
Malawi

**Total area:**

118,484 km²

Population:

16,407,000 (2013)

Literacy:

56%

Official languages:

Chichewa

GDP (PPP) per capita:

\$1,172 (2016 est.)

Life expectancy:

54 years

Religions:

53% Protestant, 26% Catholic, 13% Muslim, 5% indigenous beliefs, 3% other religions

Prayer points

Conferences in Malawi

How would you prepare to preach if you had no Bible, no study books or no formal theological education? This is the reality for many in Malawi. Worse still, indigenous churches are often steeped in animistic culture and traditions. Zambesi Mission runs 'bookset conferences' to address these challenges. Two are being planned in July in Mzuzu and Nkhotakhota in northern Malawi. Please pray for the team as they choose and order the study books in English and Chichewa and finalise plans with local church leaders. Pray that the conferences would lead to the spiritual transformation of the participants. (Zambesi Mission - August 2021)

Equipping local churches across Africa

Please pray that the Gospel of peace would proceed forth throughout Nigeria, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, and other African nations on this incredible continent. May the beautiful feet of those who bring Good News be readied with peace. Pray for upcoming AI Massira trainings in Malawi. May they further equip the local Churches for discipleship and evangelism to advance the spread of the Gospel. Pray for the AM resources being translated into several African languages. May they bear fruit for the Kingdom. Pray the AM App would be fully provided for and ready for widespread use throughout Africa. (AI Massira International - July 2021)

COVID-19 spread in Malawi

Your prayers are urgently needed for the Covid-19 situation in Malawi which is growing worse due to the South African variant. There is no vaccine roll out in place and many of the Malawian people are

fearful of being vaccinated. Pray that the people will be given the truth about the vaccine and the importance of having it. The current figures are 20,830 cases, 7,005 recovered, 540 deaths. (Starfish Malawi - March 2021)

Radio outreach in Malawi

Our partner radio ministry in Malawi is serving the Yao people of that region, and following recent government research, it was discovered that the station had more listeners than the other two stations in their district combined. They now have all the permissions necessary to proceed with setting up a new broadcasting site that will double the number of people that their signal reaches. Pray as we begin to get the equipment ready for installation. One of the listener groups would like to start a Bible study in their village so pray for great impact from this group, and that many more will hear the gospel as the station is heard over a much bigger area. (Reach Beyond - March 2021)

AI Massira trainings in Africa

Pray for the follow up to AI Massira (AM) trainings held in Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Malawi. Pray the 'gospel of peace' to be clearly communicated through every participant. May each proceed to journey through this gospel resource with friends. Pray our Father's protection over his people particularly so as hostile groups increase their threats to 'steal, kill and destroy'. Pray the One who came to give 'life and life in abundance' would meet with those that persecute him and his people. Pray God's abounding provision for the development of an AM App to further enable his Good News to be heard. (AI Massira International - January 2021)

Bible Explorer class in Malawi

Praise God for the good health of all the Bible Explorer class trainers, and that they have been able to return to visiting schools, teaching the Bible to hundreds of children. Pray for God's guidance in 2021, that He will enable us to reach more schools and districts in Malawi. Pray that the 'clean hands' project is well implemented in the schools and that participation of the children is good. Pray that all those in schools are protected from Covid-19. (Starfish Malawi - January 2021)

Gospel ministry in Malawi

The Evangelical Bible College of Malawi (EBCoM) in Blantyre performs a vital role in training men and women for gospel ministry in Malawi and northern Mozambique. EBCoM was facing severe financial challenges when it was forced to close by the government in March 2020 due to coronavirus. It will start its delayed new academic year in January with almost no money in the bank and with new Malawian teaching staff. Please pray for sufficient new students to make the college sustainable and for the Holy Spirit to lead, teach and inspire teachers and students alike through God's Word. (Zambesi Mission - January 2021)

Health services in Malawi

The population of Malawi is very vulnerable with high levels of malnutrition, HIV and other diseases such as TB and malaria. During July the number of Covid-19 cases rose rapidly and it was feared that their rudimentary health services would be overwhelmed. But crucially the number of cases has been declining from its peak in July. The rate of hospital admissions and deaths have also followed this trend. The reasons why the outbreak did not escalate uncontrollably are unclear, but please give thanks to God that Malawi has, so far, been spared. (Zambesi Mission - December 2020)

