



Our Malawi Journey

August 6—20, 2009

After traveling almost 20,000 miles round-trip to Malawi Africa and returning home safely with countless blessings, all I can say is “God is good!” “All the time, God is good!” I am amazed at God’s goodness for giving the five of us the opportunity to travel to Kawiya Church in Malawi, to live among our brothers and sisters in Christ and to be on both a giving and receiving end of God’s amazing grace. The partnership between Bethany and Kawiya churches and between Pittsburgh Presbytery and the Synod of Blantyre in Malawi, is based on the scripture verse in Romans 1:12 “...that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.”



Our Malawian family has told us that they were encouraged by our visit, because we sacrificed to make time with them a priority. Our visit honored them with a sense of importance to have Azungu staying with them. The word “Azungu” in Chichewa, the native language of Malawi, translates as “white person”, but more importantly it means “visitor”. Our Malawian friends were encouraged to have visitors from America as an extension of God’s love and grace. Our visit also brought hope to our sister church Kawiya, that the partnership between our two churches and bound in God’s love, continues to grow and flourish.

The five of us were deeply touched and encouraged by the love that our Malawian brothers and sisters in Christ had for us, even before they met us. Their care and hospitality for us was the ultimate example of the Good Samaritan. They gave up their very best for us. We were also encouraged by their child-like faith and true dependence on God. They were an example to us of pure, uninhibited worship, as they sang whole heartedly and danced freely in the isles.

We were mutually encouraged when Bethany and Kawiya worked side by side on the manse, preparing a foundation for one of the concrete floors. We learned that on several occasions, members of the Kawiya congregation worked together on the manse, making bricks or doing whatever needed done. We were encouraged by the faithfulness of Kawiya, when they gave their first fruits during a Paper Sunday to raise money for the continued construction of the manse. They donated bills, not coins. Kawiya was encouraged when we presented a gift of \$2100 from Bethany Mission funds for the manse. This money will go a long way and may even come close to being enough to complete the manse.

We were mutually encouraged when we exchanged youth ministry ideas between Bethany and Kawiya. We greatly enjoyed spending time with the Kawiya youth doing devotion lessons and teaching them songs and Ultimate Frisbee. We learned as much from them as we shared with them. We also saw areas of need in which we can partner together with Kawiya to help raise money to send their youth to weekend retreats.

We were encouraged to learn of the elderly at Kawiya and how they take care of each other and the orphans of the church whom have lost their parents. How great it is to know that the elderly and orphans have each other. The elderly were greatly encouraged, when we extended a little bit of love and hope, in the name of Jesus, to them. The joy and laughter of the orphans has left a smile on our faces as they were always the first to welcome us back to the church from our daily travels and they would always run after us every time we departed the church, saying good-bye. Although the elderly have a few small projects to bring essential income to sustain the life of this wonderful group, we also saw a need for a dairy cow that could provide protein rich milk to the orphans and elderly and sold to help them be self sustaining.



The life of our brothers and sisters of Christ, at Kawiya Church in Malawi, is difficult to say the least. They toil for little pay, sometimes just enough to survive, sometimes less. They face great uncertainty with drought, economy, disease and political unrest. But amidst the difficulty of their physical life, their spiritual life is unwavering. They know that God is all they need and they offer praise to Him, regardless of whatever present situation they are in, good or bad. Their life is a simple life, but also a rewarding and purpose-filled life of togetherness as opposed to a lonely self-fulfilling life that we sometime face here. I pray that God will use Bethany to help Kawiya with their physical struggles and that He will use Kawiya to help us with our spiritual struggles, so that we can be mutually encouraged in life and in faith. Thank you for supporting the five of us and our families and entrusting us to represent Bethany on this amazing, life changing partnership and thank you for all your prayers or as they say in Malawi – Zikomo!

