

THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA WITNESS DIVISION REPORT

(Missions Committee; Hunger Committee; Peace & Justice Committee; Self-Development of People Committee; New Church Development; Evangelism; Guatemala Partnership; Malawi Task Force)

July 31, 2012

HUNGER COMMITTEE

Your Hunger committee is grateful to these participating churches in our Nickel-A-Meal program. Hunger relief programs across our Presbytery and as far away as Guatemala and Malawi are supported by these funds. Please join this effort if your church is not already collecting the Nickel-A-Meal offering. Thank you.

Arbor Dale	Good Hope	Northminster
Asheville First	Grace Covenant	Olney
Banner Elk	Grassy Creek	Reems Creek-Beech
Belmont First	Green Street	Riceville
Bessemer City First	Hendersonville First	Robinson Memorial
Black Mountain	Hickory First	Rutherfordton
Brevard-Davidson River	Jack's Creek	Ryburn Memorial
Brittain	John Knox	Shelby
Bryson City	Kenilworth	Sherrill's Ford
Burnsville First	Lenoir First	Siloam
Canton	Lincolnton First	Southminster
Cherryville	Long Creek	Swannanoa First
Columbus	Lowell	Trinity
Conley Memorial	Marion First	Tryon
Crossnore	Micaville	Union
Cullowhee	Mills River	United
Dallas First	Montreat	Unity
Duncan's Creek	Morganton First	Waldensian
Etowah	Morrison	Walnut
Fairview	Mt Holly First	Warren Wilson
Fletcher	New Hope Asheville	Waynesville
Forest City First	New Hope Gastonia	West Asheville
Franklin First	Newdale	West Avenue
Gastonia First	Newland	Westminster
Glen Alpine	Newton First	Presbytery P.W.

The following Spring Nickel-A-Meal Grants were voted on at the Hunger committee's May 5 meeting and were subsequently approved by the Administrative Board:

- \$2,500.00 Dulatown Presbyterian Church Food Pantry [Sponsored by United]
- \$1,177.55 Catawba County HOPE (Help our People Eat) [Sponsored by Hickory First]
- \$2,500.00 Pack a Sak of Gastonia [Sponsored by Third Street]
- \$4,500.00 StoreHouse Pantry [Sponsored by Rutherfordton]
- \$4,500.00 Cherokee County Sharing Center [Sponsored by Hayesville]

For a total of \$15,177.55 in Nickel-a-Meal Spring Regional grants.

PEACE & JUSTICE COMMITTEE

At its March 20 meeting the committee approved the following: \$500 to the NC Council of Churches, \$1,250 to Western Carolinians for Criminal Justice Women at Risk Program, and \$500 to Ministry of Hope Swannanoa Correctional Facility for Women Chaplaincy Program. The committee also received and approved a \$100 funding request from Burnsville First Presbyterian Youth to support an interdenominational youth roller skating fundraiser and educational event on April 25 to benefit Reconciliation House Food Pantry.

At its June 19 meeting the committee voted to use the Presbytery's portion of the October 2012 Peacemaking Offering to fund Peacemaking Offering Grants in 2013. These are small grants of at least \$250 to churches that are working in concrete ways toward peacemaking in the community or the world. Grant forms will be available in the Fall. The deadline for grants will be December 31, 2012.

SELF-DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE COMMITTEE

The deadline for SDOP grant applications is September 4, 2012. To find the grant application form, go to www.presbyterywnc.org, click on the "Mission Zone" button, click on "Mission Forms/Apps.," click on "Self-Development of People Grant Application." A full list of the eight criteria used for grant applications is printed on the last page of the grant application form.

When the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering was taken at Easter time, one-third of what was collected went to fund the PCUSA's Self Development of People Program. Our Presbytery was assigned a portion of these funds (actually the 2011 funds) so that our local SDOP committee could make grants in 2012. This year the Presbytery's SDOP committee has \$9,369 available that they can award (after approval by the National SDOP). SDOP grants help "groups of people that are oppressed by poverty or social systems to help themselves." Program/project ideas must be "presented, owned, and controlled by the group of people who will benefit directly from it." The most recent recipients have been Opportunity Threads in Morganton and Home Cleaning Professionals in Asheville, both of which are cooperatives.

