The Financial Basis of Faith in Action

We support Paul's teaching given in 2 Corinthians 9:7 that we should give as we have decided in our own heart, and not under pressure. We do not, therefore, include any requests for donations in our literature. However, we do want to provide some information about how we operate financially.

All our work is done on a voluntary basis. We are therefore able to use 100% of any gift according to the donors' chosen designation. Please would you indicate clearly if you want a donation to be used for a specific project.

We would be grateful if you could let us know if you would like to receive a Gift Aid Declaration Form. We use a small percentage of the money that we receive back from gift-aided donations to cover the cost of producing news-sheets and leaflets, and for other administration costs which relate directly to projects. Please could you also tell us if you are not receiving a news-sheet, and would like to be added to our mailing list. These news-sheets give on-going feed-back about our projects.

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Faith in Action exists to support the ministry of local churches in Africa by:

- Developing personal links and church to church contacts
- Strengthening the work of local pastors
- Supplying Christian resources in local languages
- Sending relief consignments and funding development projects in villages
- Encouraging diversification of crops for food security
- Making small interest-free loans for family businesses
- Providing wells
- Supporting orphans

Miscellaneous Projects

May 2010

We are distributing tree seedlings in the villages of the Lower Shire, in order to encourage the re-forestation of this area.

Tree Nursery at Makhanga

Provision of Tree Seedlings

A tree nursery has been set up at Makhanga. Each year about 100,000 tree seeds are planted. The seedlings are later distributed in the villages. In this way we encourage the reforestation of the area, teach communities about the value of trees, and show farmers how to use trees in agro-forestry.

The Lower Shire was stripped of a large number of trees during the time when over one million Mozambican refugees lived in this area. The trees were cut down to use as firewood, and this greatly increased the scale of the de-forestation in this area.

We believe that the drought and flooding experienced over recent years could have been caused, in part, by this loss of trees. There is now a ban on cutting down trees, and people

are encouraged to provide firewood by planting their own trees. Poles for house-building now have to be purchased, or grown for personal use.

Tree seeds are planted in June-July, and are distributed when the rains start (November to January). The cost of each tree seedling, including protective tubes and fertilizer, is (Malawi Kwacha) MK4.2 or £0.017.

The following trees are grown: Eucalyptus (Blue Gum), Acacia, Nimu, Malayina and Bawa. After 24-30 months the trees are coppiced, and the cut trunks are used or sold. Three saplings will replace the trunks that have been cut down. When farmers sell their trees, they repay the cost of their tree seedlings, and more seedlings can be given to others. Each Blue Gum pole can be sold for MK197-338, or £0.81-£1.38, and each Acacia pole can be sold for MK66-197, or £0.27-£0.8. These trees can therefore provide a source of income for families.

More recently, the Government in Malawi have been encouraging people to plant trees by the side of rivers, as a preventative measure to stop rivers from silting up and then flooding when the rain is excessive. We therefore plan to focus our distribution of these tree seedlings on dambo areas besides rivers in future, and to teach local people about the importance of this preventative measure.

The cost of planting 100,000 trees each year is Malawi Kwacha (MK) 420,000 or £1,715.

Tree Seedlings bought for distribution

Recent drought and flooding experienced in the Lower Shire, could have been caused, in part, by the loss of trees.

Solar Panels

We are providing cassette players for village congregations, together with taped sets of the New Testament in Chichewa, and cassette tapes for recording teaching. The cassette players that we are currently buying can be powered by electricity or batteries.

Our initial plan was to provide hand-wound cassette players, as these are most suitable for villages where there is no electricity. They are also more robust than normal machines. However, having spoken to a group of area pastors, these hand-wound machines have proved difficult to use as they have to be wound at an even rate throughout the playing process. They also lacked the facility to record music and teaching.

In response to these discussions, we have agreed to provide normal cassette players in future. And, as an alternative to purchasing batteries for these machines, we are also providing some solar panels for area pastors, which will enable them to run these cassette players without the cost of buying batteries. The normal cassette players also have the advantage of being able to record local teaching, and can therefore be used by area pastors to circulate their own messages around the area under their care.

Each solar panel costs MK12,000, or £50, and will not only provide electricity for these cassette players, but also free lighting for area pastors. This will enable them to read their Bibles and to prepare teaching materials in the evening. (It gets dark at 6pm throughout the year.)

However, these solar panels can not be used to re-charge batteries unless we also buy a transformer, which will cost a further MK14,000, or £57.14. At the moment we are only providing the solar panels.

We are also planning to introduce a new primary health teaching scheme, which has been set up by charity called 'TME', in which inter-active DVD's are provided on quite a large range of topics such as: Safe drinking water, healthy eating, HIV/Aids, immunization, the use of mosquito nets, and many others. In order to set up this scheme, we will also need to provide small portable DVD players, together with solar chargers that will enable them to be used in villages where there is no electricity.

A Bicycle Ambulance in the Anglican Workshop in Mangochi

who lends it to anyone as the need arises. In this way the church is able to demonstrate God's love to the whole community.

