



SaltMalawi Newsletter

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

January 2017

Welcome to the first SaltMalawi Newsletter of 2017. Many of our readers will have been following with interest the news and progress of this season's desperate food shortage after all the reports of disastrous harvests. Julian and the team have been reporting for the last 12 months on the huge efforts made to acquire and store maize safely to enable the churches to distribute food and help to the neediest in their communities. Your prayers and financial help have been the crucial 'enabling' ingredient for the team to be able to respond to a greater level than ever before as Julian's report indicates. You may be interested to learn that Wednesday's (25th January) mass food distribution began at 6.15 a.m. and went on until well into the afternoon – a very busy day for them all!



People awaiting food distribution at Tumba

They are to be congratulated on their tenacity and determination to meet these needs while continuing to work with all the existing church leaders as well as responding to requests to bring the gospel to new villages. The news of the arrival of reinforcements this month in the form of Roger and Helen Jacobs is a boost to the whole team and both a help and relief to Julian and Caroline after many years of praying for such and especially as they prepare to return to the UK for 6 months in March this year. You will see from Julian's report that Roger and Helen are already getting 'stuck in' to the work. The good news and glorious answer to prayer is that the rains have been much better this year than that of either of the last 2 years, PTL!

On behalf of all trustees, thanks again for all your on-going support. *Brian*

A report by Julian on the distribution of maize on 25th January follows.

Our programme was to help people who are outside the church. We already have been helping our churches in the villages around Lilongwe, Dedza and Nsanje. Now we wanted to make maize available for the needy in the villages where we work near Chiphazi.

The problem. After two consecutive years of relative drought it was obvious to us that there would be serious hunger in our region. The problem is exacerbated by some farmers selling their surplus to traders who took maize to other regions that had produced even less maize than Dedza after last year's harvest. The farmers were offered such good prices that many were tempted to sell what they could not afford to lose. Of course there were very many too who did not harvest enough.

There is maize in the country. However even the government-provided maize (available only in certain areas) is there to be sold to those who have cash. This is perhaps the biggest single reason why people are suffering now - they have no cash. After 2 years of problems most families rely upon piece work during the hunger season in order to buy food. No work means no food. Unfortunately, many people who might normally employ the poor to labour in their fields have no money and therefore cannot give work, or if they do they cannot pay the workers properly. Maize is in short supply so the price is high. A good day's work will only earn enough to buy food for that day and perhaps a little bit for the next. When we were distributing help at the village of Nyombe on Monday we heard this story from everyone in the church. They can't buy food so have survived by eating fruits (e.g. bananas) but now those have all gone. Without our help there would be literally no food in the family until the harvest, mid - late March at the earliest.

Yesterday women were squabbling over very small amounts of maize. A sign of the hunger. Today we have had many more people coming asking for maize.

We developed our programme in agreement with the chiefs and village headmen and, in all, 60 different villages received assistance

yesterday. 1011 people came to our church building in Tsumba to receive 20 kgs of maize each - so we distributed over 20 tons of maize in the course of 8 hours. Each person represented a family. We can assume that more than 6000 people (and probably many more) will enjoy the fruits of our labours and your gifts over the past 8 months.



Providentially we had no rain and not everyone came at the same time to collect the maize. Photos above and on the previous page show the crowds around the building at intervals of about 3 hours. Perhaps as many as 400-500 people were waiting at one time.



We had a team of 5 men working to distribute the maize (photos above and below).





Cameron and Roger dealt with registration and supervision of that element of the work. Another 4 men worked to carry the maize from the pickup and Hilux (photo above) whilst a team of 6 women sweated bringing the maize out of the store on our land (photo below) together with John and Alexander. Caroline and Julian drove the trucks to the church and back, several times each - a total of 34 trips were made!



Four community policemen turned up to help keep order. The chiefs were all present to make sure that those from their village who were registered with us actually received their help.

Of course the opportunity was taken to share the gospel with people as they waited. (See Roger in photo top right).



The photo below shows happy women (in the main) carrying away their maize.



On Friday we will send 2 tons of maize to our churches in the south, and on Tuesday Julian and Roger will take 1 ton to the churches in the Lilongwe area. And so it goes on . . .

With love *Julian*

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

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