

Malawi Journal June 29-July 11, 2015

6.22.15

All arrived at the airport at 9:30 a.m. Len was 5 minutes late, but John makes him look great, as he was later. Check in went very smooth; a prayer supporting the team was given, then off to pass security. Again went very smooth.

Flight had a 20-minute hold in the air at Atlanta, due to weather. Team had a light lunch and devotions by Angie. It was very appreciated, as the topic was “Listen” to what God is saying.

Flight from Atlanta to Johannesburg was filled with movies, games, and some sleep. Upon arrival at Johannesburg, the team ran into its first hic-up at immigration. It was found that Mic was an illegal immigrant, and Len was harboring an illegal. To everyone's, surprise the rules were changed June 1 where all 'children' under the age of 18 need their original birth certificate and a letter signed by both parents giving custody to an adult

The first solution was to send Mic back to USA, but at that point God intervened. Edward, an employee there had a solution to stay with in the security area and become an in-transit person. With Edward's assistance (against policy of immigration) Len was allowed to see John (who was past security), to communicate the lodging for the team in Johannesburg, as well as provided assistance to get to the hotel.

Edward took Mic to Len to a restroom where there was a sofa and 2 large stuffed chairs.

6.30.15

What a day! It's hard to imagine today began with more time on an airplane. But our adventure started before that. Three of us

woke up wondering if the two others on our team were safe IN the airport. Angie, Kathy and John loaded up the team bags and headed back to the airport. After checking all of the bags, we met Len and Mic at our gate.

There was another plane ride, another meal of bread! Upon arriving in Malawi, we moved through customs and found our bags. Copeland, Elvine and other Malawian church members greeted us warmly. We shared a prayer and sung outside and then loaded the bus. Finally we begin our journey.

Our first van ride took us to a village where Lenox dedicated the borehole last year, and Lenox/Ankeny have contributed toward a new church. We were greeted with song and dance. A small program was held to introduce us to the chiefs and the people. We were shown the new church, which was in progress of being built next to the borehole.

It was pure pleasure to listen to the lay leader tell stories of programming happening at the church. We gave out gifts and went on our way. We then traveled to the Bethel Circuit, where the elder Pastor Nkata greeted us. There was a church service and meal.

Tuesday

This was the day we introduced Pastor Angie and Mic to bus riding—

- *The loading and unloading
- *The questionable (and infrequent) rest stops
- *The dodging of potholes
- *The fording of dry creek beds
- *The checkpoints
- *The jiggling of intoned muscles!?!

*And the in-route lunches, passing various food products back, and forth till its contents are gone.

But the hours of driving to dedicate the new borehole was well worth it as we could hear singing and giggling children as we entered the village. You could not have felt more royal as we were treated with welcome handshakes. Greeting in different languages with smiles added to the excitement. A balloon and crepe papered borehole was the focus as it was “unwrapped” given to God and water then gushed....a glorious day.

Prayers, praises and all kinds of congratulatorys were given. As honored guests we were given lunch in the chiefs hut. We paced the land for a new church and more singing and dancing. Not everyone gets this kind of experiences!

Wednesday, July 1

We left Lilongwe for Mzuzu. We past many people, walking, biking, selling and carrying—doing what they need to do to make a living. It is amazing people aren't hit by vehicles as they walk right in the road.

We drove until we got to Kasunger and stopped for a restroom break. The scenery began to change as we began going higher. We saw forest reserves, elephant rock and a monkey! We drove through a town, called Mzimba, where the road is the border between Zambia and Malawi.

When we arrived at Mzuzu, we went to see the tailoring school and we bought shirts to wear on Saturday. Rev Copeland showed us where the old church was and now used for Sunday school. We also saw the new church. He invited me to jump the brick wall to go to his house but I politely declined! Pastor John and Mic showed us how it is done.

Then we went to Roberts, -Lwinga Lodge and met some young women—American students who were doing research on water purity here. It was very interesting to hear them talk about testing the water from the borehole through the time it was used. It's clean at the borehole but can become quickly contaminated. They were eager to hear that we have stayed with this ministry and that there will be some education of the villages about the boreholes. Chifundo talked to us about the problem of trafficking and the corruption that corrodes most positions of power from government officials to police officers.

We had dinner with Robert and the Nkhatas. John and I talked about the need to think about next steps. A village is provided a borehole then what? Church? Education? Roads? Medical facilities? How do we continue to walk alongside these people even after the borehole is completed?

