



ORBUS NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2010



Highlights from May to October 2010:

- * The Orbus Centre for the care of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) operational.
- * Relationships formed with the local community around the Centre.
- * Landscaping of the Orbus site started.
- * Opening Ceremony and Dedication held on 31st July 2010.
- * Orbus Centre management and staff identified and appointed.
- * The Orbus Nursery School for OVC started classes on 6th September 2010.
- * OVC Nutritional Feeding program started.
- * The Orbus HIV & AIDS Club established.
- * Agricultural program expanded.
- * Craft and Fellowship Room set up for parents and guardians of OVC.
- * Two clean water wells and pumps completed.
- * The Orbus Ngumbe Junior Soccer Club initiated and equipped.
- * Backpacks and container goods from Australia distributed.
- * Further opportunities to help needy OVC identified, including re-building the Masters family home.
- * Orbus provides resources to start a new 50 bed residential orphanage at a CCAP school.
- * Restructure of Orbus in Malawi underway and partnership established with CCAP Blantyre Synod.
- * St. Andrew's Christian College raise funds for Orbus.

Please visit the Orbus website at www.orbusafrica.org or [Click Here](#) to view photo albums of some of the Orbus activities mentioned below.

Orbus Restructure and CCAP Blantyre Partnership:

Due to some operational and administrative concerns, a restructure of Orbus in Malawi was initiated by the Board and is underway. Orbus' local man on the ground in Malawi, Colin Mbawa, left Blantyre and service to Orbus in early 2010 and has no further role with Orbus. We are thankful that through Colin Orbus has had this opportunity to initiate this ministry. It was agreed by the Board of Orbus that the best way forward for the Orbus ministry in Malawi was in a partnership between the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Blantyre Synod and the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (PCV). The Board decided the entity called Orbus Development and Aid in Central Africa Limited should be wound up and all Malawian assets gifted to the CCAP Blantyre Synod, to be held in trust as an ongoing joint Malawian/Australian ministry to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) called Orbus Malawi. An agreement was signed on the 24th September 2010 to facilitate this. Each incumbent General Secretary of the Synod and Clerk of the PCV will act as joint trustees.

It is hoped that this structure will provide adequate oversight, give the ministry longevity and accountability, and allow for ongoing involvement from Australia. Orbus in Australia is to continue as a separate ministry maintaining its original mission aimed at initiating and supporting community based orphan care projects like the Orbus Centre in Ngumbe. Orbus in Australia plan to continue to operate its website, and South Yarra Presbyterian Church will continue as the fundraising entity. If anyone would like further details on any aspect of this exciting new phase in the work of Orbus please [contact us](#).

November Newsletter Details:

Stage 1 completed: The Orbus Centre at Ngumbe, Blantyre, Malawi operational:

The *Martyn Lloyd-Jones Building*, with 16 bedrooms, wash troughs, showers and toilets, and the *Charles Spurgeon Building* with three large classrooms, wash troughs, showers and toilets were completed in late July. The buildings are to be used for emergency short-term accommodation for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and to conduct classes, programs and activities associated with caring for OVC. The *John Calvin Building* has been re-roofed and is to be used for agricultural and vocational training activities.



Community Involvement and Survey:

The Orbus Centre is a community development centre built for the community to care for OVC in the surrounding areas. To succeed in helping these children, and the poor and underprivileged generally, the community needs to be supportive and involved. Therefore relationships were formed by Orbus throughout the surrounding community between May and September. There are four CCAP Blantyre Synod congregations surrounding the Centre: Ngumbe, Mlombwa, Nansengwe and Chitimba (all approx 1.5 to 2km from the Centre). With their help, and the help of the local village chief and leaders, and local community members, Orbus were able to introduce the project to the community and cement their enthusiastic support and involvement. A survey was conducted by each of the churches of the orphan situation in their areas, which ascertained there were approx 500 orphans and vulnerable children within a 2km radius of the Centre. The main needs of the children were identified as being clothing, shoes and socks, nutritional food, toiletries, school resources, secondary education and vocational skills training.

