



We can only describe our ministry in Malawi as exceeding all expectations.

✘ After leaving on September 17 we had a 16 hour, non-stop (thank God) flight from Washington D.C. to Johannesburg, South Africa where we spent a night. The next day we took another 3 hour flight to Blantyre, Malawi where we were met by dozens, maybe even upwards of 100 people (many pastors) at the airport. They sang us all the way out to our vehicles while they carried our luggage. Gary and Marilyn Van Vleck accompanied us and they remarked, "This singing was a part of our lives from the greeting of 100+ people at the airport, to the greeting at the Nkhwazi village church on Sunday, to the singing greeting we received at the conference each day. They are a happy, spiritually hungry people."

Bishop Dimba and his son Enock have been, amazingly enough, used of the Lord to plant 541 churches in Malawi and Mozambique. The churches average 100 or so in attendance. Some have 500 and more. The pastors have virtually no training. The Bishop (who never finished high school) and his family have been praying for 11 years that someone would come and teach, equip and encourage the pastors. We were the answer to their prayers. They pray with such fervency. The bishop had to scold them a bit on the second day of the five day conference because some of them had stayed up all night praying on Monday night. He wanted them to be able to be fresh and alert to hear the Word each day. He is a very humble man and has great respect among the pastors and their wives. The conference took place at Maoni orphanage which houses 241 children whose parents have all died, many of AIDS. There were 700 plus pastors and wives in attendance. They had no electricity at the site. They slept on straw mats on uneven dirt floors, 50 or more in a room. The first session was at 9 in the morning and the last session ended at 4 each afternoon. They slaughtered dozens of chickens, 10 goats and one steer, on site, to feed the crowd 3 meals per day.

We kept Jesus central in our teaching. We also spent much time on building strong marriages before ministries. Pastors tend to see their wives as second class citizens all over Africa. It is estimated that as many as 300 of the pastors do not even have Bibles and if they do have one, they are the only ones in the church who do so. We wonder what they are teaching when they come together. I think that they spend most of their time together praying with desperation and fervency. They put us to shame when it comes to praying. We would like to provide Bibles in their Chichewa language. If you would like to help us with that project, send a check to the address below and mark it "Bibles-Malawi." Complete Bibles can





be purchased for about \$10. Our ministry provided enough funds to feed the 241 orphans for the next 2 months and also to provide 3 large bales of clothes purchased in the market place there. We have pictures of the children with grateful hearts receiving the clothes. We were amazed at the simplicity of the culture, with no TV, internet, I-pods, phones etc. Their exposure to the outside world is minimal. For example, pornography which is a huge problem here is almost none existent there. Many of the pastors did not know what an airplane was so “airplane illustrations” really didn’t “fly.” I found this out on the last day as I spoke about airplanes and then later the first plane we heard in this remote area flew overhead. Many of the people, standing outside, looked up at it with a certain curiosity. They have only seen them streaking across the skies. No point in “horsing around” with horse illustrations, because most of them have never seen a horse.

When the conference was over they loaded up in flat-bed trucks, provided by Shepherds’ Support, and rode for many hours, 5 hours to the nearest border in Mozambique. The young mothers had babies strapped on their backs and were sitting on the metal beds of the trucks, about to be bounced and jostled around by the numerous potholes on the substandard roads. Many of them would still have to walk long distances to their homes once they reached their destinations by truck. They were singing from the moment they climbed into the trucks until they pulled away. For most of them this was the first time that they were ever in a conference like this and they would love to do it again.

✘ We provided 20 copies of my book *Going the Distance* along with 30 little thin-line New Testaments for those who could read English. We wish that we could have taken more, but were hindered by weight restrictions on international flights.

I will conclude with some personal testimonies sent by Pastor Enock. I have improved some of the grammar for readability.

“Dear Pastor Steve, thank you very much for coming to us. Your coming and the teaching was an eye opener as most of the people have seen themselves spiritually. Yes the Lord is using you and the ministry of Shepherd support and most of the pastors that came at this conference will never be the same again. Praise the Lord for the good fruits that this conference has borne through you and the team.”



“I am Pastor Eliyasi Snell from Mulanje district. Although I was a pastor I was not a born again Christian. I was just pretending, because I was smoking tobacco, but after hearing the teaching that you taught us I was in the group that prayed a confession prayer and I received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior that day and I have stopped smoking since that day I prayed and I thank God for sending you here and it is my prayer that the Lord may enable you to come again. Thank you very much.”

“I am Pastor William Mtembo. I am very thankful for the teaching you taught us. Although I am a leader of 6 Churches I didn't know my Bible well so you opened my eyes as you said the number of chapters and verses in the Bible and since I heard that I am now reading my Bible with understanding. May the lord bless you very much and I want you to be coming now and then to us so that we can be mature in our leadership.”

“I am Pastor J Y Nkopeka from Mozambique Zambezia province and I am looking after 87 Churches, I was so touched when you said that to be a good leader you must love and respect your wife and your ministry will bear fruits and I want to tell you that I will do the same and the same Lord who enable you to come this trip I want him to give time to come again and continue where you have left, may God bless you so much.”

“I am Pastor Annie Mayaka from Zomba Malawi, thank you so much for the teaching you have taught us and what you was doing is sharpening us and now we are geared to the work of the Lord and I have kept each and every word you told us.”

“I am Pastor Damiyano Amosi from Chikwawa, Masenjere Malawi. I was drinking beer, abuser, greedy and I didn't have a mercy heart in me but after but during the conference mainly the topic of the work of fresh and the gifts of the holy spirit after healing that teaching I conference and know I have Jesus in me and I thank God for sending you to us. may God continue using you.”

✘ “I am Pastor Chilanzi from Mozambique, Mulumbala. Now I have understand that a good leader must have one wife as the Bible told us so and I under stand well when you said (and the two will be one not three), about drinking beer surely I have changed and I thank God for you may the Lord be with you all the time.”



“I am Pastor Mulambala from Malawi, Malosa in Zomba district. Your teaching has brought a change in my life as I was marrying and divorcing and now the wife I have now I will not leave her until death shall separate us, need your prayers each and every day so that I may be in Jesus every day and tell each love he has showed me at the Conference to others, may the Lord Jesus be with you. I want to assure you that what you have planted in us will grow and it will bear witness. Your teaching was powerful and led by the holy spirit as you can see the impact that it has brought.”

“Thank you very much for helping us at Maoni Orphanage and I want you to keep praying for us and the work of the Lord we are doing here.” Pastor Enock

The medical and dental needs of the pastors and wives are overwhelming. We would love to go back in another year or two and take a team with us that could help these dear, joyful, grateful saints. Pray with us about that possibility.

Again, we thank God for you and for all the support that you give in so many ways.

Pastor Steve and Connie