



MALAWI MISSION TEAM REPORT

May 16 – June 2, 2010
By Gail Lehman (FPC Franklin)

Where does one begin to describe a seventeen day trip to Malawi, Afrika?! I could hardly believe I was going to Afrika (that's the way they spell it). When people asked me where I was going, and I told them Afrika, I still found it hard to believe. This was the longest time a team would be at Nkhoma, because we could not get tickets when we wanted them due to the World Cup Soccer

coming to South Afrika. To be going so far, we all agreed that it was a good thing. We would have more time to work with the people. This was one thing that impressed me, was that we worked with a group of Malawians who went out to the work site with us.

Our team consisted of nine people. Stan and Lynn Hovis, David Layne, and Teresa Locke from Southminster, Gastonia; Jo Ann Taylor from Walnut Grove; Tommy Bureson from Fletcher; Tom Kilgore from Morganton; and Doris Munday and Gail Lehman from Franklin First, all possessing different gifts from God. Actually there was a tenth member of the team, Dorothy McKenzie from First Church Gastonia. She had heard Dr. Nagy talk at her church and how doctors, nurses and teachers were

needed at Nkhoma. So Dorothy decided to inquire about teaching. She arrived in Nkhoma last February and will be staying a year! Ebenezer School was built by the people from Holland for hospital staff's children. It is hard to get doctors and their families to come to Malawi, because of the lack of good schools for their children. Well, Dorothy at age 79 did such a good job, they made her the principal!

We arrived in Lilongwe, Malawi, the capital, May 18. The next day we visited the Ministry of Hope Crisis Nursery which was started by the Dimmocks from Black Mountain when they were missionaries in Lilongwe. The facility is taking care of fifteen babies at present, although



Crocheted and knitted baby caps

they can have as many as twenty-five, but the economic situation is a problem in Malawi also. There was a dedicated staff of women looking after these babies whose mother

had died of AIDs or simply could not look after the child. A young woman from Kansas City, Danielle, greeted us and showed us in. She is volunteering at the orphanage for a year. We were all able to hold one of these babies and love them and take them out into the sunshine. They have their own garden behind the orphanage. When we were finally able to put these precious bundles down, we headed for Nkhoma, after grocery shopping.

After three days of traveling, we arrived in Nkhoma Wednesday afternoon with all action packers. Each person was responsible for two. Many were full of supplies requested by Dr. Nagy for the hospital and supplies for the school. We delivered seven packers to the pharmacy and our to the school. We met with Jan Wednesday evening. He is



Medical Supplies

from the Netherlands and the one in charge of the work projects. Our main task was to refurbish a house at the Chiwe Clinic. Nkhoma Hospital has ten satellite clinics around the countryside. This clinic is two hours from Nkhoma, so we left at 7:00 am to get there. The house had not been lived in for some time and was in bad shape. The hospital has hired a nurse for the Chiwe clinic, and this will be her house. Only four of the team could go in the transportation provided, so our plan was to rotate the team members so all could see the village. The house needed two new doors, window panes were broken, painting inside and out and closets and shelves built in the bedroom and spare room. Jan sent a team of workers with us, Kuchepalo, carpenter, a mason, a painter and O'Charlie who gave me my first job of cleaning the walls and spackling. David, Stan and Tommy worked right along side of these workers painting, removing rotten door frames and putting in the metal ones, and replacing broken window panes. Our other half of the team went to visit Ebenezer School. The children were finishing up the second term, so Friday was going to be the last day of school for a two week vacation. In that time, the three classrooms were cleaned and painted. Jo Ann made curtains for the windows. Doris did pillow covers and helped Dorothy with a banner of thanks to Holland for their school building. The Moon Wha School in Korea is building the second wing of the school which will add three more rooms. Lettering by Tom now announces Ebenezer Institute of Learning with a logo at each end. Lynn and I painted different shapes and colors on the reception room floor (three and four year olds) as a learning project. Teresa made pictures of each child in the school so they could show their families.

