



## Can You Come Help Us? by Eric Gephart

We felt what Moses must have felt when he crossed the Red Sea on dry land. We drove two trucks on the dry lake bed of Lake Chilwa on our way to the Island of Chisi.

There are two ways to approach the devastating needs in the developing world. We call them **relief** and **development**. For centuries, missions have operated under the principle of offering relief . . . food for the hungry. The problem with this is that when the food is gone the problem is still there. However, if we help a community to develop, then the situation can change. While providing food is very beneficial for today, it does not solve the problem for tomorrow. Soon the family will be hungry again.

It is like the parable, "Give a man a fish, and he will have food for a day, teach him to fish, and he will have food for a lifetime."

**Development** looks for a solution to the problem by asking, "Why does the family not have food? Do they simply lack the money to buy food?" Then the issue is how are they using their funds, budgeting, etc? *Is the issue a lack understanding in how to grow food?* In this case, development seeks to offer skills to teach the family how to properly grow the food they need. *Is the problem a lack of a job to provide an income?* Development seeks to offer vocational training so that the family can provide the income needed. Additionally, development seeks to offer the family a way of learning about money and saving it in a way that provides enough cash for their daily needs.

Namikango Mission's philosophy is to develop individuals, families, churches, and communities, empowering them to help themselves and discover their own solutions without dependency on foreign aid and foreign money. This is evident in our Village Savings & Loans (VSL) and Christian Health Evangelism (CHE) programs. The VSL does not offer outside money or even loans, but helps the groups discover the money they need amongst themselves. And our CHE program helps to develop healthy Christ-centered communities. Results are evident in the farming initiatives we undertake around the country, teaching good agricultural practices that produce healthier harvests.

Good results are also seen in our education initiatives where we seek to strengthen church leaders so they can handle the events

and problems that arise in their own congregations. Development works well and in the long run offers communities a new way to become strong enough to solve their own problems without us. The joke among our staff is that we are developing workers and trying to work ourselves out of a job.

After raising the banner of trying to help people become self-sufficient there inevitably comes an exception, a time when an empty stomach does not want a lesson in fishing, they want food. There are times when relief aid cannot simply be cast aside as an antiquated approach, but is urgently needed in some situations.

For Malawi, a country that is frequently rocked by famine and drought, food can become so scarce that even hard-working communities with good farming practices still suffer. A parasitical worm has invaded parts of the country, decimating healthy fields and leaving large areas of the country exposed to poor harvests.

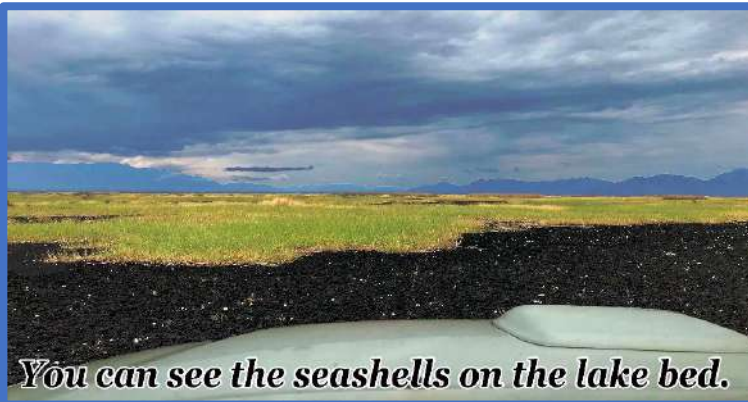
In these cases, **relief must step up**. People are starving now and classes on how to protect against the army worm would be pointless. Hungry bellies need food, not a sermon.

We recently received news of a small village on the Island of Chisi in Lake Chilwa, about 20 miles east of Zomba. This village has no food, with no prospects for a harvest in the next few months. Several women and children have already died and the situation is only worsening.

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**A Prayer of Blessings came with the Food**



**You can see the seashells on the lake bed.**



**Prepared for rising water**

## Can You Come Help Us? Con'td

Several churches have helped these congregations, but now they too are entering a period of less food as they wait for the rains to begin another planting season. Namikango was asked if we could help alleviate the hunger on Chisi.

The staff at Namikango immediately went into action, taking up a collection of food and money for the church on Chisi Island. Likewise, the local church, Thondwe Church of Christ, also contributed food to the cause. Finally, the Mission agreed to send two trucks full of maize, nearly 5,180 pounds, for immediate relief.

On 19 November the two truckloads were taken out to the island and distributed among the villagers there. Each family was given 55 pounds of maize and some salt. The villagers were incredibly grateful, singing songs and shaking our hands as we distributed the food. While happy that we were able to help, we left the island aware that the food will not go far for most families and that the hunger issues will continue for several more months on Chisi Island. We will need to provide more food and help to resolve the blight there in days ahead.

## God's Tool Chest by Faith Somanje

God has given us some amazing tools to use in spreading His Word among His people.

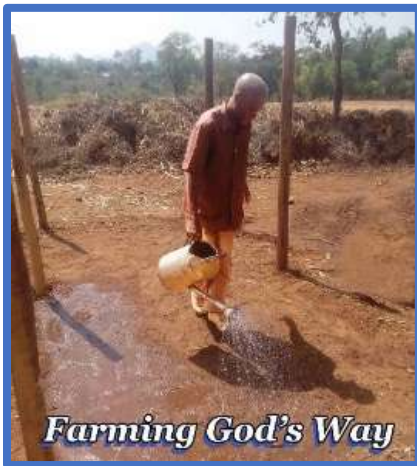
Would you believe that a training program called "Farming God's Way" does just that? This way of farming truly brings people close to God. The program not only teaches people better ways of growing crops, it also draws a close bond between the physical and spiritual needs of their lives. "Farming God's Way" is taught by the Namikango CHE ministry and sets the tone early by focusing on God's teachings; on knowing God, reflecting on His way of doing things, understanding God's completeness in everything we do, reaping what we sow, tithing, charity, and Believing what God has said . . . very simply, "Farming God's way".