Thursday July 2

We left Mzuzu today after our stomachs were stuffed with wonderful food. All of us were unsure if we'd be able to eat lunch come the time. We went to a nursery school where we were greeted with unforgettable smiles. Children danced and sang, jumped with joy and showed their best attention, as the teacher at the nursery provided a demonstration of what the kids had learned. During the demonstration I was shocked to see what all the kids had learned. It was amazing to see how happy all these children were and to see their smiles. We handed out crosses and hats that were made by the people from our very own church in Ankeny

After leaving the nursery we went off on the road towards Lake Malawi. On the way the bus ride was full of fun, laughter and stories of life experiences. It amazes me how comfortable we have become with one another. We see children, shops, animals, and plants I've never seen. We saw rubber trees, which fascinated

me. As I sat in the front seat for the first time, I began to see more and more. I was overwhelmed with emotions as I realized how fortunate others and I are. People here in Malawi, do such wonderful and amazing things that I find it hard to put into words. They make due and appreciate what they have, they may ask for more, but they are still happy with life.

At Lake Malawi we sat and ordered food. While our food was being prepared, we set off to the beach of Lake Malawi. That was only 100 meters from our restaurant. The lake was full of such beauty and happiness that I could only thank God for this amazing place in which we were to be blessed to visit. After playing soccer, walking and running on the beach for a short time we had an amazing lunch/dessert. On our way back to the hotel we stopped at a local curio shop where we bought tables, letter openers, bowls, animal figures and more. We then arrived at our hotel where we socialized and had yet another amazing meal.

Friday 7.3.15

A great day began with devotions and breakfast by the team. A Malawi adventure was next, as we stopped on the way to the nursery school to pick up the frames for the tailoring school graduates certificates. While the store had the frames, they were at a different location. We were informed that they would be there in 10 minutes. As usual, the 10 minutes turned into 1 hour. The team had Robert, Copeland, Elvine, and a young fellow that works for Copeland off to Buergu, to visit the nursery school that Pastor William Phin oversees. The teachers, children, and 3 chiefs were there waiting. The children showed us their skills in various areas.

Presents were given to the chiefs and teachers. We saw where the bricks for the school expansion were made, and were

ready to be fired. After the farewells, the van had the addition of Pastor William, his wife Cecelia. We were off to Rumph, to visit Autusyi his wife Praise, who took us into their home for lunch. After lunch, we saw the private school that Autusyi has. It is on a ground with a tremendous view over the valley. Upon leaving Rumph, the van now had the addition of Autusyi and a girl who was to stay at Copeland's home. From there the van went straight to Chitimbs to a curio market. Along the way we fed the monkeys bananas as they were along the side of the road. After the curios market, we stopped at a place along the beach for a rest stop and another view of Malawi Lake.

Upon returning to Lluwunga Lodge, we found the electricity off. After gassing up the generator, and later the electricians company lights, we had an enjoyable evening with the journal given by Mic. Another blessed day was had by all. Len

Saturday July 4

Oops

Sunday 7.5

We began our day (as usual) with a breakfast of eggs and potatoes at the Lodge. What was not usual is one of our team members (Len) woke up ill. We were all concerned for his health.

After breakfast we made our way to church for worship. Pastor Copeland's church in Mzuzu is lovely and it is always great to worship with our brother and sisters from Malawi. Pastor Angie led a Bible study on the parable of the sower. After 'just a few choruses' of song, Pastor John gave a sermon on "rich men".

One subtle highlight of the morning was seeing Hastings. He and his wife Alice used to attend Mzuzu UMC but have left the church. So it was good to connect.

Because Jane has been ill, we decided to forgo the cooking exchange and instead cook a meal for the hotel staff and Copeland's family/guest. We made goulash, rice, fruit, PB sandwiches and THE BIG HIT---Kathy's no bake PB and Hot chocolate cookies. Although they were 'too sweet', they were devoured.

After a short break/rest/cleanup, Chifudo took us into Mzuzu for a short tour. We then stopped for pizza at A1. Upon returning to the lodge we packed, repacked and reviewed current project updates. A great end to the day was a group prayer led by Pastor Angie and Jane. MORE PACKING! And rest.

Monday

All aboard, it's traveling day! Everyone is up and at breakfast! Have you noticed that no one has been late? (I mean really late) Kudos.

This final breakfast has set in that goodbyes are going to take place. Gifts are exchanged and the sad farewells take place. Prayers ease the pain but I have been told that sadness can only happen if you know joy. And joy we had here.

We collect two additional riders and Elvine and on we go. It took all of 20 minutes before heads started to bob. We had moments of chatter, passing of food, taking of photos, but Chifundo got us safely to Mjindi. We got a lesson of the psychology of police question by Chifndo (aka McIver) but he really becomes our hero when he found a new hotel, Grace Lodge

Lester, Rose and Edward greeted us at the farm; provided fresh picked bananas from the farm and proposed an agenda for the next two days. Back to the hotel for chicken.

Tuesday, July 7

Today we woke up as usual and had devotions and breakfast. Soon after we all piled up into the van and headed out towards the farm. On the way to the farm we stopped at a market and got 7 kilo of fresh steak and then stopped at several stores until we obtained our small list of groceries. Our drive on the way out was quiet and peaceful and full of friendly talking. When we arrived at the farm, Lester and some others greeted us. We soon set off to see what progress the farm had done. We saw Papua trees, pineapple plants, ground nuts, maize, bees and so much more. We went into some building and soon I and others found that we had to use the restroom.