MISSION COMMITTEE

The committee will be collecting Presbyterian Disaster Assistance "Gift of the Heart Kits" to take to PDA's Ferncliff Disaster Assistance Center in Little Rock, Arkansas on September 23, 2012. There will be flyers at a display table at the July Presbytery meeting with more detailed information. To learn how to make one of the PDA "Gift of the Heart Kits," go to <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/pda/making-gift-heart-kits/>

In the attachments you will find two letters (April and June) from Dr. Barbara Nagy, Mission Co-worker in Malawi, Africa. Dr. Nagy will be enrolling in the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University this Fall for a two year degree program. This degree will allow her to return to Malawi and focus on growing Nkhoma Hospital's ten remote village clinics. Her hope is that by strengthening the village clinics, Malawians will be treated before their medical conditions become dire, and will avoid death from things that would be simple to cure if discovered earlier. While Dr. Nagy is taking the two year degree, she will be considered by PCUSA World Mission to be on "Interpretation leave," since her degree will help her further God's mission in Malawi in the future. During these two years, the

Presbytery is still committed to paying 80% of her salary, so that she can provide for herself and her children while living in Decatur, GA.

MALAWI MISSION TRIP

There were ten participants on the May 21-June 6 Malawi Mission Trip. They took requested curriculum to Ebenezer School and supplies to Nkhoma Hospital. Their projects included helping at the school, renovating buildings on the hospital grounds, painting a site map for the hospital, and creating a YouTube video tour of the hospital for the hospital's website. In addition, churches and individuals in the Presbytery generously gave over \$15,000 to cover the cost of two portable Ultrasounds for the hospital that were desperately needed. One Ultrasound was carried to Malawi by the Mission Team and one was carried by Dr. Barbara Nagy's sister in July. Please contact a member of the Mission Team below if you would like them to speak at your church. Also see the Malawi Mission Team Report below written by Barbie Heilman.

- Richard Greathouse, 828-612-7485 (Northminster)
- Barbara (Barbie) Heilman, 828-879-8430 (Waldensian)
- Rebecca (Becca) Heilman, 828-439-3690 (Waldensian)
- Agnes Horsley, 704-616-3379 (Belmont First United Methodist)
- Tom Kilgore, 828-438-0844 (Morganton First)
- Teresa Locke, 704-867-8135 (Southminster)
- Dorothy McKenzie, 704-865-8170 (Gastonia First)
- Brent Ramsey, 828-467-1016 (Walnut Grove)
- David Robbins, 239-398-5390 (Fletcher)
- Alice Salthouse, 828-448-0667 (Rumple Memorial in Boone)

MALAWI MISSION TEAM REPORT

May 21-June 6, 2012

By Barbie Heilman (Waldensian)



The Western North Carolina Mission team to Africa left for Malawi on Monday, May 21st. Prior to the trip I experienced various emotions – excitement, fear, nervousness – all to be expected given I was headed to a place I never dreamed I would go. Upon arrival, I guess the best way to describe my feelings is sensory overload. So in this report I will fall back on my teaching background and describe my visit to Nkhoma, Malawi through my five senses.

Vision. Nkhoma is a visual smorgasbord. We saw huge poinsettia bushes, hens and roosters wandering free, mud huts with thatched roofs, bicycles, beautiful trees and plants, goats and many colors of the fabrics of Africa everywhere we went. The Malawians are a proud people who exude a dignity and grace that is rarely seen in the U.S. These people are so warm and openhearted and displayed their welcome and ease in their smiles and greetings as we encountered them every day. The people of Nkhoma welcomed our group as old friends. Indeed, some of our group has traveled to Nkhoma several times so they are old friends and those of us who were new visitors were welcomed just as warmly.

