



MEDICAL MISSIONARY NEWS

Supporting Christian Mission through Healthcare

2019 Number 3



Glorifying God

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Someone once wisely noted that our purpose is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Christians can do this today by making disciples of Jesus Christ from all nations, by helping sinful people to be reconciled to God through Jesus' work on the cross, and to become like Jesus in our attitude and way of life. This is a mission that the whole Body of Christ is busy with, as we each use the skills, interests and resources God has given us.

From the beginning, the mission of Jesus has been about ministering to the whole person; mind, body and soul. In His life on earth, Jesus gave people a vision and understanding of God's character and purposes, and demonstrated His power and compassion by meeting people's physical needs. In doing this He enabled His followers to recognise their need for new life and to turn to Him for salvation.

The same is true today; the truth of the Gospel is most vividly demonstrated by how those, who have received God's grace, treat other people. Our care for one another's physical needs shows our love, without which, our proclamation of the Gospel can sound like a noisy gong, and the demonstration of practical grace, in helping someone physically, is a small picture of the grace God has shown us at the cross. When we see grace and love in action, we are best enabled to understand the Gospel, and this paves the way for someone to explain it to us. Whenever a person accepts the Gospel, God is glorified.

Medical mission is an opportunity for the Body of Christ to show grace and love to people in need, so that God is glorified and people have the chance to hear the Gospel. This edition of MMN is full of examples of the Body of Christ glorifying God by our care for the vulnerable and marginalised. Vision for

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China's projects give children with special needs fulfilment and hope. These children, whom God has made and delights in, might otherwise face rejection and neglect, but instead are being given the opportunity to praise and glorify God in this life, as well as into eternity. The ministry in Chad is an example of how God commands us to make every effort to secure peace and reconciliation so that He might be glorified to the community.

God is glorified when the body of Christ is not divided, for we are all one in Christ, and the Aurora Christian Association's work in Romania is breaking down hostility between gypsies and other residents of Vulcan, by offering the chance for children from different communities to learn together, as well as through the health care they offer to those who would not otherwise be able to afford it.

The flooding in Malawi is a further opportunity for the Body of Christ to show grace to those in need, and so glorify God. Here, as Janet Stafford reports, God's people have been able to provide food, blankets and clothes to the thousands living in camps, as well as to provide Bible teaching and fellowship to those marginalised due to blindness or albinism. Our God comforts His people, and we praise Him that this practical provision is one way that He does so.

The work featured in this edition can feel like a long way away. However, we all have the opportunity to be involved, and one role of MMN is to help you to be involved. So what can you do? You can pray. As you read this magazine, browse the MMN website or if you have signed up for regular email updates, you can pray for the missionaries, the people they serve and for God to be glorified as the Body of Christ works and grows. Our prayers are never wasted, because they are incense offered up before the throne of God in heaven, and when we pray, we enjoy His presence and He is glorified.

You can tell others. Do your friends know about the amazing work being done all over the world which MMN reports on? Why not tell them about it? The examples in this magazine will help you to share, with people who don't know Christ, what God is doing in the world today. When we talk about God's work, He is glorified, and we enjoy him.

You can give. Many of the medical missionaries we are in touch with are looking to expand their work, to build or improve facilities or reach out to more people through special projects. Most also need supplies like medicines. MMN has the privilege of being able to channel funds to where they are needed most, and we are continually grateful to God for the huge generosity of so many MMN supporters who have been moved to share what God has put at their disposal, so that Christ can be glorified through medical mission. When we enjoy God more than we enjoy the things he has let us have, God is glorified.

At MMN we focus on encouraging God's people to pray for medical mission and to get more Christians praying for medical mission. This year, we spent time at the Keswick Convention with a stall, where some potential young supporters could try their hand at 'Operation' and others could find out more about our work. In this photo, Grev Parmenter, the

MMN director, is answering difficult questions about our container shipments. One reason we went to Keswick was to raise awareness of our work among a whole new generation of Christians.

The theme at Keswick was 'Longing'; that this world is not all there is, and as we go through life, we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and the treasure we have in Him, so that we can better do the work He has given us to do now. Medical missionary work reminds us that we live in a world which is longing for Christ's return, when He will make all things new, and sickness and death will be no more. It also reminds us of the mission we have, to be the hands of Christ as we seek to make disciples of Him, as He adds to the number of people being saved.

Please enjoy, share and pray for the work of God described in this edition of MMN.





VISION FOR CHINA Testimonies of Changed Lives

by Dr Christine Sansom

Vision for China (VFC) is a Christian organisation restoring hope and transforming lives in China, while demonstrating God's love through the fields of healthcare and medicine, childcare and child development, social care and rehabilitation, education and training. We have been working within China for over forty years and have known the faithfulness of God throughout that time.

The present situation within China is becoming increasingly difficult for our Chinese brothers and sisters. It is also becoming more difficult for overseas workers to get into China, although we are still able to place teachers who want to teach English in Chinese universities. We have seen how nothing takes our Heavenly Father by surprise and how He led the organisation to set up Chinese charities, (non-profit and non government organisations), which now provide for those we care for in China.

