

Diocese of Niassa Annual Report 2005

Introduction

God continues to bless. The Diocese is financially stable, we are engaged in a wide range of community development activities, our structures are slowly being put into place, training is being offered at various levels, vocations are on the rise, churches are growing and people are maturing in the faith. Nonetheless, there still remain a few challenges to meet.



None of this would have been possible without the wonderful support we receive from friends around the world. A rich tapestry of linkages and relationships between old friends and new acquaintances continues to reinvigorate us as we seek to follow in the Way and participate in the building the Kingdom of God in Niassa. For the many prayers, visits, financial support, friendships, letters, e-mails and love – we give you thanks and

praise God. May 2006 be another year of rich blessings.

Organizational Capacity Building

Our diocesan vision is to become a *communion of communities in Christ Jesus*. We see this being exercised in the areas of Worship, our relationship with God, Ministry, our relationship with one another, and Mission, our relationship with the world.

After consolidating the archdeaconries in 2004, this year was dedicated to enriching parish structures and looking toward a comprehensive training program for all members of the Diocese. We were blessed with the visit of Dinos Kousoulous who spent a month helping us to identify priorities and look to ways to organize ourselves in a more efficient and effective way. This proposal was discussed at length and agreed by the Diocesan Standing Committee. It continues the process of de-centralized decision-making that was started two years ago but helped to establish systems of accountability that had been lacking.

**It is through
our friendships
in Christ Jesus
that we grow
into complete
persons.**

The Diocese will have a senior leadership team consisting of the Bishop, the Administration Manager, Programs Manager and the 4 Archdeacons. Each of these in turn has a team of staff: Administration and Finances, Projects and Programs, and the four archdeaconries. The diocese has a somewhat complex structure because of the great distances and desire for local planning and decision-making. Functional teams, such as *Equipa da Vida* our HIV/AIDS program, exist at every level: diocesan, district, parish and congregation and the staff are accountable for planning and implementation of activities within the team. They are also must report and communicate to local groups: Parish Councils, Archdeacons and the Diocesan Standing Committee. The new structures are being put in place gradually.

Construction and Rehabilitation

It was another year of building and fixing. Over two dozen churches were built or renovated, 5 vicarages, and offices for two archdeaconries. Parishes or archdeaconries supervised most of these projects locally.

multi-use facilities. Although structures they have been courses, crèches, schools activities during the week. It take great pride, and rightly buildings have been

Church buildings are more than places of worship; they are community centers, crèches, schools . . .

Church buildings are they are simple used for adult literacy and a host of church is a place which people so. Most of these constructed at a fraction

of the commercial cost because of the hard work of thousands of volunteers, making bricks, carrying sand and water, breaking stone, hefting heavy loads. Men and women, young and old - the entire community - lend a hand to build a church.

The following were completed during the year:

Lago	Nampula	Zambezia	Lichinga
Mbamba church	Wall for Nampula church	Shallow well in Mongue	Nasenhenge church
Chikaya church	Morrupula church	Archdeacon vicarage renovation	Metonha church
Matitima church	Monapo land	Morrumbala land	Mecanhelas land
Chigoma vicarage	Mecuburi land	Quelimane vicarage renovation	Mecanhelas church
Chiwindi church	Pemba vicarage	Molumbo vicarage	Nzinge land
Matenge church	District Office renovation	Mongue vicarage	Wall for Lichinga vicarage
District Office	Primary School – Nacala	Three churches – yet to be named	
		Mocuba vicarage	

Church Organizations

In addition to the well established presence of the Mother’s Union in our diocese, this year saw the rise of two new diocesan organizations: the Diocesan Youth Network and the Saint Bernard Mizeki Men’s Guild. Although these two are well established in many neighboring dioceses, they had never existed in Niassa. The Bernard Mizeki Guild has begun with a flourish in Nampula District having over 100 members and participating in the pilgrimage to Zimbabwe this year. The leadership presence of the men in the guild has made a strong impression on their home parishes and we look forward to seeing it grow in 2006.



‘The youth are the church of the future’ is an oft-quoted phrase in our diocese, but our youth turned the words upside down at their first every diocesan conference by declaring that they are the church of the present. Over half of Mozambique’s population is under the age of 15 and the youth are hungry to be more involved in the church. They are looking for

ways to evangelize, to talk about HIV/AIDS and relationships, to be engaged in the leadership of the church as they continue to give life to our worship services through music and dance. It is exciting to see them recognized and hear their imaginative plans for the future.