We recently had a training session on Namikango campus for 90 area farmers, including representatives from six different area churches.

The zeal and enthusiasm shown by our teachers is contagious. Everyone gets excited as they see how God blesses all areas of our lives.

Those participating in the studies were given a starter pack with maize seed and a measuring tool to use. Each lead farmer in a group has to set aside a one-hectare (~2½ acres) piece of their farming land in order to test the farming practices being taught. According to John 10:10, "I am come that they may have life and have it to the full." We believe that the abundance of the harvest will lead to an abundant godly life in these farmers and in their communities.

This excitement is long-lasting because when we later visit their villages, we see the results and they are outstanding. We see good fruit - both physical and spiritual - in their farms, their homes, and in the churches.



## Camp Meetings Come to an End

As the rainy season comes upon us the Camp Meetings must come to an end for the year.

We headed out to our last scheduled meeting . . . and it looked like rain. Dark clouds arose in the distance. We were concerned that we could not complete the meeting. We saw the dark rain clouds begin their downpour in some areas. But thankfully, they held off on us and we did get to finish our Camp Meeting.

We considered this year a success in spite of difficulties; many villages dealt with drought and poor crops. Of the 19 places we had scheduled to host a Camp Meeting, we were able to complete 18. We only had to cancel one due to extreme hunger. The zeal of the people everywhere we met was overwhelming despite the food shortages.

The theme for the year was "Loving God by loving our neighbor." It was centered on Luke 15 and was well received. The attendance at the Camp Meetings was good, with one camp meeting, in the Phalombe

District, reaching over six hundred people attending for the weekend. We had set several goals for the Camp Meetings this year. One was to go to hard-to-reach-areas, where few had visited and where people were hungry to hear the word of God.

Another goal was to visit widows and the elderly people, who were connected to Namikango, whose spouses had passed away in recent years. This has been an important ministry to let the families of respected leaders know they were not forgotten. We really enjoyed getting to visit these people and to encourage the churches to continue to uphold them.

We have already received numerous requests for Meetings in 2019. We would like to continue our effort to go to new places. We pray that the Lord will bless the seed we have planted and that it will continue to grow and bear fruit in abundance.



Symon John Katete



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### We drove to the Island on Dry Land



## Barriers are Coming Down by Ben Hayes

*"That they may be one." These words were spoken by Jesus Christ the night before He died. Five times He prayed for unity for His followers. That they may be one. (John 17:11)*

We've longed for unity among the churches in Central and Southern Malawi and thankfully have seen this come to pass. Ryan, Eric, and I, along with key Namikango leaders Symon, Chitani, Sam, and Stanley, made the 4-hour trip to Lilongwe for this meeting. Over 100 leaders gathered from approximately 13 different congregations in the area for the one-day event. The focus of the day was servant leadership as depicted by Jesus, specifically with the image of the Good Shepherd. Eric taught that a good leader serves much like a good shepherd cares for his flock.

Ryan's message from 2 Cor. 5 was a message of reconciliation and forgiveness. This is what God has given us and is what we are commissioned to do with others.

We finished the day knowing that God was with us in a very powerful way. We had many compliments for the event with people asking us to come back again, and have it hosted in their areas next time. While we are blessed by these encouragements, we are aware that God is doing something bigger than our holding a seminar. Even in the months leading

up to this day, and before that, we've seen God moving in His own ways to bring churches throughout Malawi towards the unity that Jesus prayed for. We've seen many [barriers coming down](#) in this last year in places and ways that had nothing to do with Namikango.

We praise God that He is alive and working mightily in our area. We know He will continue to move and work, and we are grateful to be a small part of the larger work that He is doing.

## Call to Prayer Sunday, January 27, 2019

The year 2019 represents an important milestone for the Namikango work in Malawi as we embark on a major fund-raising effort to address multiple needs created by the tremendous growth of this good work.

We humbly request to all of our supporters that the fourth Sunday, **January 27, 2019**, be designated as a special **Day of Prayer for Namikango**.

Specifically, we ask for prayers for the Mission team and the Board of Directors as they oversee the work, for the capital campaign to raise much needed funds in 2019, and most importantly that all these efforts result in the glory of God and the salvation of many.

**Dave Langford**

On behalf of the Board of Directors



Leaders meet in Lilongwe



*We've had an overwhelming response to the news of our son's passing.  
Thank you for your outpouring of love and condolences.*

*The Vaughn Family*

In loving memory of  
**Terry Vaughn**  
a good friend and godly man.  
He will be missed.

Wade & Christi Aplin  
John Attebury Family  
Bruce Conger Family  
Colin & Kathy Curry  
Gladys Ellis  
Henry & Peggy Galvan  
Brett & Jane Harrison

Robin Hughes  
Curtis & Juliette Kessler  
Jaak & Karla Kindberg  
Tony & Lugene Lovell  
New Beginnings Church  
Tom & Janis Parish  
South Belt Church of Christ

Paul & Sheryl Stokes  
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*Be sure to watch the amazing Mission video!*  
**<https://vimeo.com/174889961>**