Covid-19 in Malawi

Numbers of Covid-19 cases are rising rapidly in Malawi. At a recent Scotland Malawi Partnership meeting Malawian health leader Dr Jane Mallewa said that the situation is "going to escalate badly" and their "health system is not going to cope". Zambesi Mission's partner the Zambezi Evangelical Church (ZEC) runs five health centres in rural districts. ZEC's healthcare workers are shining the light of Christ into their communities. Zambesi Mission is providing them with PPE during the pandemic. Please pray for God's protection over ZEC's staff and for the love of Christ to be

experienced by everyone they serve. (Zambesi Mission - October 2020)

Protection and guidance

Pray for the protection of God upon each and every staff member, our families and the office properties and premises. Pray for God's guidance upon everyone as we carry on doing some work in this period of the pandemic. Pray for God's encouragement to Pastors to keep on reading Christian books and teaching material during this period of Covid-19 so that they get encouraged. Ask God to help members to receive God's direction after reading the books and apply it in their day to day life. (Starfish Malawi - September 2020)

Hand washing stands in Malawi

Pray for the grace of God to help the health clinic construction to be completed and to get it registered with the Malawi Medical Council so that the doors can be opened by July. Pray for the welders to complete the contract for the hand washing stand carefully and in good time. Pray for the local chiefs to mobilise the communities to use and maintain the washstands. Pray for wisdom for our staff as they set up the washstands in strategic places around Salima town. (Starfish Malawi - July 2020)

Wisdom for projects

Please pray for the Starfish teams in the UK and Malawi as they wrestle with the impact that the coronavirus is likely to have on the work of the charity. Fundraising events in the UK are already being cancelled or postponed, with the effect of decreased income for this year. Projects such as Bible Explorer in Malawi, have already been affected as the schools and nurseries have been closed. Please pray for wisdom in deploying staff onto other projects. (Starfish Malawi - May 2020)

Orphan Daycare benefit vulnerable children

The Zambezi Evangelical Church (ZEC) supports vulnerable children at three Orphan Daycare Centres (ODCs), set up during the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980/90s. Far fewer are orphans today, but every child at the ODCs is in extreme poverty. They receive Christ's love through physical support, food and education; but also God's Word, especially important as many are Muslims. Zambesi Mission is currently helping ZEC to install maize mills at the ODCs. These will be used to generate income to fund their ongoing work. Pray for the completion of these projects and for their future successful operation. (Zambesi Mission - April 2020)

Glad Tidings Orphan Care

Thank God for all the donations which are given to the Glad Tidings Orphan Care centre to enable the work of caring for the children on a daily basis to continue. Pray for the staff and nursery school teachers as they educate the children. Thank God also that the health clinic construction is nearly completed. Pray that it will help many people to access medical help in the community when it opens in 2020. Thank God for the ambulance as it is already providing a valuable service to those in the community. (Starfish Malawi - January 2020)

More trainers needed for Bible Clubs

Children for Christ Ministry (CFCM) is a small organisation run by three Malawians. They run children's Bible Clubs around Blantyre, in which the gospel is presented in a fun and imaginative way. Many children come to personal faith in Christ through their ministry. CFCM also trains Sunday school teachers and Bible Club leaders (1,000 people in 2017). They feel very dependent, however, on their Malawian staff and really want to expand the training programme, so they have embarked on a process of training more trainers. So far 14 new volunteer trainers have been trained and have passed their practical tests. Please pray for CFCM as it seeks to develop and multiply children's workers through Malawi so that many more children would come to faith in Christ. (Zambesi Mission - February 2020)

Orchard blesses Glad Tidings Orphan Care

Starfish has created an orchard of fruit trees that will benefit the community of Glad Tidings Orphan Care, as well as local primary schools. The fruit supplements diets and the community is educated about the nutritional importance of including fruit, fibre, and vegetables in their diet. Pray that the fruit trees grow without being damaged by disease. Pray for well-wishers to help build a brick wall around the Orchard. (Starfish Malawi - December 2019)

