

Souper Sunday 2011

Vitumbiko Script

SLIDE

- 1 Malawi is a land of many contrasts; a land of huge challenges; and a land of great Christian faithfulness. Today, let's look together at this small African nation – a country which has much to teach us.
- 2 To visit Malawi is to find a place of unimaginable beauty,
- 3 where trees and plants, scenery and wildlife come together in the most amazing ways.
- 4 Yet Malawi is also a country where many people are very poor,
- 5 where work can be hard and rewards can be little.
- 6 In Malawi, some children are born into relative prosperity,
- 7 while others may have little or nothing.
- 8 Often, children are raised by their grandparents, because Mum and Dad have died as a result of HIV.
- 9 Today, many so-called "AIDS orphans" have reached adulthood, and now have to fend for themselves in very difficult circumstances.
- 10 Malawi, of course, is a country whose history is tied in to that of Scotland.
- 11 And the Church in Malawi has long-standing and highly valued connections to the Church of Scotland.
- 12 For people in the Church of Scotland, "Ekwendeni Hospital" is a name that is very familiar, though perhaps you are not so familiar with the frontline work being pioneered by the hospital's HIV/AIDS Project.
- 13 This dedicated team of professionals works with the financial and prayer support of the Church of Scotland, reaching out to some of northern Malawi's very poorest families and individuals:

14 people who are either infected with HIV, or affected by it.

15 These men, women and children are helped by the project, so that they
can deal with issues of HIV in their own lives.

16 This may be through peer education, voluntary counselling and testing
or the provision of hospital clinics and vital medicines.

17 One other innovative way in which Ekwendeni Hospital helps whole
communities is through self-help groups and income generation
schemes.

18 In the remote village of Katula, the “Vitumbiko” group encourages
people living with HIV to get together, to share their ideas and their
concerns.

19 Income generation allows the group to make money through growing
and marketing food for the wider community.

20 Profits are ploughed back into the scheme, helping them both to
finance HIV care schemes in their village and to give out loans for
making home life better.

21 The word “Vitumbiko” means “blessings” and there is no doubt that
the people of Katula have been greatly blessed by this church-led plan
for income generation.

22 Once, HIV was seen as a death sentence by many, but now thanks to
education, medication and viable sources of income, people are
coming to see that they can genuinely live with this virus, rather than
just dying with it.

23 Men, women and children are realising that life can be lived in
fullness,

24 with even the most unwell being given new hope through the love
which is being lived out in together.

25 In all of this, the Christian faith is being lived out,

26 with lives being enhanced physically, spiritually and mentally.

27 Malawi has so many challenges to face,

28 but in so many ways there is real hope for the future.

29 Children can grow up, knowing what HIV is all about,

30 young people are able to talk in serious ways about the lifestyle issues
which face them,

31 adults are being enabled to live life to the full,

32 and older people are at last able to be confident that their families will
grow and mature to adulthood.

33 “Vitumbiko” means “blessings” for the people of Katula, and for so
many others in northern Malawi. This is just one way in which the
church is changing lives in wonderful and amazing ways.

34 Be part of this great movement for change in our world.