The first NGO formed was Agape, based in our hub city, which now runs

several programs. One is the Hope Haven nursery for children, abandoned because of the government one-child policy (now changed to two children in most cases). Agape also runs a Vocational Training program called Warriors House for young adults with special needs and a sheltered employment program called Agape Farm. The No Regrets Program also comes under Agape. Working within local universities and the local church, it aims to promote Biblical values for life to young people and families. This has developed into a family services program to help parents develop their marriage and parenting skills.

Well of Love Special Needs Education Project, an NGO in south-western China, grew out of the vision and prayers of two of our teachers, aiming to show the love of God in a practical way to families struggling to care for their children with special needs.

Eagles Wings, our newest NGO, is in a more rural area, providing education and vocational training to local young

people with a variety of special needs, plus support for their families, as well as a nursery for children with special needs and a rehabilitation program.

We would like to share some stories which show the eternal value of these projects. Bella, the leader of Warriors House writes:

'The House began in December 2012, providing residential special needs education and vocational training (including living, social and work skills) for eleven young adults over fourteen years old. They all have mild to moderate physical and mental special needs. The goal for each young person is meaningful integration into society, through training cooking, baking, handicrafts, gardening and cleaning together, along with spiritual teaching. So far, eight students have graduated to sheltered employment, one is married with a baby and one has been adopted overseas.

Holly (left in photo right) came to Warriors House two years ago and at first she did not understand what the teachers said, didn't want to learn and just kept crying. But now she is the best cook, baker and cleaner too. The biggest change in her life is in her believing. At the beginning she didn't believe in God. She laughed at us when she saw us sharing the Bible. She teased us, saying that we were speaking to the air when we prayed. But now her attitude has completely changed and she has a simple trust in God her Father to provide what she needs. To be with her inspires us all.

One day Holly and I planned to go to the Bell Tower by bus to get something. To my amazement we caught a bus quickly and it was also quiet, which is very rare in the city! When we got off I noticed her excited expression and asked her what the matter was. She explained that before we had left the apartment she had prayed for a bus that wasn't crowded to come quickly. God had

answered her prayer perfectly. I had been thinking how fortunate we were because it's a long time since I trusted God for every little thing, as Holly does. Her faith encourages me to trust God completely, no matter how big or small the issue.

Recently, some volunteers who help Warriors House donated some materials, leaving them at the main gate. Holly came with the teacher and me to pick them up. Normally the gate to our unit is easy to open but this time it just wouldn't move. I was about to call for a workman to come and mend it when Holly said, 'Let's pray'. She closed her eyes, prayed and immediately afterward the teacher opened it easily! She and I both felt ashamed that we had not thought to ask God for help before anything else. Holly always thinks of God her Father no matter what kind of difficulties she meets and she is a wonderful teacher in this way!





Before the Spring Festival we had a visit from the students of the senior middle school (attached to a local technological university) and their parents; in total about twenty people. They made dumplings and then ate them together with our Warriors House students. This kind of interactive activity made them all very happy, both the school students and ours. When we were all sitting around the table for lunch, Stephen (photo above) reminded us that we should pray before the meal. Because the visitors were not believers, Stephen spoke loudly; 'please close your eyes and pray before eating.' The students didn't know how to pray, so then Holly prayed for us all. The guests respected our children's belief, closed their eyes and listened to her prayer. During the lunch, some guests asked about their faith and this enabled our teachers to share their beliefs naturally. May our Father lead these children to know Him better!

Eagles Wings was registered as a NGO in November 2016. The successor to Eagles Nest, it is now developing as an efficient community based activity centre,

providing special needs education, rehabilitation, mentoring and vocational training for forty young people living at home. The goal is their eventual integration into society. A door to door service is offered and weekly dormitory accommodation began in December 2018. Jack (photo below) shared the following with one of his teachers:

'I am a boy with Down's syndrome and I first came to the centre on 4th January 2016. My intelligence was low and I was very clumsy in my movements. I was unable to look after myself and my self-control was poor too. I used to speak and act in odd and unexpected ways. But I was teachable and enjoyed doing repetitive tasks.

After I started attending the centre my life began to change for the better in many ways! Because I enjoy repetition and can focus well, I can learn different life skills. The teachers kept telling my mum that I could learn by practicing repeatedly even though my intelligence is low. They also explained that my mum needed to be more patient with me and give me plenty of



opportunity to practice what I've learned in the centre, such as trying some easy household tasks like washing the dishes and clearing the table. These are tasks I really enjoy now and my mum has come to believe that I really can master basic life skills and learn to look after myself better.

With the instruction and help of the Agape teachers and with my mum's cooperation I have learned to stand on my own two feet! Now, I can manage my emotions better and have fewer negative reactions and feelings. My behaviour has improved too; I get along well with my classmates and don't yell at them now! I can obey the rules for each class and follow the teacher's directions. I don't make faces any more in class either. When my teacher discovered I was fond of copying people, she divided each new activity into a few simple steps, and then demonstrated each one to me for me to copy. In this way, moving gradually from 'demonstration' to 'let me do it', I have not only learned so many skills, but also become more confident with life. I feel so good!

I am a good cook now and make lunch for my ten classmates in the centre. For this task I do all the work, from buying, washing and preparing the vegetables, to the actual cooking. I am grateful that I can join in this big family here at Agape and also that I can learn, pray and praise with our teachers every day. I enjoy singing and studying the Great Book, even though I do not understand God's words totally. I give thanks to Him for the progress I have made.'

