

## Village Bible Schools – Looking Ahead

We have many Village Study Centers and we want to keep them up-to-date and accountable. It is important that the leaders in each study center share in the responsibility of maintaining their school. Our agreement is that the Mission will support them for three months and the study center will support itself the next three months. If this is not met, that center may be asked to sit out for a year and plan for the following year.

Then for study centers that do well, we want to consider providing incentives in several ways:

In special training for their teachers plus assistance with their crops, seeds, and establishing a community bank account to assist in farming needs. The farmers would sell a portion of their harvest and invest that money in a community bank account for use the following year. We saw this idea working well on our trip to South Africa and think it's a great possibility for creating revenue to help the school committees maintain the school, as well as providing a demonstration to the community of good farming techniques.

### Schedule

This year is the last year for lessons to be taught in Chichewa on campus. By the year 2018 we hope to have the English school operating on campus. The following year (2019) we want to start the Village Study Center schools on a new two-year curriculum. Several thoughts on this: The English program will be 3 years for a diploma, so it makes sense that a certificate level course should be shorter. Also, the timing seems to be good to make this change, as we also want to be more selective about which teachers will teach and how they teach. We are planning to announce this at the Teacher Refresher Course, telling teachers to get ready for special training next year, and thereafter there will be an evaluation to select those who will continue to teach. One reason for this is that there has been the assumption that once they finish the bible school, they are automatically a teacher. But some are not able to teach due to lack of skill or other reasons. Poor teaching has also caused us to have to redo some classes.

All in all, we see these changes increasing the number of students and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Village Study Centers.

### Discipleship Program

In line with this, over the last year and half we have been talking about our desire to invest more in some of the teachers/preachers that we see as being exceptional who are also grace/unity-focused in line with Namikango's historical stance. The annual Teacher Refresher Course is about 50-60 people, which allows us some hours with all these men for a week, but only once a year. We are proposing to select 10-12 of them, and bring them to Namikango once a month for a two-day session of learning together, praying together, and pouring into each other's lives. We would want to do this for something like a two year period, and then see where we are. Of course, the challenge can come in choosing individuals and not offending others at the same time.

We would spend the two days going through material together with Ryan, Chitani and me facilitating, though not really teaching. We envision this being different than perhaps what they are used to: just spending time together in different atmospheres, reflecting on the Word and growing together. I don't know exactly what the end goal would be except to hopefully end up with a handful of grace-oriented men who love their churches and will go on to disciple others in their areas, as well as growing more ourselves.

More later, but I wanted to present the idea here.

I believe the timing for some of these changes is happening naturally, and couldn't have, nor didn't need to have happened earlier.

We ask for your prayers as we seek God's will for us in the days ahead.

Blessings, **Ben Hayes**

*Ben, I am overwhelmed reading these plans for the future. It is easy for a long standing mission like Namikango to grow lax, weak, and routine. Too familiar. This is always a concern in the back of my mind. But as I read the outstanding report of plans for the future I see vibrancy and cutting edge sharpness. I see strength and dedication growing in the days ahead. Truly, Namikango is becoming a shining light to the world. I applaud your heart and dedication to become one with Christ.*

*I would like to share these plans with our supporters even though some plans are not complete.*

Blessings, **Sidney Vaughn**

## A Good Driver is a Necessity . . . not a Luxury by **Samantha Wheeler**, Intern

Thompson Matebule has been the faithful driver for Namikango Mission for the last ten years. As the Mission driver, Thompson's responsibilities include transporting both the Mission staff and maternity patients to and from the Mission. He also keeps records of the Mission's vehicles and their use. Plus, when his driving takes him on a village visit, he is **often asked to preach** for them.

He stays prepared for the opportunity. Over the past ten years, Thompson has seen himself grow spiritually and because of this, his job has taken on a whole new meaning. He says, "When I drive

a patient to the hospital it isn't just a feeling that I am doing my job, but as a Christian it is my duty to help." He loves that Namikango cares for people.

Thompson has been a huge blessing to the Mission and it is satisfying to know he is on the job when it is time to travel.



Thompson Drives Ben and others in the Van

## Noted Primary School Continues to Raise the Bar

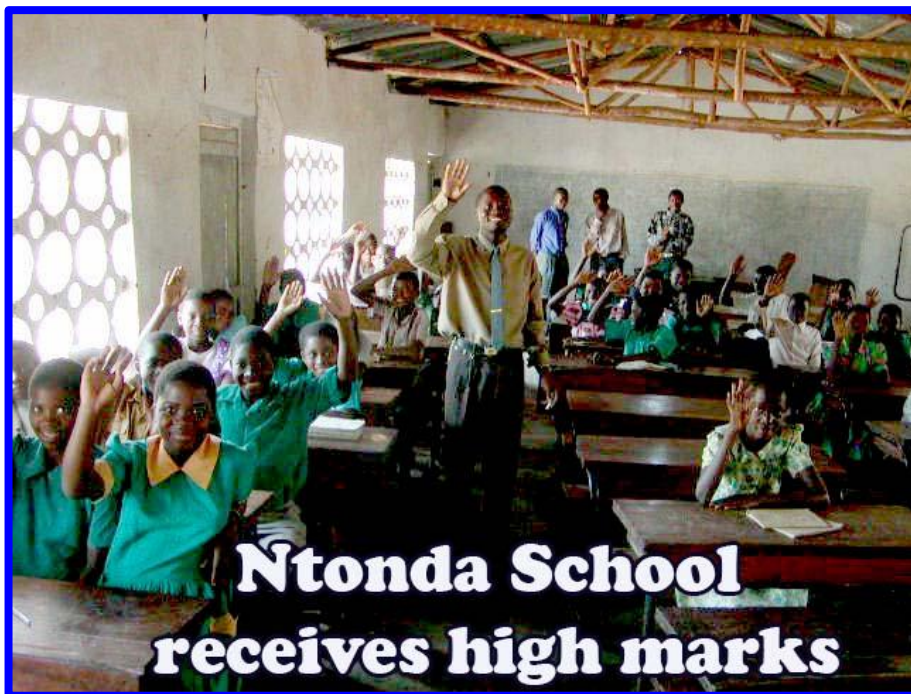
At the end of each year we take the opportunity to visit Ntonda Primary School to encourage the teachers for the work they do. This year several of us went and had a wonderful time meeting the teachers and students. We presented the teachers with a gift and words of encouragement for their work.