Stage 1 Landscaping:

In early July a local landscape designer and horticulturalist, Blessings Kanike, volunteered his services to assist Orbus to landscape and beautify the 6 hectare project site. Orbus employed up to 15 local men as casual labourers and over the following weeks set about landscaping, planting trees, shrubs and flowers, putting the top soil back, building a brick centre piece, some brick drainage channels, brick and stone terrace walls, an outdoor kitchen and a car park. We organized signs, and planted a thorny hedge around the two new buildings, and had a great time doing it all. Prior to the rains coming in November Orbus plan that more brick paving will be completed and lawn will be planted around the two buildings putting the final touches to the Stage 1 area beautification. Everything is expected to grow quickly following the rains.

Centre Management and Staff:

Local management have been identified and appointed. Mrs Ellen Mtegha has been appointed as the Centre manageress with two assistants Mrs Flossy Mlanga and Mrs Rhoda Mkandawire. These ladies are all members of the Ngumbe CCAP where Rhoda is the Deputy Session Clerk and Flossy is the Women's Guild Co-ordinator. Ellen was a schools inspector. The ladies are assisted also by an Oversight Committee made up of one representative from each of the four surrounding CCAP congregations. Ellen reports to the Oversight Committee as well as to the Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission (BSHDC) which in turn will report to the Synod and to the Presbyterian Church of Victoria. Orbus also employs three full-time farm workers, David, Benson and Felix and three security guards, Mjojo, James and John. The wages Orbus are paying are higher than the local average wage for each person and the cost of wages for one year for the nine full-time employees is less than A\$10,000. As this money enters the local economy it will further assist this community.

Opening and Dedication Ceremony:

The Orbus Centre was officially opened and dedicated to God in a very joyous celebration on 31st July 2010. The Centre was jointly opened by the General Secretary of the CCAP Blantyre Synod, Rev. McDonald Kadawati and the Clerk of the Assembly of the PCV, Rev. John Wilson. Approximately 200 people attended and enjoyed singing from a group of orphaned children and three local choirs, as well as moving messages from McDonald, John, Chief Daniel Snr, and Rev. Gabriel Ntaja from Ngumbe CCAP. Gratitude was conveyed to the Australian partners who initiated and funded this Centre and the local community was urged by Daniel and Gabriel to look after and protect the Centre as if it was their own property. Refreshments were provided and a wonderful time was had by all.

Orbus Nursery School for OVC:

The Orbus Nursery School for OVC began classes on 6th September 2010. By the end of the second week there were 120 children aged between 2 and 4 registered and attending classes. The program for the classes consists of prayer, Bible stories, fun activities, singing Hymns, playtime and a fortified porridge. Many ladies from the community are volunteering to assist. Read a report on the 1st week of the nursery school: [Report in PDF](#).



Nutritional Feeding Program:

Because many of the children in the area are undernourished and not receiving a proper diet due to poverty, Orbus has introduced a feeding program at the Centre in an attempt to improve the health of these local children. Orbus have built a kitchen on site and every morning from Monday to Friday a team of volunteer women cook the children porridge enriched with vitamins and minerals. Produce from the Orbus farm is also to be used to feed the children. It is hoped that within a short period of time a difference can be made to the children's health because of this initiative. The cost of feeding 100-120 children a bowl of fortified porridge every morning Monday to Friday for a year is estimated to cost approximately A\$1,700.

The Orbus HIV & AIDS Club:

HIV & AIDS is prevalent in the area so one of the main concerns for Orbus is to assist those living with HIV & AIDS and to educate the community on prevention of the disease. To achieve this the Orbus HIV & AIDS Club was established and held its first meeting on the 14th September 2010 with 49 members registering on the first day, 42 women (with 12 babies among them) and 7 men. The club is managed by a volunteer committee with two young women from a USAID funded group called Development Aid from People to People (DAPP) providing guidance and specialist HIV & AIDS input. The Club's activities include developing an herb farming project on the Orbus site to grow herbs which have been identified as helping to boost the immune system. All work is done voluntarily by the members, the seeds have been donated by DAPP, and the output of this project will be provided free to the children and adults in this community who are living with HIV & AIDS. Any excess will be sold at market by Orbus to provide income. The herb plot has been planted and we await our first harvest.