Carl Suppo, Kawiya Partnership Trip Leader

Pictured below left to right:

Dee Kantorzyk, Judy Gardner,
Jack Crawford, Bonnie Eichler,
Carl Suppo



My trip to Malawi was truly awesome. Each team member added a different perspective to what we saw and did. Seeing the many projects that the Pittsburgh Presbytery has successfully funded over the years gave me great satisfaction. The mission monies collected by Presbytery were visible everywhere we went. Numerous communities have churches, clinics, well organized children's programs and schools supported by Pittsburgh Presbyterians. The partnership between Bethany and Kawiya is still in its infant stages, yet the potential for good things to happen between the two churches is unlimited. As this partnership continues to grow, God's blessings will overflow in both churches. The people are painfully poor yet their love of God and Jesus is genuine, sustains them and gives them hope for a better tomorrow.

Judy Gardner

I want to thank you for praying for our Malawi teams safe trip and return.

Delores Kantorzyk

Malawi Africa

I was not a guest with my host families - I was a member of the family - immediately I knew that - I belonged - the love was there! My two host families houses were made of brick with cement floors. Meals were cooked on wood fires usually outside - everything prepared on the floor - we did eat at a table. Something as simple as a yo-yo enthralled the entire family.

Bathroom facilities were nothing like anything I had ever experienced - my legs are a lot stronger than when I went! The people are excited to have you and share the love of Jesus Christ. Their faith is evident every day of the week not just on Sundays. They truly walk the walk! They sing and dance all over the place - it is amazing. The items women can carry on their heads is unbelievable - I saw a women with a sack of cement on her head and piled on top of that were bricks. There are red bricks in most people's yards as they make their own brick, build fires and dry them to enable their construction to continue. Anywhere you travel there are people walking on both sides of the road or they are on bicycles. It shocks me how much a person can put on a bicycle and maneuver it. I saw wood piled 5 feet high, I saw red bricks, I saw goats - you name it I saw it on a bicycle - it is incredible. The people are sucking on sugar cane and both sides of the roads are lined with the bark. Lots of people, bicycles, motorcycles and a few vehicles going 65 miles per hour. Sometimes I hid my face! I had a hard time watching! Anyone we waved at - young or old - excitedly waved back with a huge smile. Everywhere you go you can see Pittsburgh, Bethany and the Presbyterian Partnership at work - our money is visible everywhere you look! What an awesome feeling that is to know that you truly are making a difference and it shows. Our Bible School children in July made t-shirts with crosses on them for us to take with us to distribute to the children in Malawi. It took my breathe away the excitement it generated.

Thank you for praying for all of us and our sister church in Kawiya and for all the financial support that you give them. Keep on praying for them - they need all you can give.

Jack Crawford



Dear Carl, Jack, Judy, Bonnie & Dee,

How are you doing yours over there? It has been difficult to adjust ourselves following your departure. I guess you had a nice but long journey back to USA- Pittsburgh and we pray that GOD the almighty should keep you safe up to the time we shall see each other again. Probably when Kawiya organizes a trip to visit Bethany in the near future, it was wonderful to have you guys all the way from the US just to visit us here in Malawi – Kawiya, we feel privileged for that. This proved to be a blessing and that really GOD created man in HIS own image despite the different languages we speak as well as the colour of our skins. My thanks should go to Bethany congregation for making us able share different experiences that are separated by distance as well as sharing our spiritual brotherhood together. It was nice to sing and praise the Lord at Kawiya when we were together. Very exciting to see Jack and Carl preaching from Kawiya's pulpit, Judy reading the scriptures also Dee and Bonnie interacting with Sunday school children. I suppose you are now busy adjusting yourselves from the changes that you had from here at the same time being excited to be welcomed by your families. I thank you for sparing your time to visit us here in Africa, we don't take that for granted. I know that in the process a lot of things have been wasted, but this was due to the deep love you had for us at Kawiya. Once again let me thank you for the gifts you brought because finally the name of our LORD will be glorified. Let him add wherever all those numerous gifts were from. Thanks Carl, Jack, Judy Bonnie and Dee, May the almighty GOD be with you together with your families. Wishing you all the best, make sure that Dee receives this message.

Take Care!! Patrick Njiwa