Andy (photo right) is eleven years old. He does not like his routine being changed and has a very simple diet; he only eats two kinds of local bread every day. In spite of this, he is in good health, and describes himself as 'chubby and cute.' He is very lively but sometimes

given to sudden and unaccountable changes of mood or behaviour. In the past he has always enjoyed doing the things he liked but hated any strange environment or going to a new place. In fact, whenever he had to go to a new place he would be naughty, even crying in the middle of the road, which sometimes caused traffic problems!

Andy says: 'I came to Eagles Wings on 7th March 2016. My temper has now become much gentler with the help of my teachers and classmates.



I regularly ask for the teacher's help when I find something difficult. I can now use simple language to communicate with people and I've learned a lot of life skills, such as wiping, sweeping, mopping and so on. Before I didn't know how to write but now I can write the Chinese characters neatly in the grid. I've also learned to sing many Bible songs. I can play the piano and read the music score.'

Andy wouldn't have made any of this progress without the help of his teachers and especially God's grace and leading.

Joshua (photo below) was first brought to the Well of Love centre by his young mum when he was about eighteen months old and she told us her heart-breaking story. Joshua had a normal birth but when he was five months old he rolled off the sofa, hitting his head on the concrete floor. This resulted in a bleed to the brain which left him visually impaired and with learning disabilities. The grandparents instructed the parents to abandon their child but they just couldn't do it and as a consequence the grandparents disowned them all. The mum's husband was a train driver and would normally be home only one night in five. Whenever she went out into the street people would point at her, saying 'that's the woman who injured her baby.'

When we offered a place to this little boy, his mum fell on the floor sobbing. This young mum was helped by older mothers at the centre, who taught her to knit and who provided her with friendship and support. She learnt to live again with hope in her heart. Joshua is now attending a local school.



Harry (photo above) was ten years old when we first met him and at that time he had not been outside his home for eight years. He was being cared for by his grandparents, because his father had left and his mother didn't want to know; she was too scared. Harry had cerebral palsy and was very bright, but had never had the opportunity to go to school. Life was very difficult because his grandparents couldn't lift him to take him out. Wheelchairs were not commonplace then and you certainly didn't see people outside who had cerebral palsy. We started to collect him and wheel him down the street to the centre. He enjoyed coming out and loved the stimulation. One day he asked one of our teachers to read him the story of Jesus and indicated that he wanted to follow Jesus and become a Christian. Once he had committed his life to the Lord, he immediately wanted his grandfather to know all about this good news. One of the greatest achievements in Harry's story is that his mother started to see the potential in him and now has a

relationship with her son that she had never before dreamed possible.

Abigail (right in photo below with her mother) was seventeen years old when we first met her, and she had learning difficulties. Her mother had heard about us and brought her daughter to our apartment one evening to see if we could help her. Abigail had never been to school and spent her time at home watching television. She had very little speech, with about twenty words in her vocabulary. Her parents had cared for her in that she was clean, well dressed and well fed but beyond that they didn't really know what more to do. Her father would not allow his daughter out in the daytime in case someone saw her, so she was only able to visit us at night. The parents were divided in that her father thought that any therapy was a waste of time and all that could be done was to meet her physical needs. Her mother, however, wanted her to have the opportunity to see if she could learn.

Abigail began to come to our

home once a week and soon started to make progress, particularly in her speech. By the time Spring Festival had arrived in February her father had noticed a difference in his daughter. He sent us a gift with a letter, thanking us for the progress his daughter was making and agreed that from now on she could attend in the daytime!

Abigail has continued with the program and made huge progress. She is now a member of staff, washing toys, preparing snacks for the other children and generally helping the staff in the day-to-day running of the centre. Her father now brings her to work, walking down the street with his daughter. Her mother is now the accountant for Well of Love. The biggest miracle happened on the day that her father walked into the office and said he needed to know God because he recognised that all Abigail's progress was because of Him. The family are now complete; all trusting in God!

All these ministries express their grateful thanks to MMN for their generous grants in support of this work.



Study Progress Report

by Felix Chibwe



Greetings to you. I am a thirty-five year old Christian currently in my third year of training in general surgery. In the picture above I am with my wife Norcia and daughter Candace.

I believe the Lord started teaching me to trust and wait upon Him very early in my long journey to a career in medicine. I say so because as a very young believer in Zambia I was faced with having to deal with final year high school results that had gone missing for no good reason. This called for patience and trust in the Lord. So as I look back I now know I needed those lessons to prepare me for the journey ahead.

I was accepted into the University of Zambia two years later than I was supposed to, due to a printing error that caused my final high school results to go missing. Nevertheless, the timing was

right because, through the delay, the Lord had preserved me from the frequent closures that had characterised the university during the period I was waiting for my results. So much so that, when I finally got in, I was able to get through my seven year undergraduate training without any delay.

At the end of my internship I desired to work in an environment where I could freely use my career to serve the Lord alongside fellow believers. This is how my wife and I sought the Lord for an opportunity to serve at Kalene Mission Hospital which operated under the auspices of Christian Missions in Many Lands (CMML) in the north western province of Zambia. However, despite having put in a request to be sent to Kalene, the authorities decided to send me to a government hospital in the opposite direction but still within the

north western province. So we obliged and went to this other hospital but continued to wait upon the Lord, who in His faithfulness used the saints on the CMML health board to get us to Kalene after the last resident missionary doctor had been taken ill, barely two months after we commenced at the government hospital.

