




ORBUS AUSTRALIA  
NEWSLETTER  
MAY - AUGUST 2012



  
**The Orbus Centre**  
 For Orphans and Vulnerable Children  
**Nursery School**  
**Primary School (1 to 3)**  
**Farm Produce Sales:**  
 Vegetables; Sugar cane;  
 Maize; Fruit; Sunflower seeds  
 Pigs and Goats  
  
 Volunteers Needed  
  
 A ministry of CCAP Blantyre Synod and  
 Orbus Australia ([www.orbusafrica.org](http://www.orbusafrica.org))  
 Email: [admin@orbusafrica.org](mailto:admin@orbusafrica.org)



*“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son (Jesus Christ) that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)*

Orbus Australia is a Christian not-for-profit volunteer charity which exists to demonstrate the love of God through word and deed to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). The Orbus Centre in Ngumbe, Blantyre, Malawi is a joint project between Orbus Australia, the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (Australia) and the CCAP Blantyre Synod. We invite you to visit the Orbus Australia website at [www.orbusafrica.org](http://www.orbusafrica.org), to view the [Orbus Photo Albums](#) and to visit the Orbus Centre in Malawi.

### Orbus Update May to August 2012:

My family and I left Malawi at the end of April 2012 for the UK, planning to return to Malawi in July. However, due to various circumstances, including my mother becoming very frail and sick, we returned to Australia, sadly just two days before my Mum died. I thank God for the precious time I had with her and that I could be there with her when she died. It would seem now that we may not return to Malawi in the immediate future as a family, but I hope to visit regularly. Orbus Australia has taken over the rent of the [house](#) my family established in Blantyre. All the contents of this five bedroom, fully furnished house have been donated to Orbus Australia (being separate from the Orbus Centre and BSHDC) and we hope the house will be used by short-term and/or a longer-term representative of Orbus Australia.

General Update: Some staff changes at the Orbus Centre were implemented in April, with a search beginning for a Headmaster and new teachers to assist with the expansion of the primary school; Orbus' long-time friend Lamech was appointed as Farm Manager; Oversight of the Orbus Centre continues under the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Blantyre Synod through their Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission (BSHDC); The Orbus School is registered with the Malawi Government and comes under the stewardship of the Blantyre Synod's Education Office; Orbus Australia will maintain its association with the Orbus Centre in Ngumbe through: funding a portion of any shortfall, after farm income, needed to fund: the teachers and staff salaries, a portion of farm input costs, school books, the feeding program, paying an administration fee to BSHDC; and sending volunteers from Australia to work at the Centre.

With the Orbus Centre firmly established, the farm set up and operating, the nursery and primary school started and expansion to Grade 3 underway, staff in place, oversight established, having gifted the project to the CCAP Blantyre Synod to be held in trust by them and the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (Australia), we leave the project in God's hands under the Malawian stewardship of current Synod General Secretary Rev. Alex Maulana; current BSHDC Director Mrs. Lonnie Ncozana and current Synod Education Secretary Moses Kasitomu.

I hope to continue managing Orbus Australia from Australia and to continue to report on progress at the Centre in our newsletters and through our website [www.OrbusAfrica.org](http://www.OrbusAfrica.org) as we receive reports and photos from Synod, BSHDC, local staff, friends and visitors.



Some of the children with some parents/guardians; Lamech; a nearby village house;

### The OVC Nutritional Feeding Project:

The Orbus Centre continued to feed the children a vitamin and mineral enriched porridge every morning Monday to Friday. For some of these children this is the only nutritious daily meal they receive. The children usually approach the meal time enthusiastically and in an orderly manner, lining up beforehand to wash their hands. Volunteers assist with the cooking of the porridge in the Orbus kitchen, the serving and cleaning up afterwards.



Some of the children enjoying the mid-morning porridge at the Orbus Centre in Ngumbe, Malawi.

