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Dear Brethren,

2019 has been a very difficult year for the churches in the Central Region of Malawi. During the summer an attempt was made to lure the churches into supporting the building of a hospital and a secular school. After some congregations accepted this offer, many preachers and elders began preaching against it and brethren are now debating these issues. They are facing a division in the church similar to the one we saw here in the 1950's and 1960's over institutionalism. So it is a sad and troubling time.

Along with this, they are now also facing a food crisis. In March 2019, Cyclone Idai, made landfall near Beira, Mozambique and spread quickly into Zimbabwe and Southern Malawi. All three countries were devastated. Multitudes were just about to harvest their crops when the storms washed them away. It is estimated that over a million acres of various crops were destroyed. Because of this all three nations are in a serious food crisis this year.

While Idai stopped before it reached the Central Region of Malawi, the need for food in the other areas has led to a terrible inflation in the price of food. Maize has tripled since this summer and has become so high that the poor among the saints in Malawi can no longer afford to purchase it. Not only that, but it is so scarce that many wait in line all night to purchase it only to be told that the government has run out and they go home with nothing.

We have received many letters requesting help from various elders in the churches in Malawi. The church here at Holly Street has already sent several thousand dollars in aid to the elders of the churches there. But since there are over 1,000 churches and over 8,000 saints in the Central Region of Malawi, much more is needed to help alleviate their suffering.

I am hoping and praying that others will also be willing to send help to those who are struggling there. I learned last week that some of our brethren are now only eating one meal a day and some are having to skip meals completely.

The good news is that they are having abundant rains that started early, so the harvest will begin in early March. After that the price of maize will drop significantly and the crisis will be over. Therefore we only need to help them for the rest of January and February. For this reason a quick response is needed. We have set up a special website about this issue in Malawi:

<https://www.biblequestions.org/malawitd.html>

If you have any interest in helping, or have any questions, please contact me at the phone number or email address below:

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Thanks for taking the time to read this letter and to consider the needy saints in Malawi.

Alan Hitchen