The person who borrows the ambulance signs in a book when he borrows it, and again when he returns it. We understand that these ambulances are on the road day and night because the need for them is so great. They are also used for collecting dead bodies from hospital.

Over recent years, the Lower Shire has seen several outbreaks of cholera. Bicycle ambulances are especially valuable at this time, as patients need to receive hospital treatment quickly in order to prevent dehydration.

These cholera outbreaks could happen at any time of the year, but are most often experienced during January to March, when the rain in most heavy.

People in the Lower Shire are especially vulnerable to cholera when their pit latrines become flooded, and overflowing effluent causes contamination of local water sources. Cholera is spread through contaminated water and food.

A Bicycle Ambulance provided for Nyachikadza Village

These ambulances are bought from a project run by the Anglican Church at Mangochi, which is on the southern edge of Lake Malawi. The ambulances have now been upgraded, and the new ones are stronger and more comfortable. The cost for one ambulance is MK81,250, or £332. To date we have provided 62 ambulances.

Msangu Trees for Agro-forestry

Msangu trees are nitrogen-fixing plants that improve the fertility of the soil, thus increasing crop yields.

An Msangu Tree planted among Millet

The repeated crop failures that have been experienced in the Lower Shire during the last decade, has meant that many farmers lack the finances to buy fertilizer for their fields. Furthermore, traditional teaching in this area does not support the use of fertilizer. And without fertilizer their crops yields will be low.

We have recently taken one step towards addressing this important need, without incurring further costs for the farmers. And thus, we have introduced a scheme to provide Msangu trees for agro-forestry. At the same time, we will use this project as an opportunity to teach local farmers about the importance of adding fertilizer to their soil.

'Msangu' is the local Chichewa name for this tree. Its English name is Winter Thorn. Its family name is Leguminosae. And its scientific name is Faidherbia albida.

Msangu is an indigenous deciduous tree. It has a white bark when it is young, which turns grey and fissured when it is mature. The leaves are feathery and grey-green. The thorns are white, straight and thick. It has creamy white spiky flowers, and the seeds are contained in a thick and often spirally twisted pod.

The main aim of agro-forestry is to plant nitrogen-fixing trees or shrubs among edible crops, in order to increase the fertility of the soil, and thus to increase crop yields. With most agro-forestry, the trees are planted in lines between rows of other plants. With Msangu, or winter thorn, it is

recommended that these trees should be planted at random among the edible crops.

Almost as soon as the trees are planted, the the roots of this tree start to fix nitrogen in the soil, thus improving soil fertility and increasing crop yields. These trees need to be pruned regularly so that they do not grow too tall, and thus to shade the crops around them. The cut branches with leaves can be laid on the ground to stop the sun from drying out the soil. The leaves can also add fibre and nutrients to the soil, and by adding fibre to the sandy soil, this will reduce the rate that rain water soaks through the soil.

This tree will not only increase the fertility of the soil, but it will also bring a number of other benefits for local people as follows:

- The trunks and branches can be used for firewood, canoes, mortars and pestles. They can therefore be sold to provide a small income, or used by the family to reduce their need to buy wood.
- The pods and leaves make excellent fodder for their animals.
- In times of famine, people can eat the seeds after repeated boiling.
- The flowers attract bees for honey-making.
- The hollow trunks make good bee-hives.
- The bark can be boiled and used to cure diarrhoea.

The seedlings should be planted in June. However, they can be planted all through the year in dambo areas beside a river. Each seedling costs MK10, or 4 pence. The cost of one project providing 3,000 seedlings is MK30,000, or £122.50.

We understand that the Ministry of Agriculture in Malawi has selected most of the farmers' gardens where we have provided these Msangu trees, as field demonstration gardens, so that other farmers can learn this type of modern farming.

Msangu Tree Seedlings being purchased

Bicycle Ambulances

A seriously sick person would normally be tied to a chair, and carried to hospital during the evening and night-time.

A Bicycle Ambulance in Chinsomba Village

In many villages the nearest hospital may be many kilometres away. Normally, a seriously sick person would be tied to a chair and carried by a group of people, who would usually walk during the evening and night-time when it is cooler.

Because the task of carrying a sick person to hospital can be so difficult, family members will often delay taking them there until it is too late, and thus many people die before they receive any medical care.

Bicycle ambulances are one excellent solution to this difficulty. They make it much easier to take sick people to hospital from villages where the terrain may not be suitable for cars, and cars are very rarely available.

As well as helping sick people to get help before it is too late, the provision of these bicycle ambulances will also lessen the serious risk of spreading disease, which is caused by carrying sick people.

These ambulances are made of a welded tubular-metal framework with a mesh of metal strips on which the patient lies. The front is attached to a bicycle and the centre is supported by two bicycle wheels. There are two holders for umbrellas which protect the patient from the sun. The ambulance can be separated from the bicycle and pulled by hand when the terrain is especially bad.

Each ambulance is kept with a local pastor,