The Mother's Union initiated a project to help orphans in Lago District; is encouraging the St Agnes group for girls in three parishes, hoping to expand it to other parishes this year; provides a wonderful transport service with its two boats along the Lakeshore; now has four workers, one in each district; held a conference to train regional presidents and workers in May 2005, with another for all the Presidents and clergy wives planned for this year; has begun a small animals breeding project in Milange; and is looking to start a literacy program for women in Zambezia.

Saint Agnes is a new initiative in our diocese to work with young girls aged 10-16. A pilot project is underway in the parishes of Metangula, Bairro Popular and Messumba and is coordinated by Agnes Phiri, a recently returned refugee from Malawi who participated in a 6-week contextual theology course in Grahamstown in January/February 2005 with five others from the diocese. The girls enjoy meeting together for games and Bible study, singing and just playing together. We hope that this initiative will grow to include other parishes and will strengthen the young girls' faith as they face the challenging choices of adolescence.

Parishes and Clergy

We were blessed by many ordinations this year, the highlight being a wonderful weekend at our cathedral of St. Bartholomew, Messumba, where 5 priests and four deacons were ordained in a great festival of color and praise. The previous day we laid to rest the remains of Niassa's first Bishop, Paulo Litumbi, and his beloved wife, Helena. The solemn service of paying respect to this charismatic leader was like the parable of laying the single grain into the ground so new fruit would come forth in the following ordination service. Over two thousand people attended the services.

Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground . . .

Although new clergy were ordained, several also retired. In fact, many were working well into their 70's without ever having the offer of retirement. After great effort, and support from the Province, the diocese has been able to organize its pension program and paid out nearly \$100,000 US to retired priests or their dependents. This has been a great encouragement for many who ministered for so many years and had never received their pensions.



A new parish was inaugurated. It is called the Parish of Lichinga and contains the congregations of Sanjala, Bairro Popular and Nzinge. It is the city of Lichinga, which is growing rapidly and is probably now the largest parish in our diocese with over 2,000 communicant members. A new church is to be constructed at Kuchijinji for the Sanjala congregation and is planned for 2006.

The community priest program was initiated late in 2004 and continued in 2005. We have 19 candidates who come from all four districts. They are participating in a two-year training program in practical theology being offered by the diocese and will graduate in August 2006 when we hope to ordain them deacons. This ministry has been greatly influenced by the

combined effects of many years of war whereby communication and education were difficult, and the teachings of an Anglican Priest, Rolland Allen, who advocated that where there are men or women of God working faithfully in communities and are recognized as Christian leaders, then equip and authorize them to celebrate the sacraments so that the entire people of God might participate in this means of grace. Previously, in our diocese, only 10% of the people of God could expect to receive communion, now through this program and a revitalized priestly visiting schedule, we are aiming at everyone having the opportunity to celebrate the Holy Eucharist at least once a month.



We had another wonderful clergy retreat, this time on the beach at Chiuanga and led by the Rev. Felicity Scroggie as part of our Alma link. These annual retreats have proved extremely uplifting to the clergy as we relax and learn together.

We continue to grow. Although the most astounding is along the Malawi border in Mecanhelas, Molumbo, Milanje, Mongue and Morrumbala, we hear stories of growth in almost every parish. In 2006, we hope to organize our parish record-keeping so that we can monitor growth more accurately and respond in a wise way to what God is doing.

Bishop Mark also had the pleasure of preaching in Scotland at Rev. Canon John Paul's golden jubilee of his priesthood.

**God is good
All the time
God is good
All the time**

Christian Formation

Along with the community priest program, we initiated a training program for catechists, evangelists, and sent 6 to the Provincial Seminary in Grahamstown. The catechist training will make use of an excellent manual developed in Tanzania called *Rooted in Jesus*. The course was put together by ReSource in the UK. It is being translated into Portuguese, Yao, Nyanja, Macua and Sena. It will become obligatory for all new catechists.