It was my greatest joy to serve the Lord at Kalene for three years (2013-2016) alongside other local and overseas believers, much more to see souls saved, besides the help for these temporal bodies rendered through the medical services. But through it all, the greatest challenge was not being able to do much for those that needed more specialised surgical treatment, on my own. So I began seeking the Lord for an opportunity to get some formal surgical training and this He provided in 2016 when I was accepted into the medical school at the Copper Belt University, the second largest government run university based in Ndola.

As I mentioned, I am currently in my third year of training and I have one year still to go. The Lord has blessed me in having the right people alongside me throughout my journey, from whom I have learned a great deal. He has taught me to trust Him even more! I am grateful for the financial support I received earlier this year from Medical Missionary News, particularly at a time when I had come to the end of my own resources. This has helped me with my accommodation and other school needs, especially as I begin to prepare for my final clinical exam in September this year, while seeking ethics committee clearance for my research scheduled for the final year of the training in 2020.

I have therefore acquired enough surgical and trauma/critical care skills to enable me to provide quality and safe surgical treatment to the rural poor, who

are horrified just at the thought of being referred to urban hospitals. For this, I am most grateful to the Lord for the help rendered to me through Medical Missionary News.

While based in Ndola, I have been meeting with believers who gather in a gospel hall within about two kilometers from the hospital where I have been undertaking my training. I have been privileged to learn so much from the Bible studies and the ministry meetings, and I have participated in gospel outreach ministry scheduled for the last Saturday of every month.

I have also been privileged to use my medical skills to serve the saints and their families through my house rounds. This has encouraged many, especially the elderly, and those kept away from the meetings on account of ill health.

May the Lord bless all the staff at Medical Missionary News and their partners for all the good work they continue to do around the world. Thank you.

Finally, please pray; pray that I may remain in good health as I prepare for my exams and research. Pray that the Lord will make it possible for me to be placed at a CMML hospital after my training. Pray as I consider full time missionary service in the near future. I feel it impressed upon my heart as I face limitations due to my obligations as a civil servant. Pray for my wife, that she may continue to see her own personal call to service by the Lord, through her teaching career. Pray for my children, that they may grow to know the Lord and be saved at a tender age, and to live the rest of their lives serving Him.

In August I spoke at a conference for assemblies that speak and write in the vernacular, in the provincial capital town of the north western province. Please pray that I was able to proclaim a 'word in season' for believers and unbelievers alike.

Camundambala Primary School, Angola

by Brian Howden

Situated ten kilometres from the town of Saurimo, Camundambala is the first village on the main road south to Luena and has an approximate population of 1,000 people. Prior to 1938 there was no village in existence. It was only when the Portuguese government of the day didn't want the presence of evangelical missionaries in the town of Saurimo that they gave a 100 hectare plot of land outside the town. It was from that site in Camundambala that the missionaries reached out with the Gospel and today there are twenty-four local assemblies in Saurimo. The very place where the government of the day didn't want the Gospel is now the centre of Gospel witness!

How it all began

As was usual in those years, a mission station had to have a primary school, and so that was started in 1938 and functioned until the last missionary left in 1969. The old mission station

deteriorated and as the civil war erupted the population fled. Everything was left abandoned, until my wife Debbie and I arrived at Camundambala in 1996.

In 2005, two years after peace finally came to this troubled land, the elders of the assembly at Camundambala approached our missionary colleague Ruth Hadley and me, and told us of the vision they had for the work. It involved rebuilding and recommencing the primary school that had stood on the former mission site since 1938 and which had been destroyed. These dear elders realised that if the work of the Lord was to progress then we had to have a generation who could read the Bible themselves. If the country of Angola was to have its own doctors, nurses and teachers then they, of necessity, had to have a good education and at least be able to read! It was neither in Ruth's mind nor ours that we would undertake such a task, but as we reflected on the

vision of our African brethren we realised that, not only was the need obvious, but the end product would indeed be a tremendous asset in the work of the Gospel.

After much prayer and discussion the young men began in 2006 to make the first mud bricks with which to build the new school classrooms. The plan was for the local Christians to do what they could and we, the missionaries, would provide what they were unable to afford, for example, cement and roofing sheets. So building commenced using the original stone foundations of the first school, and three very simple small classrooms were built. Ruth Hadley enrolled teachers and worked tirelessly in the school until she had to leave the field at the end of 2016 due to ill health and her consequent home call.

This simple mud brick structure worked well until it was apparent that the classrooms were too small and were deteriorating fast with termite damage. On one occasion, towards the end of 2015, having been up to the school again

to spray a damaged wall with the insecticide we use for dealing with termites, we suggested to Ruth that we ought to rebuild with a permanent structure. This was because the results of the primary school education system had already filtered through to positively affecting the local church at Camundambala and beyond. Clearly, it was a work that paid spiritual dividends as well as provide secular and social benefits, and merited the investment of time and resources to this end.