Hearing. The first sounds we heard each day were the neighborhood roosters. They began our mornings and continued their heralding throughout the day but were thankfully silent at night. Another early greeting was the call of the pied crows. These large black and white birds would greet and join us in the yard for breakfast hoping for bread crusts and dry cereal. The town bells would ring periodically during the day calling the people to begin work, break for lunch, come to church or stop work for the day. One Saturday afternoon as we were walking back to the guesthouse, we paused outside the church where we heard the glorious sound of singing. Upon entering the sanctuary we discovered not a full choir of 20 plus people but just 4 individuals singing a cappella to the glory of God. More of this music awaited us as we attended both the English and Chichewan services on Sunday. One of my favorite sounds was the musical “Hello” we were greeted with as we encountered children on the road – accompanied, as always, by their beautiful shy smiles. A final sound each evening was the sound of the neighborhood and wild dogs barking and fighting as they chased unwelcome animals from their territory. Sounds that were rarely heard were planes overhead, cars, television, radios etc.-- all the sounds of our modern world.

Smell around Nkhoma. This sense is a little more difficult to describe. Many memories of the smells of Nkhoma center around the hospital—the smells of sickness and antiseptic. We passed through and spent some time on the hospital grounds as some of our team was partitioning a building into offices for family planning. The smell of fresh cut wood was prevalent in that area. Another member of our team painted a schematic map of the hospital and also painted the Nkhoma Hospital symbol at the front entrance. While walking around Nkhoma market we also encountered the smell of fried potatoes. Vendors were everywhere cooking and selling fresh fried potatoes. A final not so pleasant odor came from the “fish sticks” that could be found in the open fish market. For those who don’t know, fish sticks are literally about 8 small fish tied onto a bamboo stick and sold as a delicacy.

Taste. Yet another unforgettable experience is the food of Malawi. Fresh tomatoes, tangerines, bananas, potatoes and pumpkins were available everyday at the market and our team certainly enjoyed our share of each of these. While we prepared most of our meal ourselves from food we bought in Lilongwe upon our arrival and what we found at the Nkhoma market we were also treated to a traditional Malawian meal three times during our stay. These meals while similar were each unique in the company with whom we shared it. We ate ‘nsima which is a staple for Malawians. ‘Nsimba is a maize based food of a thicker consistency than mashed potatoes. On its own ‘nsima is bland tasting but when eaten with cooked pumpkin leaves or cabbage or chicken it is delicious and filling. Another favorite food was Matrine’s home baked bread. Matrine, the housekeeper at the guesthouse, kept us well supplied with bread that went well with peanut butter and jelly, cheese, butter or just plain. A last taste of Malawi is Sobo, a drink concentrate we would add to our boiled and filtered water to give it flavor. We had orange and pineapple and both were worth the taste.

Touch is the final sense. Our days began with the feel of the chilly air in the morning. The temperatures as we awoke were in the 50’s. As the day progressed the sun warmed our faces and we

enjoyed days in the 70's—a much more pleasant winter than below 30 and icy. The cooling breezes that blew all day made walking around Nkhoma a pleasure. I also recall the feel of the Malawians rough skin as we shook the hands of the many people we met. These are the hands of a people who work hard every day to survive but who are also so warm and welcoming to strangers in their midst.

Overall, this trip was an amazing opportunity for me to see a country so different from my own and to realize that the people of that country would welcome someone like me—someone so obviously different from them. This was a journey that will not soon be forgotten and I hope to be able to return to The Warm Heart of Africa – Malawi.

Barbara Nagy Letter April 2012

This is our first week of 2012 without rain, and we have a sense of tremendous relief—we've made it through another malaria season, with the help of God and the prayers and hard work of many people. The entire pediatrics ward staff as well as lab, outpatient department, and many others feel as if we've passed through the fiery furnace! This year our pediatric ward census topped 270 patients per day (in 45 beds). Over 1,600 children passed through the pediatrics ward in the month of January alone. Nursing staff in particular was so stretched it was often challenging to get a trained person to the side of every emergency. We were blessed to have visiting nurses and medical students who were willing to work many extra hours per day doing triage, lab tests, or whatever was needed, in disaster style treatment pods, and staff from other areas of the hospital helping as able, to ease the crisis. Lunch became a coke guzzled in a few minutes of sitting down. Electricity seemed to go off



