

Faith in Action

Working in Partnership with the Church in Africa

April 2013

Bicycle Ambulances

Traditionally a sick person would be tied to a chair and carried to a hospital during the evening and night when it is cooler.

A Bicycle Ambulance in Chinsomba Village



In many villages the nearest hospital may be a long distance away. Traditionally, a seriously sick person would be tied to a chair and carried to a hospital by family members who would usually walk during the evening and night when it is cooler.

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

Bicycle ambulances are an excellent solution to this difficulty. They make it much easier and quicker 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 medical care 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.

A Bicycle Ambulance in Chitsa Village

These ambulances are made of a welded tubular-metal framework with a mesh of metal strips in the centre. This is covered with a mattress 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 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 bicycle 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 taking pregnant ladies to hospital for the delivery of their babies, and for collecting dead bodies from hospital and taking these bodies back to their home village for burial.

We have received the following testimony about the significant benefits of these bicycle ambulances. A family in Malemia Village had approached the pastor in Chamboko Village during the night because they

A Bicycle Ambulance in Maglasi Village (left) and in Nyachikadza Village (right)



A Bicycle Ambulance in the Anglican Workshop in Mangochi

wanted to borrow the bicycle ambulance. The husband had cerebral malaria and needed to be taken to hospital quickly. The pastor not only lent them the bicycle ambulance but also got up and went to the hospital with them. When they arrived, a doctor said that if they had come just 20 minutes later the man would have died. Without the bicycle ambulance he would not have received treatment in time.

When the man regained consciousness, he asked what had happened. When he heard how they had received help that night, he said that he had never seen such a demonstration of love. As a result, fifteen members of this family have become Christians and have joined the church.



These ambulances are bought from a project run by the Anglican Church in Mangochi, which is located on the southern edge of Lake Malawi. These ambulances have now been upgraded and the new ones are stronger and more comfortable. The cost for one ambulance is currently (Malawi Kwacha) MK140,000, or £255. To date we have provided 72 bicycle ambulances.

Current exchange rate: £1 = MK550
 (Sterling prices have been calculated to the nearest pound.)

A Demonstration of how a Bicycle Ambulance is used in Losi Village (left) and a Bicycle Ambulance in Bodza Village (right)



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. Consequently, we do not include any requests for funds 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 donor's chosen designation. We would be grateful if you would 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 newsheets and leaflets, and also for other administration costs which relate directly to projects. If you are not receiving a newsheet and would like to be added to our mailing list, please could you contact us at either the postal or the email address given below. These newsheets give ongoing 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 and irrigation systems
- Supporting orphans