The Evangelical Bible College of Malawi

The Evangelical Bible College of Malawi (EBCoM) is run by a group of international mission agencies together with several indigenous evangelical churches. Limited access to scripture means that there is little detailed Bible knowledge, causing susceptibility to false teaching. EBCoM prepares local believers to teach and preach the Bible faithfully and make it applicable to situations that local believers face. This autumn EBCoM will be starting a new degree programme; please pray for EBCoM, particularly that the Holy Spirit would inspire all its students to grow in faithfulness, godliness and love of the Lord as they prepare to serve God in Malawi and even beyond. (Zambesi Mission - October 2019)

Bible Explorer (BX) programme teaching

We ask for God's favour and protection in this coming academic year for our secondary school student sponsorship; and for good outcomes to staff changes. Pray for the Bible Explorer (BX) programme teaching the Bible to children in school, for spiritual growth in the lives of all BX presenters, and for their good health. Pray also for the expansion of this programme in schools in the Matenje zone, where ten schools are expected to be added this year, and that in the Glad Tidings Orphan Care the nursery school children would excel in their education. (Starfish Malawi - October 2019)

Bibles at lower prices for rural believers

Access to scripture in local languages in Malawi and Mozambique is a big challenge. In most rural churches only a handful of Christians have access to a bible. There are two issues: cost and access. A bible costs about £7, but travelling to the city to buy one costs much more. So they are out of reach of most believers. Zambesi Mission runs a scheme to help rural believers buy a bible in Chichewa for about £1. It is wonderful to see men and women crowding around to buy their own bible, often for the first time. Please pray that many more believers would be helped to buy a bible in this or similar ways. (Zambesi Mission - August 2019)

Devastating floods in Malawi

Please pray for the people of Malawi who are suffering from the effects of devastating floods. Over a million people have been affected: some have lost family members, seen their crops for the year washed away, or lost their houses and all of their belongings. Some of the worst-hit areas include the Lower Shire, Chikwawa and Nsanje districts, where many of the blind and partially sighted people served by Torch Malawi live. (Torch Trust - June 2019)

Bible Explorer programme official

Praise God that the Bible Explorer (BX) programme has been formally acknowledged by the Ministry of Education so that BX presenters are officially allowed to teach in all schools in Salima, Malawi. Pray for God's strength and good health to all BX presenters so that they are able to continue delivering the message and not miss classes due to health problems. Pray that God will help the team to identify nine additional schools so that it reaches the 50 targeted schools. (SaltMalawi - June 2019)

Radio Lilanguka for Malawi Yao

There has been a very positive response among the Yao people in Malawi to their new Christian radio station Radio Lilanguka. Only 0.5% Malawians are evangelical Christians but this first Yao Christian radio station has already started to unify isolated ministries and churches who are working with this unreached Muslim people group. In addition, 600 solar powered fix-tuned radios have recently arrived at the station for distribution amongst the local people. Pray for a real gospel impact as a result.

(Reach Beyond - December 2018)

Braille Christian literature in Malawi

Christian literature is important to all Christians for learning and developing their faith. In some countries it is hard for Christians to get the books they want, and even more so if they need them in braille or large print. Having used the Malawi Torch library to get books in braille, one man said, "It is an essential tool which is making my visual impairment nothing to worry about... my preaching has drawn the interest of many because I read with my fingers". Pray that more blind and partially sighted people in Malawi will be able to get Christian literature in a format they can read. (Torch Trust - September 2018)

Farmland moves forward

Bimbi in Malawi has high temperatures, low rainfall and frequent droughts. Most of the local population practise subsistence farming but this is seriously undermined by the climate. Our partner, Word of Grace Church, has a large piece of land adjacent to the church building, which could be irrigated and farmed to provide an opportunity for the church to help five different villages in the area. It has taken a long time to get the correct permissions in place but it is ready to go forward now. Pray for this project which has the potential to grow 35 hectares of green crops and supply food and income for many. (Emmanuel International - May 2018)

