

Children's Story

Manuel's Story

(Note: A photo of Manuel has been provided below. Ask the children to describe Manuel to the congregation. Mention his great smile.)

Manuel is 12-years-old. His birth was difficult leaving him both mentally and physically challenged. He cannot walk or talk and needs help in every way. His father died when Manuel was 9-years-old and then his Mom became ill and died this past year. Manuel's oldest sister, Mercy, is 16 and his other sister, Chikonde, is in grade 3. They live on their own. They do not have grandparents anymore and their aunts and uncles have too many other children and not enough money to look after them.

In Canada, there are many programs and people to help children like Manuel; but in poor countries like Malawi there are not.

Therefore, Mercy is the one who looks after her brother and sister; it is called a 'child-headed household.' Can you imagine yourself living without any parents to help you?

Each day, Mercy tries to find work so she can buy food. She hoes in her neighbour's garden, washes clothes for someone who can hire her, and on a lucky day is hired by the hospital to wash floors.

(Note: If you have someone in the congregation who is around 16 years old, ask if they could imagine working all day and coming home to look after a siblings.)

One day a kind nurse at the hospital noticed Mercy crying and asked her what was wrong. Mercy told her how each day she had to leave Manuel lying on a mat on the floor, alone, while she looked for work. When she got home, she had to cook for everyone, bath Manuel, wash the clothes, boil the water, and even then sometimes Manuel got sick which frightened her. Mercy told the nurse that life just felt too hard.

The nurse told a community worker, who works with the Blantyre Synod Health and Development Office, about Mercy and her family. It was agreed that the children would receive food, clothing, and medicine. Also, Mercy would attend classes to become a hair stylist so she could work and care for the family— just what she had always wanted to do. Presbyterian World Service and Development, Canadian Presbyterians like you and I, help to pay for the community workers that helped Mercy!

But, what about Manuel, who would care for him? Well, the Tidzalerana Club would help with that; (Tidzalerana means ‘let’s help each other in Chichewa) a support group for people with disabilities, which is also funded by PWS&D. Manuel now lives in a residence where he is cared for day and night. Mercy and Chikonde can visit anytime they like.

It is good when people and organizations can work together to assist families like Manuel’s; truly—**TOGETHER WE CAN!**

Manuel may not be able to say in words: ‘Thank you or in Chichewa ‘Zikomo’, but his smile can.



The worship resources for Mission Awareness Sunday have been written by the Rev. Glenn Inglis and Mrs. Linda Inglis. The couple have served as PCC Mission Partners in Malawi and Lesotho over a period of 18 years where their work included pastoral ministry, chaplaincy, human rights education, care for the disabled and running the Blantyre Synod Health & Development Commission. In addition, they have served Congregations in Nanaimo, Langley and Kerrisdale (Vancouver) BC. Both Linda and Glenn grew up on farms in the Southern Georgian Bay area. Linda’s home church is St. Paul’s, Thornbury; Glenn’s was St. Andrew’s, Maple Valley (now closed) in a joint charge with Creemore. They have three grown children: Jocelyn with husband Ryan and baby Niall in China; Luke, married to Carly in Toronto; and Naomi in Vancouver. It is a period of transition from a very busy posting in Malawi to the quiet life on the Coast. They await the Lord’s leading in the type of ministry that lies ahead.