar stories that could be told about each of the new churches. New growth always comes at a cost. Remember Acts 12. We are hearing stories of a significant turning to the Lord within at least 2 villages at this time. More on this next time.



## Latest data on Covid

The press acknowledge that there are 43 reported cases within Malawi with 3 deaths. (It was only first reported by Biliat in early April that 3 cases had arrived). So far, known cases seem very few. Possibly there are many more that are under the radar. We need continued prayer that the virus does not spread unchecked through the villages.



SaltMalawi has been active in helping the churches by distributing water buckets and soap to enable the locals to have hand washing facilities for every one of 51 CDJ village churches (photos selected from many sent by John and Biliat). After the famine most rural families do not have enough money to prioritise buying soap for themselves. It may not be enough but at least when the church meets together the leaders are providing the opportunity for everyone to wash their hands with soap as well as practising social distancing. It goes without saying that the church leaders are looking to God for protection. John spoke at a funeral of an older man in the village of Nyombe last week. The man died after a few weeks' illness having first

called the church leaders to witness his repentance. Before leaving to attend his funeral John sent a message that he was not afraid to go as he felt that God had given him peace about doing so.

Life in Malawi can feel raw. It causes you to examine your priorities on a regular basis. You recognise that your grip on life is weak. You are forced to continually acknowledge your dependence on God.

## Points for prayer – Summary

- Julian and Caroline in seeking to establish a new working pattern to best support the team in Malawi
- Patrick and Innocent and their families as they try to come to terms with the experience of losing their possessions to thieves and in re-establishing peace in their family life
- The physical and spiritual strength and wisdom required by Patrick and Innocent (and other leaders throughout the church group) to plant new churches and raise up capable leaders
- For disciple-making throughout the group of churches, not merely being content with men and women experiencing conversion
- Give thanks for the life of the churches in what is an area of darkness, for the preservation of life during the famine of 2019/20 and for men and women willing to serve the kingdom of God in a sacrificial manner
- That the corona virus does not spread unchecked through the villages of Malawi and Mozambique and for protection for the church, especially her many leaders who often face requests for help from the sick



SaltMalawi supports the work of the Disciples of Jesus churches in Malawi that were founded by Julian and Caroline Lott and are now under Malawian leadership

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