Backpacks and Container Goods Distributed:

The 20' and 40' containers from Australia were received, processed, unloaded, sorted and the goods were distributed by Orbus to the various destination ministries including Chigodi Women's Centre, the Theological Resource Centre, Zomba Theological College, Mulanje Mission Hospital, the CCAP Blantyre Synod, the Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission (BSHDC) and Orbus itself. The Orbus backpacks and goods were distributed to needy orphans around Blantyre, especially around the Orbus Centre. This was done at the Centre and also at and in conjunction with the four surrounding CCAP churches and other CCAP congregations, as well as through the Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission (BSHDC), and local communities in need identified by Orbus. Many thanks to those who contributed to the containers and to the distribution effort.

The Orbus Farm:

The agricultural program was continued and expanded in an effort to provide income for the Centre as well as to help feed the children. Maize is to be planted over approximately 3 acres prior to the November rains, a fruit orchard planting has mostly been completed including mangoes, oranges, white guava, hybrid peach, avocado pear, bananas and paw paws. Blessings and his father Paul (also a landscape designer, who has designed many of the best gardens in Malawi) have volunteered to oversee this work on an ongoing basis. Chickens and potentially pigs are planned for the near future but this may be delayed now until after the rains.

Craft and Fellowship Room:

A Craft and Fellowship Room has been set up at the Orbus Centre for the parents and guardians of OVC to spend time together, to have Bible studies and to help each other with their shared situations. The room has been stocked with a good supply of wool, cotton, material, needles etc from the goods in the containers from Australia.

Clean water wells completed and operating:

Two clean water wells and manual pumps were completed, one in a remote part of Daniel Village and one at the Orbus site. Daniel Village, a large area within which the Orbus Centre is situated, experienced an outbreak of cholera last Christmas during the rainy season causing at least three deaths. With the assistance of the community and church leaders Orbus were able to identify the neediest and optimum location for a well so as to assist as many people in the area as possible with clean drinking water before the start of the coming rainy season. The local community contributed the bricks required and a committee to oversee the work, and within two weeks (on the 22nd September) a fully operating well with manual pump was pumping clear, clean drinking water servicing a widespread area of spread out mud brick houses.

A ceremony was held to dedicate the well on the 22nd. Giving thanks for this clean water for this needy community John chapters 4 and 6 were mentioned, about the greater need of our souls to seek the "living water" which Jesus alone can provide. Speaking at Jacob's well, Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst." (John 4:14) and, "he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35). The community was urged to think of Jesus, to seek Him and ask Him for this living water every time they came to this new well to quench their physical thirst. Chief Daniel expressed his gratitude and insisted that his gratitude be conveyed and the thanks of those in his village, to the Australian donors for this gift. This we do here with sincere gratitude.

A second well with pump has also been completed at the Orbus site for drinking water, agricultural use and for the parents, guardians and community members to drink freely on their way to and from the Centre.



"He who is a believer in Jesus finds enough in his Lord to satisfy him now, and to content him for evermore. There is such fullness in Christ that He alone is the believer's all. The true saint is so completely satisfied with the all-sufficiency of Jesus that he thirsts no more-except for deeper draughts of the living fountain. Come continually to the fountain and take of the water of life freely." (Spurgeon).

The Orbus Ngumbe Junior Soccer Club:

The Orbus Ngumbe Junior Soccer Club was initiated and equipped with balls, nets, boundary markers and whistle. The inaugural coach was appointed and practice is planned to begin when the weather permits.

A New Home for the Masters Family:

Orbus have given the go ahead for a builder to rebuild the Masters Family home. This is a family of orphans living together with their disabled younger brother, Manuel. Construction is due to begin on Monday 22nd November 2010. [Click Here](#) to see a report.

