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Lucia attended the Summer Family Project with her husband, and two children. First time Maranatha volunteers – they were excited but a little nervous. Construction, painting, medical clinics and service projects with the local community brought out the best in their family. They can’t wait to get back to work next summer.
IT TAKES FAITH

BY CARRIE PURKEYPILE

What makes for an amazing family vacation? Lucia Michel thinks it has a lot to do with working alongside each other, with a similar goal. Lucia and her husband Alan took their two children, Rebeca, 13, and Erick, 11 on their first mission adventure this summer. “We didn’t know what to expect,” says Lucia, “but our kids enjoyed it so much, we are signing up for next year!”

As the Michel family shared their plans, excitement grew. Lucia’s boss decided to come too, and she brought her grandson and nephew along. Other families from different states also joined up with the group to form the Summer Family Project, in Choluteca, Honduras.

Young Rebeca learned a hands-on lesson about sharing. Seeing the need, she started to give away some of her own things. She was also impressed to see a 12-year old girl leading out in children’s Sabbath classes. Young people stepping up to serve a need – what better example could she have received?

Family projects are an increasingly popular option as Maranatha volunteers involve family members of all ages in a project of service together.

Ernie Medina is an enthusiastic volunteer who attended his first Maranatha project as a college student, more than two decades ago. He and his family just finished their second project as a family, and they can’t say enough good things about the experience. But Ernie recognizes the challenges.

“I believe it takes quite a bit more faith for a family to go. But I still tell them, ‘If God wants you to go, then financial challenges are nothing for Him!’ Especially when you see the impact it has on our kids who go. It’s definitely worth it!”

Once they’ve experienced a project, kids are usually willing to make some sacrifices too. Many families return year after year. “My kids are dreaming about going next year!” says Lucia.

Families have two opportunities for service in the next few months. Join the Christmas Family Project in Nicaragua, December 21-January 2, or plan for the Summer Family Project in June of 2012. Check the project calendar at Maranatha.org for updated information or to request an application.
WALLS AROUND MALAWI

BY DICK DUERKSEN

In the short time Maranatha crews have been in Malawi, 605 One-Day Churches have been completed, while 200 are still in transit or on a truck heading into the bush. It has taken less time than we had expected, but longer than the anxious congregations had hoped.

“This is the hardest job I have ever had,” said Richard Massi, one of Maranatha’s Malawian team members and driver of the truck named Seth. “Every Sunday morning each of our four teams load the steel for four One-Day Churches onto our trucks and then head out for a week of adventure.”

Every minute in Malawi is an adventure, especially if you’re traveling on one of the stony trails that lead through the mountains to Seventh-day Adventist congregations who are praying for a church.

“We made 10,000 bricks down by the river,” one church elder told us. “Then we fired them in a large brick kiln, and waited for the sound of the Maranatha trucks. The bricks are ready and our people are ready.”

The 25 original members of the Njereza congregation, in the hot Shire valley, have completed the walls to their One-Day Church, added some wooden benches, and grown the church to 35.

In the mountains west of Blantyre, we visited a congregation who has just received their new steel structure.

“First we were under a tree,” Elijah told us, “then we built a small brick building with stone pews. But the rains made it so no one would come to church. So we praised God when we heard Maranatha was bringing us a steel roof.”

This congregation needed more than just the One-Day Church steel. They needed land, a space large enough for the church, a place for the children, and for a brick bathroom. The hillside plot beside their brick-and-thatch church was available, but the owner wanted 165,000 Kwachas.
“That’s $1,000 US dollars,” Elijah exclaimed. “Far more than our small group of families could raise. But then we had an idea.”

The church leaders agreed on a creative fund-raising idea and sent a couple of the women to market to buy 12 chickens. Those chickens were divided among the 12 church families and all of the chicken profits were given to the church to help pay for the land. Add up the eggs, chickens, some extra maize, and lots of member sacrifice, and 6 months later the Namatunu congregation purchased the land and began making bricks for the walls of their new steel church.

Elijah stood on the hillside road and pointed to the One-Day Church on the prime land beside the village. “Together with God, all things ARE possible!”

The hills south of Blantyre, toward the Seventh-day Adventist hospital and education center of Malamulo, are covered with the green of tea plantations. A plaque marks each of the fields, indicating when the tea plants were planted on this hill. Though some of the plaques are dated 1964, 1963, and 1958, most of the fields were planted closer to the turn of the century in 1903, 1908, and 1912.