A Peaceful and Tolerant People

The Yao people in Malawi are a peaceful and tolerant people but the Christian gospel has made little impact there over the years. It's estimated that just 0.5% of the population are evangelical Christians. Now, after 19 years of failed attempts, negotiations and prayers, the first Yao Christian radio station is finally on the air and has already started to unify isolated ministries and churches who are working with this unreached Muslim people group. Pray for a real gospel impact from Radio Lilanguka which will reach hundreds of thousands of Yao listeners in the region. (Reach Beyond - January 2018)

Come Children Join and Sing

Zambesi Mission has been working with Malawian children's worker Etiny Thole to produce a book of scripture-based worship songs for children. Malawi has a rich tradition of beautifully harmonious choirs. But the words that they sing are not always based on God's Word. The book called Ananu Ziimbani (Come children join and sing) contains songs in the native Chichewa and Chitumbuka. It is also available in CD format to suit Malawi's oral culture, where new songs are learnt by hearing and repeating. Please pray that this initiative will really help children to learn the truth about Jesus and follow Him through worship. (Zambesi Mission - November 2017)

Library in Malawi

Many church leaders in Malawi have a hunger for God's Word. Yet even the minority that received training at Bible College have few resources of their own. Give thanks for the library that is being developed in Blantyre through The Kerusso Trust. Give thanks for Langham Literature, the Scottish School of Christian Mission, the Opal Trust and many individuals, who have partnered with The Kerusso Trust to provide almost 5,000 books. Pray that the library will be well used by pastors and church leaders, and that studying God's Word will equip many church leaders to disciple and teach the Bible to others. (The Kerusso Trust - November 2017)

Bible Training

In Malawi, one of the poorest countries in the world, 90% of pastors have had no opportunity for Bible training. The Kerusso Trust is working with J-Life Malawi to bring basic Bible and ministry training to rural church leaders, through workshops called Learn2Serve. Give thanks for pastors like Dennis, who daily walk five hours to attend the programme. Please pray for a new course called Entrust, starting in July, coaching pastors who have completed Learn2Serve to train other church leaders. (The Kerusso Trust - July 2017)

The Gift of a Goat

Zambesi Mission has distributed goats to churches in the Lower Shire valley, an area previously affected by both floods and drought. They report, "The beauty of this project is that almost everyone knows how to keep a goat, the goat will eat almost anything, they are very quickly reproductive, with a short gestation period. So rapid multiplication quickly pays back the initial investment and the recipients 'repay' the initial gift by passing on their first-born kid – through the local church – to another needy neighbour". Pray that the recipients can keep their goats healthy so that they multiply and become a valuable herd. (Zambesi Mission) (Zambesi Mission - March 2017)

Distinctively Christ-like Lives

About half of Malawi's population is under the age of 18. The Fellowship of Youth (FoY) of the Zambezi Evangelical Church in Malawi organized a summer conference which was attended by 3,000 young people from across the country. The theme of the conference was 'Unless the Lord builds the house'. One of FoY's main aims has been to stress the importance of Biblical discipleship amongst the youth, and the conference was geared towards this. Teaching sessions at the conference included Bible studies on discipleship and evangelism, as well as other spiritual disciplines, eg giving. Please pray for FoY as they seek to live distinctively Christ-like lives in a country where severe poverty is widespread and false teaching is rife. (Zambesi Mission - January 2017)

Drought Relief

For the past two years Malawi has faced a series of weather related disasters. This year El Nino has caused widespread drought in most countries in Southern Africa and in Malawi over 5 million people are facing hunger because of failed harvests. Emmanuel International Malawi has been asked to partner with The World Food Program (WFP) to feed over 500,000 of those in need, in 2 districts. This will entail the targeting, and distribution of food each month for 5 months to those 500,000 people. Please pray for motivated and organized volunteers to help with various tasks during this process. (Emmanuel International - September 2016)

Children's Church Resource

Children for Christ Ministry (CFCM) is a Malawian organisation committed to making Jesus known to their country's children. During the school holidays their main focus is on teaching Sunday school teachers. They have been preparing teaching materials in Chichewa (the main native language), since there is "nothing available commercially" in Malawi. They plan to produce a 52-week lesson plan, with Bible passages, suggested activities, how to bring in the Gospel through the story, and tailored suggestions for spiritual growth for both teenagers and children. Pray that CFCM will be able to get this valuable resource out to Sunday school teachers in Malawi. (Zambesi Mission - September 2016)

Finding Solutions.

