

JULY 2013

A day in Malawi...

John, Belinda and Samuel Naudé are working with EI in Malawi. George Neil, Belinda's dad, visited them in Malawi. He tells us about a day during his visit.



Samuel, John, Belinda and George

Malawi is a small country in Southern Africa. It lies about halfway between the Equator and the Cape. It is not Mali, it does not have civil or religious wars. It is just a small country known as the warm heart of Africa.

Smaller than England and landlocked, it is most easily picked out on a map of Africa by looking for Lake Malawi, which runs for two thirds the length of the country. If in your youth you collected stamps - and particularly the colourful colonial ones - well, Malawi was then called Nyasaland and the lake was called Lake Nyasa.

The last count put the population at around 15 million. A couple of large cities of around 700,000 to 800,000, but really a very rural country. No industrial resources: no oil, no coal, no iron. The main fuel for most of the people is wood. The main crop is maize and a good supply of vegetables and fruit. There is also coffee and tobacco.

Belinda, her husband John and son Samuel left for Malawi at the end of August last year. In May this year I took the opportunity to visit them. They had been there before, for short visits during Samuel's school holidays.

John was the vicar at the Church of the Good Shepherd (COGS) in Crookhorn in Portsmouth. But it had now reached the point, with Samuel now aged eight, that - unless they moved now - the opportunity to take their discipleship abroad might not arise again.

So, John is now the curriculum adviser to the Bible College of the Evangelical Baptist Church in Malawi. He

also teaches and mentors, passing on his experience and skills in church leadership to new pastors in Malawi.

They live in Zomba, the old capital of Malawi, which held the parliament until twenty years ago. This is about 1200 metres above sea level and nestles below the 2,000 metre high Zomba plateau. So, in the summer it is cooler than other places in Malawi. Close to where they live in Zomba, is the Malawi office of Emmanuel International. EI is an international evangelical organisation that assists communities around the world through their local churches. They not only support people who go out there but in Malawi they manage a lot of projects for other aid organisations. They employ over 100 people, and all Malawian.

I got the opportunity to visit a number of these projects. Helen, from the EI head office, drove us: two young local ladies, smartly dressed and very knowledgeable about the projects, Belinda and myself. After about an hour we turned off the main road on to a track and soon stopped near a collection of small buildings. We meet the locals and are shown the fuel efficient cooking arrangements. A very simple, but less open, wood fire that will use less fuel than the traditional larger and more open fire would use.

But I am going too fast... When we get out of the vehicle the two ladies have each taken out their "Chitenje" to wrap around their waists and cover the jeans they wear in town. To help people you must respect them and to most people out of town, women wear skirts. (Until only a few years ago - from 1968 to 1993 - it was illegal for women to wear trousers, so in rural areas women will still not wear trousers.)



Ladies crocheting...

We move on to another part of the village and a group of ladies welcome us in song. We sit and join them on a large mat as Helen is brought up to date on their project. These ladies are making bags to hold iPads which someone in the town has agreed to take and sell. But how are they making them? They are crocheting them and the material they are using is plastic! Carefully cut a plastic bag and you will have long pieces of plastic to use as thread. Plastic bags are free and the only outlay is the crochet needle. Make sure that the joins are on the inside. With a range of plastic bags to start with, your final product can be white, black or multi-coloured. There is more to see, but we need to move on.

A young man, who works for EI, tells us he is responsible for over four hundred children who are either orphans or Aids victims. In Malawi it is customary for orphaned children to live with the parents (or siblings) of the late mother. So, how does he do this on his own? The solution: a pyramid structure. He has a few key, trained ladies, who each runs a group of about ten ladies. They train these ladies so that each will set up a village group of their own to directly guide, help and encourage these children and the people who are looking after them. It is a trickle-down process, very people-intensive, but a great use of local people.

Then a long off-road drive to an agriculture project, where channels are being built and more use being made of the available water. Once again, local people are doing the work and external agencies provide know-how, training and support to help the project become self-sustaining. It is important that the people who do the work, can continue making it work and want to do so. (This seems to be the best way of providing aid – in the form of education and training.)

A long, hot and happy day in a country I would love to visit again!

Joseph John Mitchell



We are happy to announce that Tom and Ellie Mitchell became proud parents of a baby boy. Joseph was born on Wednesday 10 July at 2.17 am, weighing 8 pounds and 2 ounces! Ellie worked with EI in Tanzania for 3 months in 2007, working as a teacher at St Michael's Secondary School. In 2010 Tom and Ellie joined the Short Term Summer team to Malawi.

Update on Kasese Flood Appeal

Gareth Shrubsole and Pastor Alfonse Bwambale (BMS World Mission/Kasese Baptist Association in Kasese, Uganda) wrote to tell us about the relief that has been provided to victims of the Kasese floods.

“Our warmest thanks for the generous donation that EI sent for flood relief here in Kasese. Alfonse did a lot of research, driving around different parts of Kasese (he has a motorbike) and concluded that Kanyangeya on the Eastern edge of Kasese, not far from the airfield, was the place with the greatest needs that were not being met by other donors or government agencies. Your generous donation is greatly appreciated and will really make a difference to the 201 families it helped.

There is another village on the Eastern edge of Kasese town called Karusandara, which was also badly affected and remains in need of further help.”



Please continue to pray for the victims of the floods and for those who are organising the relief efforts.

Read a more detailed report about this on our website.

EIUK Garden Party 2013

As always, it was a wonderful opportunity for the EI family to get together. The weather was fabulous and the garden gorgeous! Thanks to David and Jenny for hosting us and to everyone for coming!



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