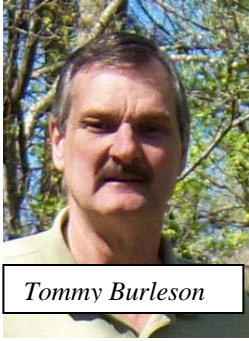
By coming into Nkhoma on Wednesday, we had six full days to work at the Chiwe house. Tommy went everyday with a rotation of the team. By Friday of the following week the house was ready for the nurse. David is a doctor and made rounds at Nkhoma and observed out at the village. He said he was overwhelmed with simple things that were needed such as tongue depressors and the fact that if children were brought to the hospital sooner, many children could be treated successfully for malaria. Medicines that we can get so readily are not available. A baby died while David was in the hospital. The grandmother took the baby back to their village for burial. It is a common occurrence, but in the six years that mission teams have been coming to Nkhoma, there has been much improvement. Three and four babies would die per week, now it maybe three or four for the month. Jo Ann, our EMT, assisted one afternoon when a man came in with a broken leg. He had been run down by a bicycler. There was no way of setting it, so she cleaned the wound with the antiseptic provided. We take so much for granted such as good medical care, lights, running water (drinkable), or turning on the stove.



What has struck me about these people is that they are happy with their circumstance. Working with them, they are laughing and always talking. They are friendly towards us, greeting us before they tell us the reason for their visit at the guesthouse. We visited with the Chaplain of the hospital one day when he came to ask us to meet with the Secretary General of the Central Church of Afrika Presbyterian. Nkhoma has the seminary for the church. The Chaplain could not thank us enough for coming to share in the life of these people. When the Secretary General came in, this was reiterated again. The fact that we come so far makes them feel blessed. Our continued coming means a great deal. Only by coming and seeing and interacting with them, builds relationships. At the Wednesday morning devotion, the head of the hospital, Dr. Ter Haar from Holland, also thanked us for coming again. The staff at the hospital has devotions every morning before they make their rounds. Frederick who runs the pharmacy thanked us for the supplies, but said, "You can send money but your presence means more." On Thursday afternoon we walked with Matrina, the housekeeper of the guesthouse, to her village. It was quite an entourage accompanying her, and we had many a laugh along the way. The family all gathered around when we got there. We were honored to go with her.

We met many wonderful people at the guesthouse. Maralise is a retired nurse from South Africa who has been in Nkhoma for five years. She helps with the nursing school and is very concerned about students who want to be nurses, because now the government has suspended the funding for them. She

took some of the team members out to a village where a little girl lived whose feet had been amputated because of malnutrition. She was able to get funds to get Ellen prosthesis. She also took some of us to the nutrition center where AIDs mothers are taught how to give their babies the best food. We met Sarah from New Zealand, Nari from Australia, Laura, an MD from UK, Isabel from Belgium who worked in the eye clinic for three years, Bunmi, a premed student from California, Kevin from the Netherlands who helps Jan with the work projects, Kate from the U of West Virginia, Lisa from U of Michigan, Jessi from Black Mountain, NC was teaching the kindergarten, and two students from Germany whose university had sent the equipment for making glasses. These young people have given up the summer to come and help in



Tommy Burlison

their field of health care for three weeks, three months and some a two year commitment! We also met Seon Hee Lee from Korea who is there for two years to work with handicapped people. She arranged a trip into Lilongwe for them to see the capital. None of them had ever left their villages. One evening devotion, Tommy asked where we had seen God. We agreed that all these people were the image of God. Under the expanse of the heavens on our brief safari, we saw elephants, hippos, impalas and warhogs, the Southern Cross, Scorpio and the Big Dipper low on the northern horizon. We gathered in a circle and lifted up a prayer for all of God's creation and praising God for his wondrous works. It was an awesome experience for this first time visitor to Afrika. To God alone be the Glory. Amen