### The Orbus School:

Orbus continued to operate classes for Under 3's, Kindergarden (Nursery School – started in September 2010) and Grade 1 of the Orbus Primary School (started in September 2011). Preparations to start Grades 2 and 3 advanced well during the period and we are on schedule to start these new classes at the beginning of Term 1, on 3rd September 2012, God willing. The new classrooms are finished, new desks and chairs ready to go, blackboards completed and...

**Headmaster and new teachers appointed:** New teachers were sought and with the help of Lester Namathaka and the Synod Education Office we are very pleased to report that Orbus has recruited an experienced Headmaster who has come from Neno School for Girls, Mr Wills Mbewe, and two new experienced teachers, Mrs. Grace Mabedi and Mrs. Esther Msiska. We are very excited about this and are thankful for these three vital new members of the Orbus team in Malawi. Two of the new teachers will also be living on-site with their families, including the Headmaster, which we see as a positive development.

*"He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked." Psalm 146:7-9*

### The Orbus Farm:

Good crops of maize, soya bean and pigeon peas, which we planted in late 2011 and early 2012, were harvested in April and May 2012. However as at August 2012 we are unable to report on any sales outcomes of any of these crops or on the sugar cane harvest sales, or on any of the vegetable, sunflower or other crops planted since then, as Orbus Australia has not received any news on this as yet. We hope to report on this and the current state generally of the farm, regarding the fruit trees, gum trees and other farm activity next newsletter. We can however report the good news that the goat numbers continue to increase and the pig breeding program has started well with approx. 28 new pigs born in the period. The chicken breeding program also started during the period with 300 chicks.



New tomato crop; pigs; guava fruit.

### New Classroom Building Completed:

The building of the [new classroom building](#) which was started in late March 2012 was mostly completed by the end of May 2012, with the finishing touches being concluded in June and July. Local retailer Mr. Price very kindly donated the paint and their staff members to come and paint the walls of the new classroom building, for which we are very thankful. New desks were made for Orbus for both new classrooms which, as mentioned, are now ready to go for the start of Term 1 on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2012.

This building has big 3.5m wide verandahs on two sides and 3m on one end, with classrooms for Grades 2 and 3 as well as an office, a storeroom and three toilets. Orbus gives thanks for the contribution of the 22 local men and the men from the Frankston and Eltham Presbyterian Churches for their efforts in constructing this new building. The men worked very well together, praying at the start of each day and enjoying the combined Malawian and Australian work-site banter.



The completed new classroom building for Grades 2 and 3.

### General Site Improvements:

The conversion of the Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones building into four separate, four room apartments/houses started in April 2012 and is now completed. One apartment is to be made available to foreign volunteers and three will be for teacher's accommodation. Two of the houses are to be occupied by two of the new teachers starting in late August 2012. Other improvements made to the Lloyd-Jones building have included the addition of a nice new kitchen and dining area attached to the north-eastern side of the building and the completion of the chicken shed. Also the installation of an irrigation system with pump over approx. three acres of the fertile land, and some solar panels to provide electricity for charging phone and torch batteries, as well as to power a new security alarm and light system.



The new chicken shed; solar panels; irrigation system; and Lloyd-Jones building conversion.

### Volunteer Visitors:

The Frankston team returned to Australia in mid-May, having been a real blessing to my family and I and to everyone at Orbus. Craig, Mark, Matt and James did a fantastic job helping to get most of the new building completed before their departure, while Pip, Alicia and Casey spent much of their time teaching the Grade 1 class and generally loving and playing with the children, as well as assisting with cleaning, sorting and organizing. John and Sue from Eltham Presbyterian spent much time assisting the Blantyre Synod and BSHDC generally as well as at the Orbus Centre along with Rob Boyle, also from Eltham, who visited in May, helping out around the Centre, and overseeing the completion of many of the improvements listed above. It is with much gratitude that we give thanks for these volunteers. Orbus Australia encourages volunteers from Australia and elsewhere. If you are interested in joining a short-term mission trip or potentially even longer term please email me at [craig.manners@orbusafrica.org](mailto:craig.manners@orbusafrica.org).