Somewhat prophetically, Ruth's reply was, 'a great idea but I am too tired to take it on.' During the next year Ruth had to return home and so physically, she never saw the building work commence. But her enthusiasm for teaching and the faithful commitment she displayed to the school lives on in the memory of all who worked with her. At the end of 2016 Jonathan Singleton (left in photo above) had plans drawn up by an architect and we received the first plans in February 2017.

And so the journey began.....



Present day

Today, due to the hard work of visitors from the UK, including Brass Tacks as well as Jonathan, together with a team of up to twenty local young men, the school has a purpose built facility with five classrooms, staffroom, library, storeroom, toilets and showers for the teachers, and a large covered patio area for shelter from the sun and rain. A further four classrooms built in 2009/10 are still in good condition, providing a total of nine classrooms. It has been a logistical nightmare getting the finance off the ground, dealing in three currencies, the pound, dollar and kwanza, and has occupied us fully for the past two years,

but it has been well worth it. Local young men have learnt new building skills and have been a joy to work with. The enthusiasm they have shown for the project, and their willingness to work long hours in the hot sun when required, has been great to witness. In two years there was not one complaint or murmur of dissatisfaction, but an attitude of thankfulness for what the Lord had provided so that the work could progress.

Early on at the start of the school in 2007 Ruth Hadley noticed that some of the little children attending reception class through to year four were sleeping at their desks. They were leaving home at 5.00am and walking fifteen kilometres

to school, then walking back the same distance in the afternoon. Hungry and tired these little children, some of whom did not have adequate footwear, were not in a fit and healthy condition to learn. This resulted in a satellite school being built in their village, which enabled the children to still attend school but only have to walk the fifteen kilometres to the main school to complete years five and six. Every day, four teachers travel the distance from Camundambala to this satellite school and, along with a local Christian in the village, provide schooling for these children both morning and afternoon. The main school is open for all children without distinction and although

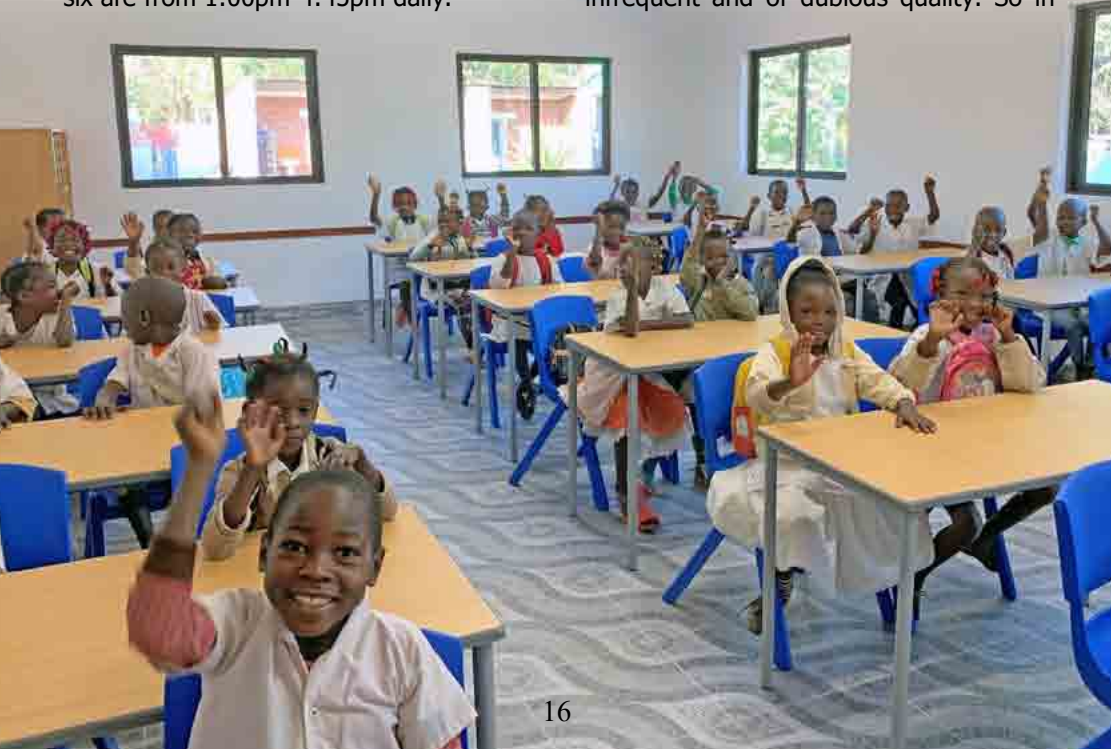
some children come from Saurimo ten kilometers away, priority is given each year to the local children from Camundambala. Unlike other government schools, no fee is asked for when enrolling children and no payment is required throughout the school year; it is a wholly free education for all. We follow the government curriculum, but have additional lessons such as English and Bible class for years five and six. The majority of the teaching staff are paid by the government, but we have the responsibility of paying the wages of an additional ten members of staff which include extra teachers, cleaners, a maintenance man and a driver.



Daily Running of the School

The running of the day-to-day educational work of the school is completely in the hands of Angolans. We are very thankful for Marcus the Head and Mavunda the deputy Head, and together with them we have a good number of Christian teachers who provide a wonderful and God honouring Christian input into the lives of the pupils every day, which usually includes the presentation of the Gospel.