New Synod Orphanage supported by Orbus:

Orbus has gifted to the CCAP Blantyre Synod mattresses, pillows, blankets, sheets and clothing (excess to its own needs at Ngumbe) to start a new 50 bed fully-funded residential orphanage in spare rooms at a CCAP School north of Blantyre.

Manners Family return to Oz:

After a busy few months in Blantyre the Manners family has returned to Australia and God has given them a gift of a new son (son #5) born on the 24th October. Jonathan Josiah Manners was born in Melbourne two weeks early weighing 7lbs. Jonathan means "gift from God", and it was a gift which arrived on Jayni's birthday!

Volunteers from Australia:

Orbus are encouraging Australian volunteers to visit and work at the Orbus site. Vin Lopes, John Steendam, Robert and John Boyle from Melbourne have visited this year, and Bobby Ganes from Tasmania is currently in Blantyre as a short-term volunteer. The Boyle brothers recently spent two weeks working with Blessings and Paul conducting further site landscaping works, planting the fruit orchard and generally working toward making the Orbus site an operational, attractive, productive and enjoyable place to spend time. Rob's recent photos will hopefully appear in a few weeks on the Orbus website with an update.

St. Andrews Christian College "Project Orbus":

St. Andrews Christian College in Knox (Melbourne) recently conducted a fundraising event to raise awareness of the Orbus Centre. The whole college prayed together each morning from 18th to 22nd October for specific needs in support of Orbus, and funds were raised through the sale of orange wrist bands and a collection of donations. A dress up day and parade was held with students creatively wearing orange clothing. Together just over A\$1000 dollars was raised to buy fortified porridge for the feeding program. Orbus now have enough money to fund the feeding program for one year.

Prayer Points:

- **Praise** that God achieved so much in a short space of time and that everything went ahead in spite of humanly difficult obstacles. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD Almighty." (Zech 4:6). "But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him." (1 Cor. 1:27-29).
- For the safe keeping of the Manners family, for their safe return and for the gift of baby Jonathan.
- For all the volunteers and their sacrificial work and involvement and all Orbus financial and prayer supporters.
- For St. Andrews Christian College and their support for Orbus.
- **Pray** for God's continued blessing upon the Orbus Centre, the children, the management, staff and volunteers.
- For many souls to be saved in the communities surrounding the Centre.
- That this will just be a beginning and that God willing a primary and secondary school and vocational training centre for OVC may be built on the Orbus site.
- That the wells will produce clean water for many years to come and that those drawing water will find Jesus.
- That the nutritional feeding program will help many children to have improved health.
- That the fruit tree orchard just planted will bear much fruit over many years.
- That the maize crop currently being planted will be successful.
- For more short-term and longer-term volunteers from Australia to work at the Centre.
- For the smooth transition of the restructure and for God's blessing upon this new Malawi/Australia partnership.
- For the Masters children and for their house to be built well, within budget and on-time before Christmas.

God's Multiplication Table

"A little one shall become a thousand and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time." (Isaiah 60:22)
Charles Spurgeon once wrote, "Works for the Lord often begin on a small scale, and they are none the worse for this. Feebleness educates faith, brings God near, and wins glory for His name. Prize promises of increase! Mustard seed is the smallest among seeds, and yet it becomes a tree like plant, with branches which lodge the birds of heaven."

However, "The person... who looks for quick results in the seed planting of well-doing will be disappointed. If I want potatoes for dinner tomorrow, it will do me little good to go out and plant potatoes in my garden tonight. There are long stretches of darkness and invisibility and silence that separate planting and reaping. During the stretches of waiting there is cultivating and weeding and nurturing and planting still other seeds." (Eugene Peterson).

Orbus has made a small beginning, we have planted some seeds, and we now move forward in full dependence on our Sovereign God seeking to bring glory to Him by obediently sharing the concern He has revealed He has for orphans, vulnerable children and the poor and needy generally. May God grant everyone at Orbus the privilege and joy of being able to help others in the name of Jesus. In His name, *Craig Manners*