



# Let the Little Ones Come To Me

*Gail Timmins, a long time friend of Come Alive Ministries, experienced extraordinary adventures in her first trip to Africa.*

In Christ?

The new creation  
has come: The old  
has gone: you have

Come  
Alive!

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Little preschoolers, talking and playing with play dough for the first time—but not in the usual American setting. These precious ones attend the Eternity Kindergarten in Karen, Kenya. Kindergarten is the word used for preschool in Kenya, and this class is composed of two and three year olds. Gail Timmins of Muncy Valley, PA, discovered some amazing things during this mission trip, her first to Africa.

Gail's heart yearns to help little ones experience art as they learn academics. Being a gifted and professional artist herself, [Gail is a Rostered Artist with the PA Council of Arts and Education, with several years of practice in Early Childhood Education] she works in several venues in Sullivan County bringing the joy of personal artistic expression in the academic setting. Her practical classroom demonstrations encourage preschool teachers on how to do this. But deep, down in her heart longs the desire for the artist in all to be expressed, through experiencing the love of God and the servant's heart of Jesus.

But in Africa? Having said for years she would never go to Africa, the Lord literally propelled her into it. A friend

said to her over a year ago, "Gail, you're going to Africa with me," to which Gail said a resounding "NO." However, in her heart she heard the Holy Spirit say "Don't be so quick to say 'no.'" The strange wording got her attention, and she began to ponder her reply. As she continued to pray she realized it was the Holy Spirit, and she said "yes."

The only thing in the way was finances. Continued prayer revealed God's plan, as the idea "sell silks" came to her. Her hand painted and uniquely designed silk scarves and other objects sold as never before. With this profit and donations from friends, she arrived in Karen, Kenya in early December to work with Eternity PreSchool.

The school is part of the ministry of Eternity Church, pastored by Charles and Miriam Kaloki. And here's the connection with Come Alive—Mary and Hank were graciously hosted by them and spoke at their pastor's conference on their very first trip to Africa! Again, Pastor Charles and Miriam demonstrated great love and hospitality as they hosted Gail in their home and fully supported and encouraged this project.

## Let the Little Ones (cont)

The preschool grew from an outreach for women, teaching them sewing skills to help provide for their families. The women came and brought their young children. Pastor Miriam saw opportunity! Instead of trying to watch them run around the campus, she saw a preschool. Now the school is staffed with two teachers, both qualified with Kenyan certification and academic degrees.

Into this wonderful setting Gail worked side by side with the teachers, bringing supplies, plans, and art skills. Of course in any mission trip there are surprises, and one was finding out the children she would work with were 2-3 years old, not 3-4 years as she had expected! After several days her admiration for the professionalism of the staff and the academic excellence increased even more. Children focused, followed instructions, and cooperated with each other and teachers. The staff even give them exams! And they passed!

During the weeks at the school, Gail saw other special qualities demonstrated. Although the children come from poor families, their lives are characterized by a non-violent society and much love in their homes. She noticed in the culture generally, people treated children with great respect, never using harsh words. The children were also kind to one another. [About half the parents also attend Eternity Church.]

How does an American teacher connect with young children, who speak Swahili but are also learning English? Bring some play dough! Gail had purchased the dough, and brought the typical spoons, cups, and other play things used with it. But she couldn't find cookie cutters anywhere; kids always want to copy what they see mommy doing in the kitchen, and often love to cut out cookies.

These children, however, had no need for them. They quickly adapted the tools they had to their own culture and began making "chipatis," what they see their moms making every day. On the plates were soon beans and rice. "This was a learning experience for me," Gail reports. "I was still bringing in my American culture without realizing it; but the children themselves had no trouble making it relevant to themselves without me! And of course, some of them did try to eat it, just like kids at home!"

"Working with the excellent Kenyan staff was a pleasure," Gail reports, "as the presence of the Lord filled the school." Being able to expand their talents and equip them to allow freer expression through the arts was an honor for Gail. But for Gail, learning that her brothers and sisters in Kenya have so much to contribute to her spiritual life brought richness and joy beyond her expectation. And that it was in the country of her heritage made it a special, personal reward.

Gail Timmins and her husband Wyatt, pastor St Peter's Church of Forksville, PA. They have been friends of Come Alive for nearly 20 years. You can contact them at: 570.482.2896 and [revwltimmins@prayerhouses.com](mailto:revwltimmins@prayerhouses.com) or [gailhjones@frontier.com](mailto:gailhjones@frontier.com)

## More Good News

Another Come Alive partner, evangelist Gary Hale, also recently returned from Africa. His report is on its way.

We are happy to report breakthroughs in ministry in our local area. The Holy Spirit is enabling contact with people from a number of

churches, our neighbors and the people we meet in daily life. We have begun a series of meetings this Lenten season entitled "Whispers of the Passion" which uses material written by a guest artist from Concordia University here in Austin. Hank is having a fantastic time reaching people at Apple with the

gospel. We are finding hungry hearts everywhere in need of restoration and healing. And JESUS is healing them!

God bless you, and thank you for your faithful support.

Hank and Mary