All the children have access to good health care and have clean filtered water to drink in each classroom. In an attempt to reduce the instances of tummy upsets, the whole school takes worming tablets twice a year. Debbie gives the necessary treatment to any children who are poorly while at school or who have any injuries that may occur during the school day. Reception and classes from years one, two and three (photo below) are held from 8:30am-12:30pm daily, then years four, five and six are from 1:00pm-4:45pm daily.



Logistics

Our daily involvement in the educational side is minimal, but the logistical running of the school is our responsibility. This requires a fair bit of management and oversight, from basic stock counting to making sure there are enough resources. The school needs to be kept clean, buildings require maintenance, the generator that provides power has to be supplied with diesel and oil, and have a regular service. The water supply has to be maintained, as does the vehicle used for transporting teachers to and from town. We are in the process of training a couple of young men to do this work and trying to help them see that maintenance is essential. It is important to prevent any breakdowns and so often this requires changing a mind-set, which is not achieved overnight.

The role of MMN

Any visitor to the town of Saurimo quickly realises that the availability of goods of any kind are extremely limited, infrequent and of dubious quality. So in



order to build the new classrooms we have had to import almost everything, apart from cement and concrete blocks. Beside the building materials that have been required, we have imported the desks, chairs and other school furniture. The on-going support of the school is essential. Large quantities of exercise books, pens, other stationery items and equipment have to be supplied in bulk as these are not easily available within the country. Consequently, most goods have to be purchased in the UK and sent via a shipping container. For this we have been most thankful for the fellowship, support and commitment of MMN, to not only order, pack and send the goods, but to store them and to liaise with us regarding priorities and the timing of shipments. This personal touch and interest makes such a difference to the running of the work in Angola as it means we get what we need at the time we require it. This is a massive help to us, not simply in relation to the school, but for every other aspect of our ministry

for the Lord. We are indebted to the staff at MMN for their work behind the scenes without whom we could achieve very little. Our admiration for their work is shared by many Angolans who, together with us, see the positive effect the containers have on Christian work in their country.

Challenges for the Future

Serving the Lord in Angola in whatever sphere is a challenge, but one area where we are personally ill-equipped is in meeting the need to raise the standard of teaching. In Saurimo the limit of teacher training is the completion of grade eleven at school. Consequently, all teachers lack a tremendous amount of knowledge and skill sets. It is our challenge to address that need. We have provided the very best conditions we can for working in but our constant task is to try and raise the standard of teaching. We were thrilled when our son Luke, who is a school teacher, was able to come and hold teacher training seminars with the school staff for a week during the month



of May 2019. Twice a day, for two hours each session, Luke (left in photo above) was able to give the staff ideas, methods and advice, all undertaken in the Portuguese language, and it was thoroughly appreciated by all. Several of the staff grew up with Luke when we lived as a family at Camundambala from 1996-2003 and that link with the past was really important and helpful to the teachers. All the material was reproduced and distributed to the staff, and the Head and deputy are using that material to remind the staff what was taught. We are praying that this might be able to be repeated on a yearly basis, but there is scope for more to be done. To be effective in this we would emphasize that fluency in the Portuguese language is essential and that effective training can not be achieved via translation, so we would value prayer for this aspect of the on-going work.

The new school classrooms were officially opened on the 21st June 2019. The local government officials were genuinely impressed but the happiest day

of all was the following Monday when the children were able to use the classrooms for the first time. What a day of rejoicing that was, to see the excitement of the children and the staff!

We are deeply grateful to all those who contributed towards this project, whether through finance, practical help, by prayer or by encouragement. In two years this huge undertaking has been accomplished and the school is now in daily use. We believe this is testimony to the truth of the words of Psalm 127:1 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it'.

Now, as we use what the Lord has given us, we would appreciate so very much the continued prayers of the Lord's people as we seek to guide the school forward. Please pray that we will be able to meet the challenges of providing a basic education for the 600 children under our care, and to use every opportunity to make sure that these dear youngsters hear about Christ and His love, and that He alone is the answer to their greatest need.

Continuing the Work.....

by Dawn Elliott

From the early 1920s until 2016 there have been assembly missionaries working in the Moissala and Doba areas of southern Chad. My late husband John and I (photo right) were commended there from Australia in 1960, primarily to translate and teach the Word of God, and I have been able to spend several months at Doba each year in recent times. John used to say that 'a missionary's task is to do themselves out of a job and leave behind the complete Bible in the local language with godly people who are able to preach and teach it'. In the Lord's goodness, this is now the situation in the far south of Chad.

There are now no assembly missionaries in the region but this has not meant that the Lord's work has slackened. It is now being undertaken by local Chadian Christians in a slightly different but perhaps even better way! No matter



how well we expatriates have known the local language, or understood the culture, the local people know it much better.

So may I commend to you our dear brother Eloi Mbaissanadje from Doba, (photographed below with his wife Jeannette) and their family, together with those Christians who help him in the work. Shakespeare once wrote: 'Cometh the hour, cometh the man' and how true this has proved to be of Eloi for his ministry in Chad.