The Zambezi Evangelical Church (ZEC) has been trialling a series of income-generating schemes to see if they can be used effectively to support church pastors, to relieve church members' poverty, and help others in their communities. Unfortunately, when visiting a potato growing scheme in the north of Malawi, ZEC's leaders found that the cash that had been gained from the project was less than the set up cost. Please pray that ZEC's leadership would not be overwhelmed by the problems they face; please pray that they would know the Lord's wisdom and strength as they work out what type of project will work in each different church. (Zambesi Mission - July 2016)

Offensive Preaching

Christian leaders in Nigeria are concerned about a Religious Regulation Bill proposed by the state governor of Kaduna which could see street evangelists fined and pastors sent to jail for up to two years for so-called 'offensive' preaching. The Bill would also require clergy to obtain an annual preaching permit. Church leaders fear that the legislation is an attempt to stifle and target Christians under the guise of tackling extremism. A Release partner in Nigeria believes the legislation would set a dangerous precedent. Please pray that the Bill does not become law. (Release International - July

2016)

Nthorowa Health Centre

Nthorowa Health Centre is one of six centres run by the Zambezi Evangelical Church (ZEC) in Malawi. The reductions in infant mortality have been rare “success stories” in Malawi’s recent history, partly attributed to the services provided by faith-based groups such as ZEC. But the future of such services is under threat. Cash flow at health centres is a major problem; the government of Malawi has reportedly failed to honour its financial commitments. Please pray that God would provide for the future needs of ZEC’s health facilities, so that they would be able to continue to run their compassion ministry for years to come. (Zambesi Mission - May 2016)

Good harvest

The recent flooding experienced in Malawi destroyed many people’s crops. The rainfall in some places, particularly in the South, during the current growing season has been minimal and erratic. Sowing has taken place, but many crops have wilted due to long dry periods between the rains. It seems possible that some parts of the country will face severe food shortages, unless the weather improves. Please pray that steady but not devastating rainfall would fall across Malawi, including the South, so that a good harvest would be reaped and a widespread hunger situation would be averted. (Zambesi Mission - March 2016)

Sunday schools

Children for Christ Ministries (CFCM) is a Malawian organisation committed to making Jesus known to their country’s children. They are currently focussing on training Sunday school teachers and Bible club leaders. Many churches have Sunday schools in name only – children’s work often has a low priority. CFCM runs training seminars across Malawi, working through topics including personal discipleship, the need to evangelise children, how to teach a Bible story or a memory verse and setting up a Bible club. CFCM want to train more trainers, so that the work can multiply and spread throughout the country. Please pray for their ministry: that more and more children will be properly taught in a fun and imaginative way and brought to faith in Jesus while they are young. (Zambesi Mission - January 2016)

Washed away

Much of Malawi has been affected by devastating floods. Many of the crops that Malawians rely upon for their sustenance were washed away or buried. There is a real fear that the loss of these crops will lead to unaffordable food prices and widespread hunger in the coming months. Maize sown in December will not be harvested until March / April next year. Pray that churches, Christian organisations, international NGOs and the Malawian government would be vigilant and ensure that all Malawi’s people have access to sufficient food. Please also pray that this year’s rains would be gentle and persistent, not sudden and destructive; so that there would be a good harvest and sufficient food for all. (Zambesi Mission - November 2015)

Training for leaders

It is estimated that over 90% of church leaders in Malawi have never received any formal Bible training, so there is a great need for the conferences provided by Zambesi Mission and J-Life/Learn 2 Serve. Over 200 church leaders came to the last of three conferences this summer at Nchalo, and tried to persuade the organisers to continue teaching! Please pray for the strategic development and scalability of these conferences, so that church leaders in Malawi are taught sound doctrine, so that they too can, in turn, teach Scripture faithfully in their churches. (Zambesi Mission - September 2015)