Many plantation employees are members of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Their mud and thatch homes, nestled in clusters beside rugged red trails, stand near the trees where they first learned about Jesus from graduates of the training school at Malamulo. For scores of those communities, a brand new One-Day Church gleams beside the old tree, a beacon of hope above the emerald tea.

Many of those congregations have already outgrown their new building, and have expanded the building with foyers, additional worship space, and even new rooms. Bounce down the road into one of these villages, especially in a pick-up that says “Maranatha” on the door, and everyone runs toward the church to greet you. As we came close to one of those communities we discovered that our directions were a bit cloudy so we asked Richard, our driver, to ask directions. He stopped and looked around the dusty building for a wise woman. “There she is,” he said. “She will be an Adventist.”

Richard was right. “You can tell by the look in their eyes,” he says. “They look kind, trustworthy, like Jesus.”

Marta (who turned out to be the Dorcas leader) guided us to the church and even helped lead an impromptu choir number for us in the beautifully bricked church. It was, by far, the nicest building in the community.

It’s that way everywhere you visit in Malawi. One-Day Church steel buildings have been adopted, bricked, plastered, painted, and loved by their congregations. Often the windows have been designed to have a “cathedral” look. Always the ground around the church is swept and clean of all debris.

Late one Sabbath afternoon we filled a minibus with Maranatha volunteers who were building the new school at Manja, and drove toward the sunset to visit two congregations located in small farming communities.

At Chiumbe the dust cloud following the bus brought a team of young soccer stars from their game onto the road. When we arrived at the church, we joined a group of members gathered for sundown worship. Some had arrived on their bicycles but most had walked to the local House of Light.

Traveling even farther down the road, we arrived at Namasechi just as the sun was dipping behind the giant baobab trees. There we met two members called by God to complete the walls of their new church.

“This is our church home,” they told us, “and we want it to show the world what a great God we serve. That’s why we are giving it a good wall.”

Every day a new church appears, steeple poking up in the air, and in Malawi that is a call to action. Eager brickmakers can hardly wait to start stacking the walls for a real church - that stands up to the heat and the rain. Malawi is the picture of One-Day Church success.
Some people say that money makes the world go ’round. You may argue yes or no, but the lack of money was bringing things to a screeching halt for many families in and around Blantyre, Malawi.

The Manja Adventist Church, in a suburb of Blantyre, has more than 700 active members. Many of those excited Christians are young people. The church has operated a school in the neighboring town of Soche for many years. But recently the small brick establishment had many more students than it could handle. Classrooms overflowed as the elementary attendance grew, and all four high school grades met in a single room. The teachers kept giving classes, but the government recently stepped in and asked them to look for a new solution.

They needed something fast, and of good quality. It was the perfect situation to launch the One-Day School in Malawi. A group of volunteers arrived to a blank canvas of 12 cement slabs at the site for the new high school. Within days they had completed the assembly of nine classrooms, a bathroom, a library, and school offices.

“This place was a bush place and when we were first told that Maranatha was to put up their structure here, we thought maybe it would take years and maybe it would take two years or even maybe one year because we know to come up with a school is not an easy thing,” says Manja church elder Ernest Kaonga. “But what we’ve seen is that Maranatha, they have done it in weeks and now we’re having a whole school.”

Spreading to two campuses will allow both the elementary and high schools to grow, starting this January when classes begin.

Wyson Eliya, director of education for the South Malawi Field recognizes the opportunity. “Now we are ready. We can accommodate many students because we had no space at the previous place. Now after looking at this structure I think now is our opportunity to enroll many students. As much as we can.”

The One-Day School can transform a community with immediate results.
Since the One-Day Church program began, Maranatha and partner organizations have constructed 2,372 churches in more than 20 countries.

**Botswana**
Maranatha is nearing completion of 74 One-Day Churches. Each local congregation will complete the floors and walls.

**Brazil**
Seventy-four churches are being constructed in Northeast Brazil, where Maranatha is assisting the Adventist Church in reaching all cities that do not have a Seventh-day Adventist presence.

**India**
Maranatha continues to build churches in India, where the Adventist Church has requested 1,000 new churches for each of the next five years.

**Nicaragua**
Maranatha is scouting locations for One-Day Churches in Nicaragua. Volunteer involvement will begin with the Christmas Family Project in December, 2011.

**Malawi**
More than 600 One-Day Churches have been constructed in Malawi. The members have completed many of those with brick walls. Approximately 200 churches remain to be built.

**Zimbabwe**
Since One-Day Churches were built in early 2011, church attendance has significantly improved in the Victoria Falls region. There has been an increase in number of baptisms and leaders have seen an increase in tithes and offerings.