

*"We have nothing, we have lost everything"*, was the remark made by a Malawian victim that I heard whilst listening to "From Our Own Correspondent" on Radio 4 this morning. Another quote from the report which stuck in my mind was, *"this is not just a disaster that will last a few days or weeks until the ground dries up. For many it will last for years."* The Malawian news agency Nyasa Times has reported that over 120,000 people have been displaced from their homes, and have just indicated that the death toll has now reached 200. Nyasa Times also reported that the Malawian government had said that *"tens of hundreds"* were still missing. Thankfully the Vice President of Malawi Saulos Chilima has told reporters that there are now no areas where people are totally stranded.

We are still waiting for the report to come through from the River of Life Evangelical Churches (RoLE) about the status of their churches. RoLE have a number of churches in areas which have been badly affected by the flooding. As soon as we receive news we will give an update via this bulletin.

Despite no running water for the last two weeks and very limited power, Field Director Simon Chikwana has been able to update us on the status of **zm's** relief efforts, which have been aimed at the worst affected ZEC (Zambezi Evangelical Church) churches. He travelled with Pastor Luckwell Mtima, the General Secretary of ZEC, to two affected churches (Namiwawa ZEC and Mulanje ZEC).

Simon reported back from his visit last Wednesday from Namiwawa ZEC, see pictures below. Two families have been displaced by the flood damage and are now living in the church. Others are still living in their homes, despite serious damage in some cases.



Mr and Mrs Nanthambwe's house. They are now living in the Church



Namiwawa ZEC church with what is left of two families' belongings

Simon also reported back from his visit on Thursday to Mulanje ZEC and one of its prayer houses. His report is as follows: *"We managed to visit Mpala ZEC yesterday. Mpala ZEC is a new prayer house for Mulanje ZEC. This prayer house was established 6 months ago by Pastor Synoden Mulamba. It has a membership of about 70. The storm and floods did not spare 12 families. The church meets at a primary school about 1km away from the Ruo River which borders Malawi and Mozambique. The primary school where the church meets is now hosting all those whose houses were swept away. As I mentioned in my earlier email, you may see in some pictures the damaged crops. Many parts of the fields are covered with silt where maize cannot grow. Some pictures look like rural roads but are fields covered with silt. Other pictures show the items that were distributed to 12 ZEC families plus one (an old lady, a Seventh Day Adventist member) whose house was close to where the distribution was done. The items included, water buckets, plastic plates, cups, flour, beans, salt and soap. In his comment, the church elder, Mr Norman said, "the problem is there till*

next planting season and harvest.” [Mike Beresford comment – this would be about March/April 2016].

I have shown below some of the photos below that Simon and Myles MacBean have sent.



One of the destroyed houses near Mpala ZEC



Fields near Mpala ZEC, completely covered with a thick layer of silt and sand



Simon distributes emergency relief packages at Mpala ZEC



Rose Chirwa hand over an emergency relief package to an elderly lady at Mpala

Simon still hasn't managed to get information from Chirombo ZEC, a church which is at the edge of Lake Chirwa where the Phalombe river flooded. This has been one of the worst affected areas. Simon reports that *“the area is at the moment impassable and communication is limited. The little information that has come through indicates that our brothers and sisters are desperate for food, clean water and shelter”*.

#### Prayer points:

- Please pray for more information about urgent needs to come through to Simon Chikwana, particularly from the worst affected areas and from the RoLE churches.
- Please pray for faith and wisdom for **zm** as we work out how we can work with the Malawian churches to help with the medium-term needs of each affected family.
- Give thanks for the gifts that **zm** has received to help those who are left homeless and without any food or belongings at this time.
- Please continue to pray that our partner churches would show the love of Jesus at this time – that they would be salt and light to those in need in their communities.

If anyone would like any further information please contact Richard Brassington at the office on 01904 674748 or via [office@zambesimission.org](mailto:office@zambesimission.org). Or alternatively contact Mike Beresford, **zm's** Mission Director, via 01904 634288 or [m.beresford@zambesimission.org](mailto:m.beresford@zambesimission.org).

Yours in Christ

Michael Beresford