In the restroom, I found a concrete hole that you set on. I was a little awakened by the awkward hole. After my pleasant experience, we rode the ox cart and saw the borehole. We then walked back where we had a brief meeting and soon after we had lunch.

We then walked around with Rose and listened to her talk about the animals. Around 3 we left the farm and visited two villages where we were greeted with warm smiles, handshakes, and singing and dancing. In one village, we danced with them. And before we left we gave the village two-soccer ball. I've never seen kids as happy and excited, as those kids were when they saw the soccer balls. After visiting the villages we dropped people off and went back to the hotel. We had dinner and had more friendly conversations, till we went to sleep.

Wednesday July 8

This morning at breakfast we discussed the passage from James—faith without works is dead. We discussed the passage in light of what we've seen here and our response to it.

We headed for the farm and picked up Pastor Raphael and his wife and Mrs. Medicia and her small son. When we got to the

farm, we picked up some others and Lester took us to the Sopa CDSS in Mehinji. There are over 700 students at the school though a couple of the classes were on break. We spoke to the youth hoping to share with them reasons to stay in school and offer encouragement. They asked up questions afterward. We got to meet the head master Jonathan Magombo.

After we were finished at the school, we went back to the farm for lunch. It wasn't quite ready so we watched the ladies prepare the food and we talked with the people. We were again served a delicious meal.

After lunch Kathy and Angie talk to Rose Mahony and the rest of the women to present a gift of 20,000 Kwacha for their trip to Lilongwe in August for a women's convention. We also gave the 100,000 kwacha to be used for projects to empower the women to be able to take care of themselves, especially those whose husbands had abandoned the family. They were elated and very appreciative. They promised to work very hard.

Then we went back to the Mikundi church for Bible study. I (Pastor Angie) had the study on the parable of the sower and John did the message for the children. We helped they children make bracelets out of pipe cleaners and pony beads. They got to make one for themselves and one for a friend. The adults got in on the fun as well. We gave the adults mirrors, the chief and pastor gifts. We were each given a clay bowl presented with singing and dancing, and given bowls to take back for Betty Honnick, Pan Heilstkov, Phil Sherman, Bob and Martha Ward and the Whites. I gave clothespins decorated by our children to the presented to the UMW and charged her with sharing them with the rest of the women. Kathy gave out ISU shirts to many.

We went back to Lester's home to leave off the rest of the things we had, so that he and Rose could distribute them to those who needed them. We said a prayer together and our farewells.

We came back to Mehinji for supper—Mic, who isn't feeling well. Tomorrow we'll head for home via Lilongwe.

Thursday 7.9.15

The team woke up at the Grace Lodge in Mjindi to have breakfast, devotion and journal. Len's devotion was on Jeremiah 29:11. Next the suitcases were loaded and off to Lilongwe. Team arrived at Duka 1, knowing ahead of time, there was an issue with the reservations as just 2 rooms were available. Taken to Duka II, which was not acceptable as well as Duka???. During this process, Chifundo checked with Korean Gardens, as well as Bridge View Lodge. The Bridgeview Inn has rooms available and all was well. After getting checked in, we crossed the street to a pizza place for lunch and then continued across another street (no stop lights) to the curio market. (Copland joined us and the curio market) back to the Bridgeview. Dinner was 7:00 at the four seasons. At 5 then 5:30, then 6. Daniel joined us and later Edward and Lester, Moty and final Lindewe and Cbucaonda. Pastor Nkada demonstrated what could happen when you take a hefty taste of hot sauce.

After a great dinner, adjoined to the Bridgeview Lodge for a meeting with the team and Malawi UMC folks. The meeting wrapped up a little after 10:00.

Another great day in Malawi but it is with sorrow that this was our last day in Malawi, as tomorrow we depart.

Friday July 10th and 11th

We are dreaming of our pillows (many were hard), our Internet, our foods we've missed, and our bathrooms. But the feel of hugs from our loved ones is on the top of our list! On the other hand we are saying good bye to old and new found friends, the culture of joyous dancing and vibrant singing and what a contrast of emotions! Sending us off were Elvine, Copeland, Chifundo, and Ines.

Our airlines experience began with a prompt flight from Llongwe. Only and short wait for a female TSA agent detained us. We are also holding our breath as we were promised bags transferred to Des Moines! Could that be true? We will see.

But all went well. We went through customs at Atlanta, transferred the bags to the flight to Des Moines and that are pretty much how the story ends. Well, until we arrived at the Des Moines airport! There they were, the people we have missed these past two weeks. Welcoming us with open arms! It is good to be at home