Ntonda Primary School's results continue to improve each year. This is mostly measured by the number of students that are chosen to go on to a national, district, or community secondary school (high school) at the end of the year. This year, worthy of noting is the fact that two students were chosen for national secondary school. This is a great success. Plus, 10 were chosen for district secondary schools – also a good

accounting. Last year we had one chosen for national, and two for district, and many others chosen for local secondary schools. This is a continued improvement and has been tangibly recognized in that the school size has grown this year, specifically in Grade 8, which is the grade before heading into higher schooling. Seeing that students at Ntonda are being

selected for secondary schools encourages parents to send their children to Ntonda in hopes that their children will excel too. This shows the hard work of the teachers at Ntonda and is good to see them continue to raise its standard.

Ntonda is sponsored by Namikango Mission and we maintain a full-time Bible teacher there – Bro. Timothy Jailos. **Ben**



## Hunger for God's Word (Daily Devotionals)

We have had weekly Bible studies here on the Mission with some of our key staff team. Recently, we moved to include a broader range of Mission employees – guards, cooks, and grounds workers. This is a daily devotional that all staff are invited to attend. This month we have been able to dive into a more in-depth study together. These groups are led by some of our core team members who have been through these studies before.

The study is designed to facilitate discussion, rather than one person teaching throughout. Because of conflicting schedules, we temporarily suspended the morning devotionals. I was surprised when one of the guards asked when we would begin again. I found it intriguing that these men hungered to have this time, and missed it when it wasn't there. It's been refreshing to see this hunger and to see our staff lead these studies with each other as we learn God's word together. **Ben**

## Seeking and Practicing Unity

During the Teacher Refresher Course for our teachers we had earlier this year, we were able to witness what God was doing in reconciling several brothers from different churches. We invited all of them to the same meeting, to visit Namikango first hand and to see who we are and what we are teaching. We all had the opportunity to visit together, and to really get to know each other and share time in prayer. We were taught about God's grace and His love, and the need to walk together in peace.



One of the teachers who witnessed the event was Bro. Maonga, a Bible teacher from Zomba East. He was touched by our unifying approach, and when he recalled the problems which were dividing the church in his area, he decided to use this same method of reaching out, with fellowship and prayer together.

After the seminar in March, Bro. Maonga returned to his home determined to start work, to practice what he had learned at

Namikango. He sent word to the leaders in and around Sakata and called for a meeting to discuss unity. Congregations which were not cooperating together were invited, along with some who were not in support of the Bible School in their area. Their differences were identified and they agreed on a way forward to get to solutions. Leaders and churches are being reconciled together again after a long time of disagreement and separation.

### A Positive milestone has been achieved! Praise God!

Bro. Maonga came back three weeks later along with some leaders of the area to report about the good news – "God has miraculously worked in the Sakata area. This is amazing." Nothing is too hard for the Lord (Jer. 32:17...Mark 10:27).

For some, unity is a far-fetched dream; but for us, it is our daily prayer that the church should remain united. The devil is pleased to see God's people fighting over issues and he enjoys our being divided because he knows in so doing we cannot achieve our goal for reaching lost souls. Let us make every effort to advocate peace and unity, not wasting time on our petty issues – Col. 4:5.

**Symon John Katete**



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## MONTHLY REPORT • Namikango Mission

[www.missionmalawi.org](http://www.missionmalawi.org) • Sidney Vaughn, Editor

VOLUME 52 • ISSUE NO. 7 • JULY 2016



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## Ntonda School Gets High Marks

### Amazing Answer to Prayer

We set a goal to help with the terrible hunger situation which was at its worst in our immediate area. Our supporters met the goals we set, and we were able to distribute large amounts of grain to widows, orphans, and the elderly . . . to those who could not help themselves. The Mission staff reported that two tours of grain distribution had been completed, but that the hunger conditions were far worse than we had expected. The devastation was greater than we realized.

God knew better than we did . . . Our contributions did not stop when we met our goals, but continued to half again of what we asked for. When I reported this to Ben – who has just returned to the States on furlough, he said, "Praise God. This is truly an answer to prayer! Now we can continue our food distribution. We really did need those additional funds." That very day, word was sent to the Mission to continue the grain distribution.

While extreme hunger is a terrible thing, it is also an opportunity to teach, and that is just what the Mission staff does. They call together the leaders in the area we have helped and tell them we have a message that will help them even further. Then, along with sharing the good news of Christ's saving grace, they teach basic principles of farming and conservation, ways to grow more with less water, ways to develop composts instead of using expensive fertilizers.

The people listened to every word. This also is the approach that Ryan Hayes uses in teaching the villagers how to help themselves and even to establish their own savings and loans. Throughout this, he teaches them about the love of God. .

This mirrors exactly the ministry of Jesus. He went about doing good, but His primary goal was not to feed the hungry, which He did, nor was it to heal the sick, which He did. His mission was to share the Good News of salvation. And when He performed acts of kindness, He got people's attention. They were eager to listen when Jesus spoke words of life and salvation.

**Sidney**



**When the work is done,  
people will listen**