In a remarkable way the Lord has prepared Eloi for the work he is now





doing for the Kingdom of God. As a little boy he was taken into the family of a local chief who liked him, and who sent him to school where he had French teachers. So he learned the French language well, together with the history and geography of France. After teacher training he eventually became Head of the Assembly School in Doba. At this point the Catholic church in Doba decided to build a school for young people who were deaf and dumb, and quite remarkably, they chose Eloi to be responsible for the construction of this building, and one of the priests taught him accountancy in the process!

All this prepared him so well for the work the Lord called him to do. MMN purchased a vehicle for us when Eloi and I began assisting in the medical work in Chad. This enabled us to buy medicines in bulk and take them out to our bush health centres where the nurses would buy from us the supplies they needed. In this way the nurses no longer needed to

close their centres for a couple of days while they travelled to the nearest large town to purchase as many medicines as they could carry home on their bicycle or motorbike. This work continued for over ten years until the government was in a position to set up and supply their own health centres. Eloi's accountancy knowledge and money handling came into its own during this time!

These days, Eloi uses our Toyota in all manner of ways to serve his people and the Church. Included in his many duties is the administration and acknowledgement of all gifts and consignments sent for the ministry in Chad.

Recently, there was a serious problem in a village not far from Doba, where the people had issues with the Chef de Canton. Each village has a local chief, and then overseeing several of these is a Chef de Canton who has the ultimate authority. Most of these posts are inherited, so what can begin with a good chief, can finish up with his son or

grandson who is of a very different character (this reminds me of Israel and Judah's Kings where there was a righteous father followed by a no-good son!)

In this case, when the trouble started, the Chef de Canton hurried in to complain to the Mayor of Doba which resulted in 'dozens of vehicles filled with soldiers' being sent to quieten the discontent. All will realise that under such circumstances, soldiers can be very brutal and many of the local Christians were caught up in this attack. Some were bundled off to prison and some were very badly injured, even needing serious surgery as a result. Eloi then spent time going out to this village and back to Doba, securing and delivering letters asking for forgiveness and reconciliation, so that the matter could be put to rest. Then, as the believers eventually became well enough, they were released into Eloi's care by the authorities. He cared for them and eventually took them home

to their village.

It has been a wonderful testimony to both believers and unbelievers and the Chef de Canton in particular has expressed his grateful appreciation, so we praise the Lord for this. Financial help from MMN enabled Eloi to do all this and we are reminded of the words of Jesus; 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God (Matthew 5:9). I would add that it was Eloi's compassion which first made me think 'I can work with this man' as I believe that compassion is one of the most Christ-like of characteristics.

Perhaps Eloi's greatest attribute is his love and knowledge of the Scriptures, and the gift the Lord has given him in teaching it among the people he loves (photo left with the author). Please pray for Eloi, his helpers, his family and especially his third son Guermadji (cover photo), who is studying medicine in Guinea, with the hope of returning to serve his people as a medical evangelist.



God's Perfect Timing

by Janet Stafford

I left Malawi at the end of 2018 leaving people with happiness in their hearts and hope for a good harvest. It had started raining well and nobody expected that things would deteriorate in the way they did. In February 2019 it started raining heavily and ended with a cyclone and heavy flooding.

The devastation became world news with the floods being the worst known in Malawi. Many people were killed, crops were washed away, houses and people's belongings, as

well as livestock, were also washed away. So many people were left homeless with nothing to depend on. As a result, they were put into flood victims' camps where life was so miserable and pathetic.

As I prepared to travel to the country in the week before Easter, with the knowledge of the devastation and also the awareness of the challenges people were enduring, the Lord gave me these words from Isaiah 40:1 'Comfort, comfort My people, says your God. Speak tenderly.....'

The numerous hardships people

were facing did not prohibit them from attending their Easter conference (photo left). We really thank God that, despite the tragedy of the flooding, more than 4,000 came. Among those present were over 150 blind people. It is always a blessing to have them. God is really wonderful for He does things in the way He knows best. With God's help I was able to speak the right words and after the conference folks went home very encouraged and blessed. This year's Easter conference was such a timely gathering as God comforted and encouraged His beloved ones with His words.

One of the difficulties we encountered concerned transport to the conference, especially as the government had prevented the use of open top lorries. This could have stopped people attending the conference but we thank God for His intervention and that the lorries from the local area were allowed through by the traffic police. Two lorries from Phalombe and Salima, in the central region of Malawi, were refused access so mini buses had to be hired, which is always very expensive. We therefore thank God for His mercy and protection during the Easter season.

Among those most affected by the flooding were the infirm (photo right), the blind and people with albinism. A night-time of prayer and fellowship was organised by Redemption Village Bible Teaching Ministries where over 700 blind people and people with albinism gathered.

The faces of those who came to the prayer meeting looked so depressed due to the situation they were left in by the floods but despite this it wasn't long before everybody was happy and encouraged by the words of God. We really thank God for His presence. They heard about the life of Jacob, particularly from Genesis 28:10-22: 'I am with you....I will





keep you....I will not leave you....I will fulfil my promises to you...surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it.' So many folks were encouraged by this and went home happy with renewed strength, courage and awareness of God being with them. Each one was given money for food and also clothes and items from the container (photo left) which had recently been sent from the UK. It had been delayed but had, nevertheless, arrived at the right time. God had a reason and if it was not for this container many people would not have had the practical support, which included braille Bibles (photo right), to help them with their needs.