just at the moment we had a whole new crop of very sick admissions, turning off lights, support equipment and oxygen, and ultimately burning out the hospital's backup generator. Political unrest resulted in many hospitals and health centers completely running out of medicines, thus many patients arrived after being seriously ill for days and were critical on admission. We counted ourselves extremely fortunate, thanks to support sent from PCUSA and other friends, not to have run out of funds to buy medicines, and were thus able to provide basic medical services for close to 200,000 people, counting those served by our health centers. The country wide lack of fuel meant that many ambulances were unable to run. A baby from a nearby health center was sent to us by bicycle taxi with a hemoglobin of 2 (normal is over 12). It took her five hours to get to us, and she died just as the family arrived at the pediatrics ward, one of many uncounted deaths related to poor governance in Malawi.

Although this sounds like hell on earth, there is much to be grateful for. The extreme dedication of many hospital staff members, extraordinary support by hospital administration, and support of our overseas partners such as you kept the death rate at about one fifth of what it is at other hospitals in Malawi and many parts of Africa. Service Level Agreements, which enable children under five to get care subsidized by Malawi government, have stretched our system to the max, yet prior to their inception many of these children would have been dying out in the villages because of lack of money to pay for their care. We still have only half the population in our area eligible for subsidized care, which is a situation that needs much prayer and attention. We deeply appreciate those who have sponsored a pediatric bed for a year, as they have enabled us to care for some of those without government subsidy. One new four year old diabetic had to stay in the hospital for weeks so his family could learn to give insulin and care for his condition. His mother collapsed when she heard the amount of his bill, which had already been reduced by half. Fortunately there was a visiting doctor who brought a gift that covered the remaining portion,

and I have had the pleasure of seeing this little guy return to pediatrics clinic healthy and robust with well completed blood sugar logs, a feat that is seldom seen in the US. Our most common cause of admission by far remains malaria, and many funds sent from donors go directly to emergency blood transfusions and quinine. An indoor residual spraying program supported by PCUSA went to many of our communities and treated houses for mosquitos, immediately decreasing malaria cases and deaths where spraying occurred. A follow up study after spraying showed that anemia in children was significantly reduced as well, giving those children a better chance at success in school.

Against all odds we have managed to increase services in outreach clinics, which extend basic health care to parts of our hospital's catchment area that are too far away to get to the hospital. I believe that we would have had far more admissions and deaths were it not for this. Expanding Public Health services is a high priority particularly because of unaddressed basic health needs of children in the communities. I have been offered an opportunity to get a Masters in Public Health which will support this. Major renovations of the Pediatrics ward have begun with support of a group of churches in Holland. This will increase our number of beds and the capability to care for critically ill children. Funds for a new generator capable of supplying the increasing power needs of the hospital have been received from Scotland. Finally, Malawi recently experienced the death of its president, but we are thankful beyond words that the vice president was duly installed without civil war or unrest that was predicted. Funds for a new ambulance, approximately \$60,000.00, will be needed to accomplish our goals of getting health care within walking distance of our population, a sort of 'health center in a traveling box' concept, so please pray for and consider how you may support this need.

On a personal level, in a few short months there will be a new high school graduate in our family! Thanks to all who have prayed for us and supported us.

Barbara Nagy for Melia, Anna, Happiness and all of the Nkhoma community

Barbara Nagy June 2012 MCP Letter

Greetings friends,

On crowded days on the Nkhoma Pediatrics ward I have been heard to say if we had one more pediatrics admission it might blow the roof off. Well, we now have the roof blown off the pediatrics ward for an entirely different reason--we are being renovated! In May, we hastily crowded all of our hundred or so admissions into our lower ward, ran over into borrowed space from an adjoining ward, and watched workmen take off the roof and tear down walls in our old ward.

