

# MALAWI ORPHAN CARE MINISTRIES



## FELC Mission Team Report!



Thank you all so much for your support and prayers before, during, and after our Mission Trip to Malawi. God is gracious, and He granted us a safe, meaningful and powerful journey. Our day- to-day plans did not quite go as we had anticipated.

The first change in plans came before we even arrived in Malawi. Our flight from Washington, D.C. to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia was late leaving Washington, so it was late arriving in Addis. Before we left Washington, we were assured by the gate personnel of Ethiopian Airlines that our late departure was not a problem – our connecting flight would be held for us in Addis because so many who were to be on that plane were on our plane. When we arrived in Addis, our flight to Malawi had already left. The airline took care of scheduling and paying for a hotel and meals for us until the next morning. This unplanned stopover in Addis Ababa allowed an unpressured introduction into life in Africa, as it seemed all of Africa was parading by in front of our hotel. We were scheduled to meet with the Board of Kanyenyeva Orphan Care Ministries the afternoon of our arrival. This meeting was rescheduled. We discovered later that this delay was a blessing, as we had a chance to meet the members of the board in the days that followed, and to do ministry with them as well. We had the chance to work at Kanyenyeva, and when we did meet together, our questions and conversation were much better informed.

The 5 members of our team each brought their own gifts to the team, and this allowed us to view things from many different angles. By joining our observations together, we were able to ask better questions. By joining our experiences together, we were able to do better ministry. God knew what He was doing when He formed the team.

We were able to accomplish much of what we set out to accomplish. But we were also allowed to learn much about the Malawian culture, and how life in the world's poorest nation differs greatly from our own. Intercity transportation is difficult, if not next to impossible. Internet communication is spotty, and slow. Cell phone coverage, interestingly enough, is better than it is in much of the U.S. Electricity is not found everywhere, and where it is available, it is not always flowing. We think we had one day in Malawi when we didn't lose power at some point. Water is not safe to drink, or to wash food in. We purified water every day, and practiced draconian dietary measures to avoid intestinal illness. Hot water is sketchy. Sanitary facilities in the villages are nonexistent. Even in at least one of the areas of the Capital city of Lilongwe, there was not running water, and outhouses for bathrooms. Roads were poor, with pavement narrow and thin, and dirt roads everywhere – even in the city. Dirt and dust were our constant companions, as were the smell of wood smoke from cooking fires, and the crowing of roosters.

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In spite of all of these difficulties, the people of Malawi were, by and large, gracious and open. They are resource poor, yet relationship rich. While we in America are resource rich, we guard our goods with such ferocity that our relationships often suffer. The people of Malawi have very little, so people – not things – are the focus of their lives. We can learn much from them in this aspect of life.

Shadreck and his wife Yamikani shared their lives with us for the 11 ½ days that we were there. Their daughter, Shamiso, enjoyed having five other doting adults around to play with and spoil her. She is a beautiful little girl. Shadreck and Yami were our driver, cultural interpreters, guides, protectors, and translators for our time there. Navigating the peculiarities of Malawian life would have been impossible were it not for those two wonderful people!

We spent time in the homes of the village of Kanyenyeva, learning about their day-to-day lives and challenges. We fetched water from the spring hole. We pounded and sifted Maize. We prepared a meal in a Malawi 'kitchen.' We shopped for food in an open market. We gave sports equipment to the kids, and played with them. We taught Bible studies and prayed with them. We helped the feeding program feed over 150 young, hungry children. We earned the trust of the people of the village, which greatly helped when we introduced Solar Cooking. We gave away over 200 toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste. We sang with them, and danced with them. We experienced jarring incongruities – like ox carts sharing the road with Mercedes sedans, and cell phone usage

in the remotest of areas. We started the construction of a Meeting Hall. We worshiped with an Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi congregation, and met with the national leadership of that Lutheran World Federation sister church.

We ended our week with a powerful meeting with the Board of Kanyenyeva Orphan Care Ministries. We shared with them about our experiences of the preceding days. We shared with them questions that we had discovered during our time there, and questions that were forwarded from the Global Mission Committee, as well as questions that had arisen during conversations with Church Council members. They graciously answered all of the questions, wanting for us to understand as well as we can what is happening in the ministry of Kanyenyeva. Pastor Tom Mambo of Calvary Chapel church, is the chairman of the Board. He and Shadreck share a vision for the Kanyenyeva Ministry that goes far beyond a feeding program. They hope to develop a vibrant, self-supporting community that is grounded in the Christian faith, and that will be a beacon for the people of the surrounding areas.

Shadreck and Yami were very sad to see us leave. Even though I'm sure that we wore them out, they were very appreciative of our visit. The people of Kanyenyeva now have 5 faces that they can remember when they hear about First English Lutheran Church. They have a connection and a hope. Our making the effort to be with them means to them that they are worth something, that they are important enough for us to come all the way

from America to be with them. This hope and encouragement might be one of the most important gifts that we were able to give to them. It gives them hope for the future, and strengthening in Christian Faith.

Thank you again for your support of this important ministry of our congregation. While we were the public face of FELC in Malawi, the ministry is bigger than the 5 of

us. You are a vital part of this ministry. It was an honor to serve in your name. Thank you for this opportunity, and please pray for God's continued guidance in this ministry with the people of Kanyenyeva.

– 2009 Malawi Mission Team:  
Andy and Joy Jones  
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