

Project # MW96753 - Mission Advancement Fund

Vision

SIM Malawi strives to play a role as catalyst in cooperation with likeminded churches and para-church organizations, facilitating the further progress of an emerging mission movement out of Malawi.

Background

SIM and its predecessors in Malawi AEF and SAGM have a history of over 110 years of in-country service. While the Malawian church developed over time a vision for ministry within Malawi's borders, the efforts to reach beyond its borders in obedience to the Great Commission are limited. Following a Pastors' Book Set Conference on Mission in Blantyre in June 2012 with 750 participants, the Malawian Body of Christ responded enthusiastically with a renewed commitment to get involved in the Great Commission (see separately uploaded missions communique). Another Mission PBS conference of similar size in the capital Lilongwe in April 2013 built on this enthusiasm, reaching an even wider church community.

As SIM Malawi seeks to facilitate the further development, we will be for example organizing conferences and trainings of stakeholders, inviting experienced speakers and arranging short-term trips and exchange or field visits to gather firsthand experience and insights with the aim to enlarge their horizon beyond Malawi and even beyond southern Africa.

Progress

The mentoring process for potential new missionaries continues.

The Makhutcha family are now well into the fundraising phase as they prepare to move to Mozambique. While continuing to learn Portuguese and undergo various orientation studies they have also completed doctrinal assessments and have met with the SIM Malawi mission sending committee.

A major development is that the Mozambique field will not be able to accept them until 2018 due to some significant changes within the team there which is a cause for concerted prayer. Both the field director (Alfred Paetzold) and a long term missionary (Janice Peters) have life threatening health conditions which means they have had to leave Mozambique which only leaves a small team there to welcome the Makhutcha family, and of those many are currently on Home assignment.

A number of mission enquiries have also been received through our own SIM Malawi website and through the Sth African office. We are in the process of establishing good mechanisms to deal with these enquiries especially to try to determine true interest and a real sense of calling to cross cultural missions work. This forms part of the efforts to establish a permanent sending base/team here within SIM Malawi. We currently have office space but need an administrative mobiliser to join the team to help move this forward.

In May, the field director and mission mobiliser were involved in a seminar/workshop in Johannesburg discussing mobilisation of indigenous churches for mission. The project sponsored a Malawian church leader, Rev Paul Mawaya of CCAP (Church of Central African Presbytery) and chairperson of MMI (Malawi Missions Initiative) to join that workshop.

Plans are also being developed to introduce the Kairos mission awareness training program into churches in Malawi with training and a facilitator's program now planned for Feb 2018, due to the availability of the trainers from Kairos Sth Africa.



Johannesburg workshop photos – (L) Watson leading a session on Mobilising the Church, & (R) participants at the workshop

“Prayer is the Key”

A key outcome of Watson’s work, and also as a follow-up to the Pastors’ Book Set Conferences held in Mzuzu, Lilongwe and Blantyre, has been the setting up of the Malawi Mission Prayer Fellowship (MMPF) in each of these three key cities. Each MMPF is made up of 10 to 12 pastors who come together once a month to pray specifically for unreached people groups and the mission of the Church.

“I think that the MMPF will have a major role to play in the development of mission in Malawi,” said Watson.

“These pastors and leaders gather every month to pray for mission, and I am certain that out of these groups, in these three strategic cities, will come candidates for cross-border mission. I also think that these groups will identify candidates from their churches and their denominations to go forward for missionary training. They are that important.” Looking forward, Watson is excited by the untapped potential, not just of Malawi but other Southern African countries as well, when it comes to cross-border mission work.

“I believe that Malawi and other African countries are nothing but a gold mine for world missions, which is yet to be tapped for God’s missionary purposes.

“If we can continue with the same spirit, the same prayer and the same focus, I believe we will see the Malawian Church becoming a missionary-praying Church, a missionary-giving Church, a missionary-sending Church and a missionary-going Church. I want to see this process happening in the next couple of years so we see more Malawians moving into the mission field and serving in cross-border missions.”



The Malawi Mission Prayer Fellowship team in Mzuzu in the North of Malawi (Rev Paul Mawaya, on a visit to Mzuzu, is in the front row)

Prayer Requests

- Please continue to pray for the Makhutcha family as they prepare to move to Mozambique – pray for their fundraising and that the church here in Malawi will support them well.
- Pray for Alfred Paetzold and his family, and for Janice Peters as they deal with life threatening health conditions. Pray for God's strength, peace and comfort to be with them.
- Pray for SIM Mozambique as they adjust to the new team make-up there.
- Pray for the Kairos Mission Awareness training program to start in Feb 2018 – pray for suitable local church leaders from within Malawi to spearhead this initiative within Malawi
- Continue to pray for another mobiliser to join the SIM Malawi team – especially someone with strong administrative gifting to enable the processes to work well