Seven evangelists are being trained to lead the expansion of our diocese in new Sena communities and among the Yao and we had our first diocesan evangelism conference in early in the year with nearly 100 delegates. As the Anglican Evangelism Movement was received into the diocese in Synod 2004, it has proved a strong motivational force for many parishes to re-examine their evangelism strategy.



Over 400 Bible Study groups have been started during the year. Every parish now has several small groups meeting weekly using the 7-step Bible Study method of quiet reflection and application to one's daily life.

Community Development Projects

As a Diocese, we are firmly resolved to work toward the transformation of all of life: spiritual, intellectual and physical. In this way we have initiated several community development programs in the diocese.

1. Adult literacy

The diocese in Lichinga Archdeaconry facilitated twenty literacy centers with 30 groups. There were 736 participants, over 70% women and with a 96% pass rate. The program is expanding its mandate by using the groups as catalysts for community development using the methodology called Reflect. Various themes were discussed in the groups including HIV/AIDS, unemployment, and clean water, etc. 20 Bible study groups were started to encourage the new learners to study the Bible and invite others to learn about the Christian faith.

2. Community-based Health Care – Salt and Light

The project is working along the northern lakeshore of Lago District. Its target is over 15,000 people living in these coastal communities. A local team of ten health workers has been established to facilitate over 99 volunteers in collecting health data, providing



basic health education and equipping communities to improve their health. Six health posts and a maternity have been constructed or renovated, 38 midwives have been re-trained. A comprehensive vaccination campaign is regularly underway. Education about HIV/AIDS together with the Equipa da Vida. Finally, the team is working to change attitudes and behavior in order that society might be more just.

3. The Team of Life (*Equipa da Vida*) work in HIV/AIDS

See annex.

4. Shallow Wells and Sanitation

Eight shallow wells with hand pumps were dug along the lakeshore in Lago District. The community provides most of the labor; the diocese provides cement, technical assistance and the pump. A village water committee is established to maintain the well and pump and collects a small amount of money from the users to pay for spares in the future. A course on sanitation was also taught to prevent water born illness in the villages. In 2006, 12 wells are planned and an improved latrine program will be included.

Chikweti Forests of Niassa, SARL

A private venture between the Diocese of Vasterås, Church of Sweden, Harvard University, the Diocese of Niassa and a few other organizations and individuals has produced amazing results. In one year, Chikweti has planted 1,000 hectares and set up a commercial sawmill operation in Lichinga. The company combines a profitable business plan with a real concern for the environment and local social development and conservation. It is attracting worldwide interest as an innovative way of partnership, which not only benefits the community, but provides profit for investors as well. Plans for 2006 include planting over 3,000 hectares and increasing the sawmill operation. The Diocese of Niassa owns 11% of the enterprise.



Administration and Finances

We continue to be challenged to keep up with the growth of the diocesan programs. In 2003 we had 3 workers, now we have 52. The demand in administration services has been very

challenging and we have not always coped well. Although there has been much progress we still need support in this important area and it might be one of the ways in which one of our partners could support us.

Nevertheless, we are pleased to provide the financial statement in the annex showing our overall income and expenditures for 2005. Although 98% of our income comes from outside, we have increased local giving from \$45 in 2003 to \$9,109.79 in 2005. Our goal is to be self-sufficient in terms of covering all clergy costs, which is approximately \$20,000 US per year. In fact, the numbers are a bit skewed since over 70% of our budget is for projects and pensions. Of the \$125,230.61 spent on diocesan activities, nearly 10% was from local income.

Conclusions

It has been another year of growth and change. The challenges for 2006 are to consolidate our growth by offering effective training for all God's people. In 2006 we aim to prepare all confirmation

long course catechism, train candidates with

A communion of communities

candidates with a 25 week using the Anglican all catechists and a two-year long 'Rooted in

Jesus' course. In 2006, we want to have motorcycles for all of our stipendiary clergy, improved housing for 75% of clergy, more equitable representation in gender and age at all levels of church governance and activities, increase clergy stipends by 33%, have another 400 Bible study groups, visit every congregation each and every month. We want to see every member of our diocese grow in faith and knowledge of God and be able to share it with someone else. We want to continue to be changed by God into something new and wonderful. We desire to be a communion of communities: celebrating, teaching, and reaching out to the world.

We thank God for all that we have done together.



March 7, 2006
Lichinga