

If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

—Isaiah 58:10-11

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

My first pastoral visits as bishop of Toungoo took twenty-one days to walk to three parishes. During these visits, I discovered that there was no proper education for children and no proper health care for anyone. Women and girls hauled water over long distances daily. Families already struggling for daily sustenance were often displaced because of armed conflict or the building of a dam. As their shepherd, I felt guilty that I could not provide for their basic needs.

Children were hungry for education. People were hungry for health care and thirsty for clean water. Families were hungry for a living wage. How could we serve them? Our diocese could only provide so much, but God works in mysterious ways. Partnering with Episcopal Relief & Development, we have been able to provide emergency relief for displaced families, education for children, health care for villagers, fresh water for everyone and microfinancing to enable families to earn a living wage. God is good.

Isaiah says that helping the hungry and the needy is pleasing to God. Who are the hungry and suffering around us? There are families who lack food, who are homeless or victims of natural and human-made disasters and who are sick. Together, we can serve them through the guidance of the living God.

—John Wilme