They are expanding the upper ward into two additional spaces, so we hope to gain about thirty beds when all is done, including a small nursery area for newborns admitted from outside our hospital. We will have a much improved and expanded area for stabilizing and treating new patients as they arrive in waves, with four pods and good lighting, as well as big windows that look out onto the rest of the ward, so that our few nurses will be able to see people calling for help. We will have some isolation rooms for the patients most in need of separation from others—meningitis, cholera, tuberculosis, etc., while most of the patients will stay in a large open ward to facilitate staff being able to see and treat them, especially in case of emergencies. We will add about eight ‘high care’ beds, an area very close to the nurses where more support equipment will be concentrated, and improve things like sinks for handwashing, and organization of supplies and equipment. Electrical outlets and ventilation and rooms for on call clinicians will shortly become a reality, after years of planning and anticipation, with big thanks to a group of churches in Holland that has raised funds for the renovations. Now we pray daily for the safety of the construction workers, who are working in very challenging conditions, and for no big problems to hamper construction, which must be completed before malaria season starts again in the fall. It is thrilling to go each day and see the progress that is made, and we thank God for this wonderful help to the care available to children at Nkhoma Hospital.



Earlier this week I also had the opportunity to see the cumulative effect of several years of work, as we admitted a baby that was very asphyxiated (did not get enough oxygen) during the birth process, referred in to Nkhoma Hospital from a health center. The child arrived with a new referral form filled out, which directed appropriate care prior to transfer, nursing staff completely and well filled out a newborn protocol, fixing several life threatening problems in an expeditious manner, and the clinician on call was able to make a quick assessment of the child’s status. Now this baby is doing well, whereas we would likely have had another neonatal death if any one of these safety nets had failed. With continued hard work, including more encouragement to mothers to deliver where births can be attended by skilled workers, we hope to see children like this and neonatal deaths dramatically reduced. Again, we thank God for the hard work and dedication of many people in this story.

Blessings to all, we appreciate your prayers and support! I will be starting a Masters in Public Health degree at Emory (Rollins School of Public Health) in August of this year, so please pray for our transition as well as Nkhoma Hospital and pediatrics services in the interim.

Barbara Nagy
Melia, Anna and Happiness

Reflections from the June 2012 Guatemala Partnership Delegation



The team enjoys dinner with Geny Merida and his wife, Sandra Escobar.

A Visit With Eben Ezer Church in San Antonio, Guatemala

During the 3 days I was with our sister church, Eben Ezer in San Antonio, Guatemala, I met so many wonderful, welcoming people. Much of my time was spent going to different homes to see how the women worked to provide some income for their families. Due to their work and our scholarship help I believe all the children and young people in this church are able to go to school.



On my arrival day the women of the church gathered at Berta's house,

an older woman who makes “cakes for all occasions” and who has raised two sons on that income. It was essentially a PW meeting of 15 women (and their children) to encourage them to start thinking of ways they might make money and thus not be so dependent on husbands.



Everyone participated in making a huge cake and had lots of fun doing it. The next day I was taken to another home where Francesca and her sister make @ 50-75 tamales every Saturday to sell door-to-door around their neighborhood. We chatted as they made the tamales, cooking them over a wood fire while ducks, dogs and small children ran back and forth on the dirt floor of the kitchen area. Down the road I met Regina who had taken her cacao beans to be ground into cocoa powder. After the powder dried and fermented she added sugar, and then we sat around an outdoor table and pounded the mixture into cookie shapes which she later baked to sell door-to-door.

The families are multi-generational: grandparents, parents, children, spouses and grandchildren all live together in small, very basic homes where most of the living is actually done outside. These women work hard and they are busy all day long, but they bring their children to church 3-4 times a week with beautiful smiles on their faces and joy in their hearts as they loudly sing their praises to God and thank Him continually for all the blessings in their lives.



They welcomed me with open arms and open hearts and thanked God for my visit, for their sister church (Black Mountain PC), and for the Partnership with WNC Presbytery. I was humbled and in awe of their faith and love and can only say GRACIAS, Gracias a Dios por Eben Ezer Iglesia y nos hermanas y hermanos alli.

