



### *Dear Friend,*

Welcome to this, the first of our regular newsletter updates from Hope Missions Ministries in Malawi. This newsletter is being produced for the benefit of all our friends and supporters to keep you updated on how things are going and what progress we are seeing.

There is a great deal to report on our activities and 2009 is seeing a real breakthrough in the growth of our ministry here in Lilongwe. God is blessing both us and the people we work with richly and we are seeing growth in our team, growth in the scope of our ministry and growth in number of those coming to the Lord. We thank you for all your support and prayers that make this possible.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and that it encourages you to read it as much as it encouraged me to write it. May God bless you for the support you all give to us and may He continue to provide abundantly for us at this time!

*Annie Mkandawire* (Project Director)

### **Feeding Programmes**

Feeding programmes are not new to the work of Hope Missions but what is new is the way that we will be approaching this over the coming years, beginning with 2009. Chrispine, our Agricultural Projects Officer, is working hard in the field at the moment with the residents of Kayabwa, Lemesi and Thugwalugwa to ensure that this year's harvest is good and that we have a healthy crop of both groundnuts and maize to help sustain the nursery school feeding programmes.

Beginning with the 2009 planting season, we hope to be able to gradually move away from the expensive man-made fertilizers and return to farming naturally and organically, the way God intended. We will be seeking to develop links with the New Frontiers initiative 'Farming God's Way', which provides training in effective agricultural practices.



If we find the funding, Chrispine will spend some time with them this year learning the methods and the best way to implement them without risking a poor crop in the years while the land and the villagers adjust to the new methods and farming practices.

### **Nursery Schools**

Last month we held a one-day refresher training course for the teachers at the nursery schools and it was encouraging to see that they are still implementing things learned from the training delivered by Sara Millington while she was here. There has been an immense improvement in teaching skills and this is leading to great excitement among not only the teachers but children and parents too. As a result nursery school sign-up this year has increased to 361 children! We continue to ask God to provide so that we can meet the growing need for more teachers and care-givers.





In the photo above we see children sitting comfortably on chairs in their classroom for the first time thanks to a generous donation from Starfish Malawi. As well as the chairs, this quarter has also seen the introduction of toys into the nursery schools and we are seeing a great im-

provement in the regular attendance as a result. Until now the teachers had struggled to bring variety to the lesson plans but since the introduction of the toys, the children are far more eager to come to school now that they have something to play with. The new opportunities for interaction with their teachers and each other are greatly improving their early learning and development. This next quarter, after the rains are over, we hope to build some outdoor play structures for each of the schools to add to the stimulation that the children are currently enjoying. We thank you all for your support that is making this possible.

Sadly there was a cholera outbreak in the villages that surround our target communi-

ties that affected a great number of people in the area, although we are pleased to be able to report that none of our children were affected by this directly. We praise God not only for the teaching and learning aids that are bringing life to the school environment but also for His continued protection.



## Women's Ministries

Things continue to progress with the women's ministries and a number of the ladies can be seen below proudly displaying the uniforms that they made for the tea shop that they plan to open in April. There is a great deal of excitement over this project which the ladies have been planning for several months.

The other ladies who completed the course continue to do well with the other business activities that they commenced following the business skills training workshop.

The adult literacy classes are continuing and the ladies in this year's class are all performing well to date. We are encouraged to see the level of adult literacy in the village increasing every year and the difference this is making to people's everyday lives.



## Ministries to the Chiefs

We continue to meet regularly with the chiefs in our target communities and February saw the number of chiefs attending rise to 72. We continue to press on with our advocacy programmes and we are seeing more and more chiefs being freed from various bondages and joining the ever growing churches in Chapsinja and Kayabwa. We still need more Bibles in order that we can provide each chief who attends our meetings with a Bible to take back to his village.

There will be a big health care talk going ahead in April for all the chiefs. This is an exciting opportunity for us to help teach them practical skills that will improve the conditions in their villages and so we ask that you pray for us as we prepare for this meeting and for the chiefs that they would be receptive to hear and implement the practical teachings that we will bring.

## Prayer Requests...

For an increase in numbers of those meeting in the new church plant in Chapsinja and particularly for more chiefs to be added to the numbers.

For protection both physically and spiritually for the church and especially chief Chapsinja, who is a group village headman and faces opposition for his decision to follow Christ.

For a good harvest for the nursery school feeding programme.

For the ladies as they continue to press on in their businesses and that they would also grow deeper in their relationship with God.

For continuing funding and finances to enable us to meet the needs of our target communities.

## Supporting Us...

If you are encouraged by what you read and wish to support our work more closely then please contact either Annie, Alex or Sara:

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