Fear of famine

After the country of Malawi was hit by severe flash flooding in which many people died, remaining families recently planted crops which were also destroyed. Malawi relies on subsistence farming: there is concern that a famine will occur later this year when maize supplies run out. Please pray for

those who are working with the Church in Malawi – that they would have the resources to help churches with food without creating dependence; and that they would help the churches to become more resilient in the future. (Zambesi Mission - May 2015)

Believers without Bibles

A pastor from the Zambesi Evangelical Church (ZEC) had a most encouraging day recently when he baptised 35 people at a rural church in Malawi. However, he was surprised to find out that not a single one had a Bible. He wrote that this “means the church has a long way to go to address this problem”. The pastor asked, “how will these young men and women get rooted in the Word of God if they do not read the Bible”. Please pray for organisations that seek to help provide Malawians with a Bible. (Zambesi Mission - January 2015)

A timely challenge

About 50% Malawi's population is less than 18 years old. The Zambezi Evangelical Church (ZEC) recently held a national youth conference in Central Malawi. It had a theme of “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness”, and was attended by over 2,500 young people from ZEC churches across Malawi. One commentator wrote that “the conference was timely for the fact that the life of the youth is being challenged by strong winds of anti-Christ and liberalism. The teaching was centred on the word of God, holiness, discipleship, counselling and countering peer influence”. Please give thanks for the way that God is using these young Christians. Please pray for their plans to launch a Bible-based discipleship programme that will be studied at every local ZEC Fellowship of Youth group. (Zambesi Mission - November 2014)

Equipping blind Christians

Pray for blind pastors and Bible teachers in Malawi. Many more blind people are contributing to church life, after years spent alerting churches to the need to include people with sight loss and use their gifting. Torch plays a key role in equipping blind Christians to lead, through providing them with braille and large print Scriptures and Christian publications in Easy English and a range of African languages, enabling them to study at Bible college. (Torch Trust - July 2014)

'Megavoice' talking New Testaments

The Yao are a predominantly Muslim people group spread across Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. In Malawi a number of church-planting pastors from the Zambezi Evangelical Church are seeking to reach out to the Yao with the truth of the gospel. They are planning to lend 'Megavoice' talking New Testaments in Yao language to individuals or family groups who are curious to hear about Jesus. The pastors will then follow up by asking or answering further questions. Please pray that through this initiative many Yao people would come to know Jesus. (Zambesi Mission - July 2014)

Preventable sight loss

Pray for the blind people of Malawi. 1% of the 16 million population in Malawi, one of the world's poorest countries, is blind. Unoperated cataracts remain a major cause, but there are only a handful of ophthalmologists in the country. Many blind people cannot work and they and their families become destitute. (Torch Trust - May 2014)

Supporting blind people

Many people in Malawi lose their sight because of river blindness, combined with poverty and hunger. Torch International Leader Janet Stafford recently visited three groups supporting blind people in remote mountain areas. She reports: “... some older people had been struggling to get to the group meetings because of distance and age limitations. To our wonderful surprise, the three new groups have been attracting more blind people, who had been hidden... Response to the Word of God was encouraging and many gave testimonies. The singing was a blessing. A number came with wounds which were attended to, and we gave painkillers and vitamins to everyone.” (Torch Trust - November 2013)

'Bad weather'

In many countries, 'bad weather' isn't unpleasant or inconvenient, it's life threatening. One of those countries is Malawi, in south-east Africa. As rains have become less predictable, and drought more common, there simply hasn't been enough food. Christian organisations are seeking to help families adapt to the changing climate. They're teaching farmers new farming methods, and working with women to develop new ways of earning income. However, these problems are increasingly common in other countries around the world. Pray for political leaders to fulfil their promises to help communities that are struggling as a result of climate change. (Tearfund - July 2013)

50th anniversary

The Evangelical Bible College of Malawi (EBCoM) was established in Blantyre nearly 50 years ago and is still going strong today. At this stage of the term, students will be preparing to sit their exams, whilst prospective future students will be considering prayerfully whether they should apply to study at the college. Please pray for the Holy Spirit to raise up and equip students for lives of serving and proclaiming Jesus both inside and outside Malawi. (Zambesi Mission - May 2013)