### Sea Containers from Australia:

The two sea containers from the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (PCV) arrived in Blantyre in June 2012. John Steendam oversaw the distribution of the goods from the containers. Most of the goods marked for the Orbus Centre were given to the BSHDC. Orbus Australia thanks donors for their generosity and for the goods that made their way through to the Centre.

*"Better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked; for the power of the wicked will be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous." Psalm 37:16-17*

### Photos:

For a selection of past photos of the Orbus ministry in Malawi please visit: [Orbus Web Albums](#)

For a selection of some general photography of insects, flowers, plants, trees, animals and places taken by myself during our time in Malawi, and which reflect some of God's incredible creativeness, please click: [General Photography by Craig Manners](#)

### General Malawi News:

Since Malawi's new president, Mrs. Joyce Banda was sworn in on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2012, she has moved swiftly to implement widespread positive changes throughout the country. Many of the foreign donor countries who had ceased financial support of Malawi due to strained relationships with the previous government have quickly resumed ties and massive inflows of donor aid from the international community has boosted the economy dramatically, creating jobs and spreading much hope. After a period of distressing economic, social and political tension in 2011/2012 the remarkable and rapid turnaround in events is a major blessing for Malawi, and (one can hope) for the many poor, weak and vulnerable in Malawi. If you would like to keep up to date with news in Malawi visit the local news sites: <http://www.mwnation.com/>; <http://www.nyasatimes.com/>.

### Prayer Requests:

- For God to provide a long-term Orbus Australia representative to be based in Blantyre to possibly assist at the Orbus Centre but also to conduct general orphan care ministry in Malawi on our behalf.
- For God's gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ for each of the children attending the Orbus Centre.
- For the salvation of souls in the wider area -Ngumbe, Kameza, Lunzu, Nansengwe, Malunga, Mulenga and Daniel Villages.
- For the start of Grades 2 and 3 to go smoothly.
- Give thanks for the provision of our new Headmaster and new teachers.
- For the neediest of the children in the area to come to the Centre.
- For Orbus teachers, staff and volunteers to have a deeper and growing love for OVC, the poor and the neediest in the community and to be selfless, generous and wise in trying to love them.
- For the children who are HIV+.
- For baby "Prayer" a local AIDS orphan Orbus provided milk formula for (photo on cover page) in 2011/12 for his first year.
- For the Masters children.
- For the street children in Blantyre and Ndirande.
- For more local and foreign volunteers to come to the Orbus Centre.
- Give thanks for the contribution of all past local staff and volunteers and for God to richly bless them and their families; specifically for Ellen, Flossy, Rhoda, Blessings, Davey, Benson, Mjojo and John.
- For the Blantyre Synod and BSHDC to embrace and cherish the Orbus Centre ministry.
- For Orbus staff and volunteers: Wills, Esther, Grace, Zulu, Esme, Triffania, Faris, Lamech, Felix, Leonard, James, John.
- For Synod and BSHDC leadership: Alex, Mercy, Cliff, Andrew and Lonnie.
- Give thanks for the Frankston short-term mission team: Craig, Alicia, Mark, Matt, Pip, Casey and James, for their willingness to come and dedicated work at the Centre.
- For Rob Boyle's visit in May and his dedication to this project.
- For Debbie Eve and her much appreciated local help with the Frankston team and Orbus generally.
- For John and Sue's time at the Centre.
- For Michael and Dorothy from Horsham who will be at the Centre in August.
- Thank God for Malawi's peaceful and remarkable political transition in April.
- Pray for the new President Joyce Banda and her new Cabinet. Pray that President Banda will remain faithful to her publicly declared trust in Jesus and fear of God and rule this country boldly but with godly wisdom. That she will protect the weak, the poor and vulnerable in her society, especially the many hundreds of thousands of orphaned children. That she will restrain corruption and the devastating impact this has on the weak, poor and vulnerable.
- Please also pray for my family as we settle our children back into life in Australia and for our future.

In Jesus Name,

*Craig Manners*



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*Jesus Christ "is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him, for 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'."*

*(Romans 10:12-13)*