We held a clinic for the blind people and we thank God for His provisions. We also set up a clinic at one of the camps where there was great need. There were so many who needed medicines that we worked around the clock from 7.00am for twelve hours. Some people had to be seen the next day.

At the camp we were saddened to see there were no tents, no mats and no mosquito nets. People were living on open ground with a sparse covering of trees. Each family was given just one blanket. With men sleeping in one building and the women and children in another building two hundred yards away who had the blanket? The men!

It was in God's timing that we went to Khungubwe flood victims' camp with food, blankets and clothes. The visit was very special as the people of this camp had never received any help like that which we were able to take to them. We had over 600 bags of maize weighing fifty kgs each and large sacks full of mixed clothes which were packed with the help of three orphaned lads who had just finished secondary school. The camp had over 278 families and a population of almost 2,589 people. Five babies were born in the camp. The maize was given

to each one of them excluding children. Most of the people in the camps were so surprised that they were able to have a bag each, when normally they would have to share.

Many people in the camp are now sleeping with blankets and the children have their sweaters. They are really grateful and thanked the Lord as Malawi was soon to have its winter season. After the distribution the Christians began to sing choruses and Lapson, a local leader and helper, had the opportunity to share from the Word of God.

Now that the floods have begun to

recede most of the people from the camps have now begun returning to their farms to clear the ground for winter planting.

We would appreciate and value your prayers as the people of Malawi still face many challenges, especially the need to acquire materials to build new houses, to source the regular provision of food and to have basic kitchen utensils.

God's children have been comforted through your prayers and through your giving. They know that nothing can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.



Returning to Aurora Christian Association in Vulcan, Romania

by Dr Christine Sansom



In April of this year a team of fifteen of us set out early in the morning from Liverpool Airport to spend a week at the Aurora Cristian Association (ACA) headquarters in Vulcan, Romania. The team consisted of three adult leaders and me, together with ten teenagers from the Christian Fellowship School in Liverpool.

For the young people from the school this is a part of their educational curriculum. They are interviewed and, if selected, they raise all the funds and prepare for this week in Romania very

prayerfully, together with their classmates. For many of them this is their first mission experience overseas.

After a short flight and a three-hour journey on a minibus we finally arrived at our destination and settled in. The next day the students prepared for the holiday club, working closely with the youth from the local churches in Vulcan. The holiday club is run for two days and each day there is an introductory time together followed by a games session, a craft session and a Bible study. On the second day some of our youth led the



Bible study on the theme of 'Trust', working with an interpreter.

I was able to visit some of the people whom Medical Missionary News has been able to help by providing regular medicines and other medical support. When my group visited the village we met Maria and her family. Maria (photo above) is just one year old but she was born very prematurely and spent her first six months in hospital. There is no funding of health care in Romania and the family were very grateful for the help provided. I examined her and was very

encouraged to see how well she was progressing.

This dear family face ongoing medical bills for this little one and ACA is also helping several families with their ongoing regular medication.

Brother Ghita (photo below) is daily in his office on site and the gypsies can come to him for help with many day-to-day problems, including obtaining identity cards, receiving food and clothing aid, as well as medicines.

Aid is collected here in the UK and taken out to Vulcan by lorry three or four



times a year. When we were there, the barn and the store were full as a lorry had just arrived.

Our teams also visited the two kindergartens run by ACA where gypsy children and the local Romanians learn together. This is a real miracle and is breaking down some of the hostility between the gypsies and the local people. They also had opportunity to visit some of the families in the gypsy village and see where the children live.

This was my fifth visit to this ministry and it is such a blessing to see how the work is growing, and to see the changed lives of people in the gypsy village. I first met Romana in 2014 when she was expecting her fourth child, and she had cried and told me that she did not have enough to feed her children each day. On this visit she took us around the gypsy village and showed us her home there. ACA have helped her to improve and extend her home. Her husband Nelu is now working and is a leader in the local church.

Please continue to remember this valuable work in your prayers.

MEDICAL MISSIONARY NEWS

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From the Director

Grev Parmenter

Recently, I had the privilege of visiting some of the projects we support, to see first-hand what God is doing in these places and meet the people God is using to extend His Kingdom in Angola and Zambia.

I was able to visit Camundambala, Angola, and see the final touches being put on the new school building described on pages 12-18. It is brilliant to see the school in operation and the children and teachers enjoying the new facilities. Having seen the conditions they were working in we can thank God for his provision and the commitment of the local team to bring it into being. We pray with them, that God will use the school to touch many lives, both educationally and spiritually, in the days to come.

Commitment to serving God through the provision of healthcare services was very evident in Zambia too. I had a whistle-stop tour of a number of mission hospitals and clinics in the north west of the country. Despite being very rural, patients travel for miles (including from neighbouring countries) to seek help as they know they will be cared for at these mission centres. Conditions and resources are very different from the UK but God's people are working tirelessly to help those in desperate need and give them the medical care that we would take for granted. The difference is that they are able to share the love of Jesus freely with those that come for help in word as well as practically, potentially giving hope for the future as well as the present. A gospel message is often shared over a hospital PA system, the Jesus film is shown in the waiting areas, pastoral visits to the wards are regular and patients are very appreciative of being prayed for. What an opportunity; please continue to pray for the staff and local churches who are involved in this ministry.