Witness to troubled children

Children for Christ Ministries (CFCM) is run by Malawians who are committed to making the Lord Jesus Christ known to children in their country. CFCM has a twin ministry: firstly, they run weekly children's Bible clubs in the Blantyre area. One of these is held at Mpemba 'reformatory' school - 40 out of 60 of these troubled young children have given their lives to Christ. CFCM also runs training courses for Sunday school teachers. Amazingly many of these teachers commit their lives to Christ for the first time during these seminars. Pray that lives would continue to be transformed by Jesus through the work of CFCM. (Zambesi Mission - March 2013)

Mob justice

Police in Malawi have raised concerns about escalating numbers of mob justice incidents in the country. This followed the death of a family man in his 30s, attacked and beaten by a mob after he apparently tried to steal some goats. Pray for the safety of the many Christian workers in the country. Pray too for President Banda, Africa's second woman leader, who took office in April. Her efforts to restore relations with former donors seem to be having some result, with Japan and Germany among countries to recently pledge funds for disaster relief and poverty reduction. (Torch Trust - November 2012)

Training for church leaders

Very few church pastors in rural areas of Malawi have had any formal training in theology or pastoral ministry yet the need for them to give good Bible-based teaching in their churches is paramount. Many Christian organisations working in Malawi have recognised this, and are developing and carrying out discipleship and training courses for pastors and elders. However these courses can be isolated and there is a need for better coordination at a national level. Please pray for improved planning and sharing of good practice between organisations, so that the church in Malawi would be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Zambesi Mission - September 2012)

Fresh hope

The leadership of Malawi's new President, Joyce Banda, has given fresh hope to one of the poorest countries of the world. As a result of her reforms, the IMF has said it will lend the country £101m and the UK has announced a £33m aid package. This past year, shortages of fuel and foreign currency along with drought conditions have intensified poverty. Torch Trust has been supplying relief to people with sight loss in Malawi - among the poorest people on the planet - as they have been facing starvation, with many resorting to begging. (Torch Trust - July 2012)

Rural churches

We urge you to pray for rural churches and their pastors. About 80 percent of Malawians live in rural

areas. They are facing big challenges at present. Intermittent rains at the start of the maize growing season have meant that the imminent maize harvest will be variable. Fuel shortages and high commodity costs also make life difficult. Please pray that church members will be able to support their pastors. But it isn't just a problem of physical sustenance: please also pray for ways that churches, bible colleges and mission organisations in Malawi can support each pastor's ongoing spiritual development and discipleship. (Zambesi Mission - May 2012)

Raising up true disciples

Malawi has more Muslims than anywhere else in southern Africa but the religion growing the fastest is traditional African religion. Amongst the Angoni, who migrated from Swaziland in the 19th century, the sons of the most prominent chiefs - the future paramount chiefs - are now sometimes sent to Swaziland to be brought up in their traditional culture, including its all-pervading spirit worship. Although the Church is growing fast in Malawi, spirit worship has a widespread but largely hidden influence - particularly in rural areas. Please pray that the Lord would empower Malawian pastors and evangelists to both preach and live out the way of salvation, and that he will raise up many more true disciples. (Zambesi Mission - May 2011)

Blindness

Today there are almost nine million people in Africa who suffer from blindness, with many times that number partially sighted. Every year, tens of thousands of free magazines with Christian content in Braille, giant print and audio formats are distributed to blind people across Africa. Most of these go to Malawi, Nigeria, Kenya and Zambia. In addition to these magazines, organisations such as Torch Trust also produce various scripture portions and songbooks in Braille in languages such as Chichewa, Shona, Sena, Hausa, Bemba, Igala and Tumbuka. Pray that God would work through these resources to transform the lives of blind and partially sighted people with the gospel. (Torch Trust - November 2010)

Braille Bibles

There are still parts of the world where it's a real event to have even a gospel in your own 'heart language'. Pray for the small team in Blantyre, Malawi, producing braille Bible sections in nine African languages. In Nigeria, Hausa-speaking Christians have been overjoyed to receive braille Bible books, although religious and political upheaval in the northern states impedes distribution. One pastor shared: "I received a complete set of New Testament books in braille for the first time. I read four or more chapters every day. This helps me in the area of sermon building and personal meditation. I am blessed beyond words." (Torch Trust - July 2010)

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