

Malawi Flood Disaster

by David & Joanna Morrison

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You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. *Isaiah 26:3*

This week we have received more rain in the Lower Shire, but there is also an increase in our appetite to surrender our hearts unconditionally to the Lord. Our church services here on the base over the last few weeks have been much more vibrant – the Lord is at work, causing His bride to be strong and able to help the weak. In the camps, as pastors and missionaries go to encourage, people are calling out for prayer, and open to encouragement.



Picture: To my left is Hedson Nsitu (house dad at Iris Africa) who was our navigator during the January 13th rescues. To my right is missionary David Walker who piloted the second Iris boat and was assisted by a marine police officer. Together with us are six of the people we rescued from the terrifying waters.

The air has been buzzing with the sounds of helicopters flying overhead. Additional helicopters joining the Malawi Defense Force from WFP and South Africa Rescue, have been flying medical teams, food and essential relief items to flood victims that are inaccessible by road or by boat. The village of Makanga on the east side of the Shire river used to be part of the main land. Now it is an island, cut off by the violent flood waters that re-routed the Ruo river during the devastating flood surge that came through beginning on January 12th. Maps will need to be redrawn and the international border with Mozambique re-established.

This past week we have been able to deliver 22 metric tons of food and relief goods to 3 different camps, thanks to gifts from IRIS UK, IRIS Canada, friends in Blantyre, and new friends from South Africa. We are thankful for Johann and Tommie who flew up from Nelspruit in South Africa, bringing help from their church, family and friends to purchase food and materials in Malawi. We sent our truck to greet them and assist them shopping to purchase food, plates & cups, blankets, soap and water purification tablets. We are grateful for their generosity and for the long hours they served here helping with distribution in the camps.

Distribution in the camps has gone fairly well considering people are living on a bare minimum. It's not easy work, calling families by name from the lists, village by village. In some cases, lists have

swelled since first registration, causing some chaos and confusion among the crowd. A few lose their temper needing to be held back by pastors and police who have come to help maintain order. The pressing crowds make it difficult to maintain that 'love for the one in front of you', yet that is what we are called to. Pray for great grace in these situations.



Picture: Pastors in their blue Iris caps distributing from the top of the truck as flood victims patiently wait for their name to be called to receive food and other essential items at the Bangula camp.

At the moment we are providing water from the Iris base (about 30,000 litres per day) for use in the camps. We are pumping it into a large bladder provided by Médecins Sans Frontières, and then trucking it to the Bangula camp. The water purification system set up at the riverside by another NGO faulted due to the muddy waters of the Shire river with all the new rain that has been falling this week. We are so thankful that the infrastructure at the base is strong enough to support more than ourselves.

Meanwhile, life on our Iris base goes on. Bible school has been somewhat interrupted to allow these pastors to assist the commissioners and other staff in distribution. Our Iris Primary School did not miss a day of school throughout the flooding, though teaching under the thundering rain is challenging. Our secondary students have suffered in Blantyre, where there is a water crisis made worse by the floods. Bad drinking water coupled with flu and malaria season has meant that several students have been to hospital this term. Our farmers are very happy at the moment. Crops and weeds alike are growing rapidly. David Walker and his team are hard at work in our gardens pulling weeds and applying fertilizer to the crops growing well with all the rain. We are grateful for our national leaders and missionaries who persevere through all, continually loving the people the best we know how.

Our guest house is presently home to a visiting nurse from Holland, and a doctor and team from Norwegian Church Aid who are actively involved in aspects of the recovery here in southern Malawi. We also had a team of Russian helicopter pilots overnight, and expect another Dutch doctor to arrive shortly. It is so good to have a comfortable home for those who are helping in the community around us.



Picture: Johan & Tommie together with flood victims now residing in a tent at the Bangula camp.

Thank you for the financial support that has been coming which is enabling us to purchase maize flour, beans, soya pieces, soap, blankets, children's porridge, cups, and plates. We are also aware that the job of rebuilding will be delayed until the rains finish, so some funds will be reserved for that purpose. If you would like to help the Malawi disaster relief, you can make a donation through Iris Ministries Canada www.irismin.ca, Iris Ministries UK info@irisministries.co.uk, or Global IRIS USA www.irisglobal.org. Designate your gift 'Malawi Disaster Relief.'



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