Grace Stitt, Black Mountain Presbyterian Church

FPC Franklin visits Camino a Canaan



Barry Clinton and Nick Potts from FPC Franklin, and accompanied by Ellen Dozier, travelled to a community near Coatepeque where our sister church Camino a Canaan is located. We stayed in a vacant house near the church owned by a man who is currently living the US. Accommodations exceeded our expectations. We participated in church activities throughout our stay. Our meals were prepared by 3 women of the church who

also hold positions of leadership either on the health committee, as women of the church, or partnership committee chair positions. All our food was prepared over open fire and always consisted of tortillas made that day. Meals (3 per day) also included black beans, rice or noodles, a meat of beef, chicken or fish. We never ate anything that wasn't cooked.



The people of the church and my impression of Guatemalans in general is that they are extremely cordial and friendly, not just to us as the delegation but to each other and across generations. The day to day challenges they face are masked by their ability to exhibit a sense of peace and love. The biggest challenge facing our partner church is the availability of an adequate supply of potable water. The effects of the lack of clean water have cascading manifestations; dirty water = poor health = poor performance = lack of motivation to succeed = difficulty in meeting the day to day challenges. As you can guess, these



affects cross over into education, as well. Until one's own basic needs are met, it is exceedingly difficult to minister to others in need. However, somehow the people we met have found the strength to take care of their neighbors in spite of their own deficiencies. They were an amazing and inspiring people to be around. Still, the need for clean water remains. We're hopeful that through collaboration with Mission Impact, a NGO out of Madison WI, we can begin to get some traction in this area of need.

To summarize, Camino a Canaan is alive with youth of all ages and the strong support of its leadership. We, FPC Franklin, hope to improve on our ability to communicate regularly with the church through the internet and telephone. It's crucial to have quick and easy means of communication to minimize complacency in the partnership. Our church in Franklin can learn much about itself through a closer relationship with Camino a Canaan. I personally have been



challenged by the experience, by what some would call life-changing. But, to borrow a quote from someone in our delegation who also borrowed it,

‘I had a life-changing experience but after a while I realized it had not changed my life.’

Something to avoid.

Barry Clinton
FPC Franklin

Mills River visits Monte Horeb

Think of

- A home with a dirt floor with chickens and ducks wandering around the dinner table
- A kitchen with no stove
- An indoor cooking fire with no chimney
- Cooking every day in a kitchen full of smoke
- A home with no bathroom --- no tub and no shower
- Having water to your home only one day out of eight, or not at all because the community water pump has not been repaired
- Not being able to drink your water without boiling it
- A backyard concrete latrine full of flies
- Six beds in the only real room in your house
- Beds with no mattresses
- A single lightbulb as the only electrical “appliance”
- Getting up at 3 am to cook for the family
- Fourteen-hour work days in the sugar cane fields
- Growing all of your own food and not being able to afford enough seed to grow corn for your family’s needs
- Being at the mercy of droughts for your family’s meals



Think of

- Seventeen people riding to church in a single pickup truck
- Hours of rain that sounds like buckshot hitting the steel roof of the church
- A Sunday school with no classroom and no teaching materials
- Temperatures in the 90s without even a fan
- A school with no books for students or teachers
- Teachers who have only a high school education
- A school with no water for restrooms or drinking



- Children whose families cannot afford for them to go to school because of the cost of uniforms
- Children who must go to work in sugar cane fields to help support their families instead of going to school
- Daughters having to stay home so their brothers can go to school
- No one in the family having a regular job
- A mother with three children living with older parents under these conditions while her husband is working in the States
- Parents, wife & children receiving news that their son, husband & father has been murdered in the US and they don't know how or why

But also think of

- Bright smiling faces
- Children who bring you flowers from the yard
- Fellow church members who always give you hugs and call you brother or sister and wish you God's blessings
- Strong, heart-felt singing in the church
- Friendly greetings from everyone you pass
- Children whose favorite subject is mathematics and who want to be businessmen, accountants and teachers
- Hearing voices praising God --- Gloria a Dios!



This is Coyolate, Guatemala.

Just think of what God can do through us in our continuing partnership with our brothers and sisters --- nos hermanos y hermanas ---
at Mt. Horeb Presbyterian Church in Coyolate!