

## “The Best Yet”

Several have said it and I heartily agree this was the best Board meeting yet. The Spirit was with us. Having our two missionaries here was a rich blessing. The work now going on and the plans ahead are encouraging. And, to top that off, we added another new missionary, Eric Gephart, who will soon be there to assist in teaching the Bible in English, and perhaps develop the studies at the Mission where they will qualify for College Credits. Plus, we got to visit with a longtime

friend of the Mission – David Giles. He was added to our Board of Directors. David has experience in Christ-centered educational programs in several third-world countries. His input will be valuable.



In our meeting we had a lot of discussion about developing the Mission in ways that will help it become more self-supporting. This is good news for our faithful supporters, and will elevate the Mission in the eyes of the government leaders as well as Malawians themselves. Of course this is a long range view, and thankfully we have young, strong, godly men leading the charge. The future looks good. **Sidney Vaughn**

## A Blessing to Serve by Robert Lee, Board Member

I am richly blessed to serve on the board for the Namikango Mission in Malawi, Africa. Meetings of the board greatly encourage me as I hear of the various works being accomplished by the Namikango team. As usual, I experienced a spiritual lift on August 19-21 when the board met in Lubbock, Texas.

I am thankful that missionaries Ben and Ryan Hayes, and their families, were in the US on furlough at the time of the meeting and were able to join us. Ben and Ryan gave excellent first-hand reports on what is happening at the mission. I also enjoyed getting to know David Giles and Eric Gephardt.

Teaching Biblical truths continues to be a primary focus of the mission. Bible schools are held in many villages in both Malawi and Mozambique and efforts are being made to establish a higher education school with courses in English.

Namikango also helps meet real physical needs of the people of Malawi, as recent distributions of food and other supplies attest. Plus, it is especially exciting to hear of the efforts of the mission that are intended to help the Malawians learn ways to improve their lives in practical ways. It is hoped a planned agricultural program will enable people to increase their harvests, especially in times of severe droughts. The VSL (Village Savings and Loan Program) is teaching people how to save and provide money that can be used to establish businesses, grow crops and

allow people to support themselves. CHE (Community Health Evangelism) is a Christ-centered educational program that equips communities to identify local needs and how to achieve positive, sustainable change.

The maternity clinic and the Ntonda primary school have already made a positive impact for several years. But, imagine having an out-patient treatment center as well as the Maternity center and imagine having a Bible School on the Namikango campus that would teach the Bible in English, WOW! Well, that is already on the horizon. These will greatly add to the positive impact of Namikango on the surrounding area.

In addition to all this are the long-term plans now being made to help the mission become more financially self-sustaining. Good things are happening at Namikango. I heartily recommend prayer and monetary support for this outstanding work. **Robert Lee**



## Introducing Eric Gephart

We are glad to introduce Eric Gephart to all of you. Justine and I met and worked with Eric in Nairobi, Kenya where we all worked with a Kenyan organization – Missions of Hope. But now Eric will be joining our team at Namikango in 2017 with the primary goal of working to update the Chichewa curriculum of Bible study as well as to develop the courses needed for the English Bible curriculum. He will be working alongside one of our longtime Malawian staff members.

Eric is from Pennsylvania and has grown up in a strong Christian home. He has a Bachelors in Christian Ministry from Messiah College and a Masters of Divinity from Emmanuel Christian Seminary. He is also now working on a Masters of Higher Education which will give him the ability to obtain accreditation for Namikango in the future.

Apart from his schooling, Eric has experience in theological education with African ministers as well as working with microfinance.

Eric is a mature follower of Jesus with solid experience working overseas. Because of this, we are very excited for Eric to join our team and see what God will do through him and through the continued development of the Bible School.

Ryan Hayes



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## "I get excited when..." by David Langford, Board Member

Jesus prayed that his disciples would not be taken out of the world but instead they be **in** the world not **of** it. To some the phrase "in the world not of it" suggests being in the world reluctantly, temporarily, withdrawing and separating ourselves from its influences. But Jesus ends his prayer saying to the Father, "As you sent me **into** the world, I have sent them **into** the world."

So what is Jesus saying to His disciples? This I think. "I want you to be "in" the world the same way I was "in" the world. Why was Jesus sent into the world? Jesus gave one answer in Luke 4:18, 19. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me...to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to

proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." By command and by example Jesus compels us to be "in" this world as He was sacrificially, generously, compassionately. When we live in the world that way, we change the way the world we live in is.

I get excited when I see our missionaries preaching both the good news about the world to come, and living the good news in the world right now, entering into the world's troubles that disproportionately oppress the poor and proclaiming to these sweet people the year of the Lord's favor. **Dave Langford**



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## Egg Money for Jesus by Gene Shelburne, Board Member

For several decades every issue of this Namikango bulletin contained a list of the previous month's contributors, complete with the dollar amount of their donation.

The intent behind that was truth-in-reporting. We wanted our donors to know where every dollar came from and where every dollar got spent. So folks who could only give three dollars got their gift listed right under somebody who gave three hundred.

Finally some alert soul pointed out to us that listing donation amounts might be embarrassing. And not just to those who gave sparsely. Some of the most liberal contributors might not want their generosity to be advertised. So the donor list now contains names only.

Back in the 1960s, however, I remember that almost every Mission bulletin I published had my Grandmother Key's name in the list of givers. The dollar amount usually was less than ten dollars. I doubt that many who saw those bulletins several states away had any idea how proud our grandmother was of the work her grandson B. Shelburne was doing in the African mission field. Nor did they have any idea that her tiny donations came from selling the eggs her hens laid beyond what her family needed. When the amount bumped up above ten dollars, it meant that she had sold the dogie lamb she had bottle-fed after its mama abandoned it. Every dime Grandmother made she contributed to Namikango.

More than half a century later the Mission work in Malawi continues its vibrant ministry because of the heartfelt commitment of dozens of people like my Grandmother Key.

She never set foot in Malawi. In fact, she probably didn't cross their West Texas county line more than a dozen times in her entire life. But the Gospel of Jesus got preached to thousands of souls on the other side of the planet because that sweet little Christian lady and a host of committed believers like her have faithfully supported a mission they never expect to see. Only the Lord knows how much good may grow out of your gifts, even if they seem small in your eyes. My dear grandmother knew that her egg money was just a drop in the mission bucket compared to the larger donations others sent each month. Perhaps she did not know, however, how much it blessed and encouraged my missionary brother and his wife when month after month they saw her name among those who supported their work.

What kind of message are you sending to our current missionary team when they open the latest issue of this bulletin and often see your name among those who care enough to finance the Lord's work in a distant land? **Gene Shelburne**







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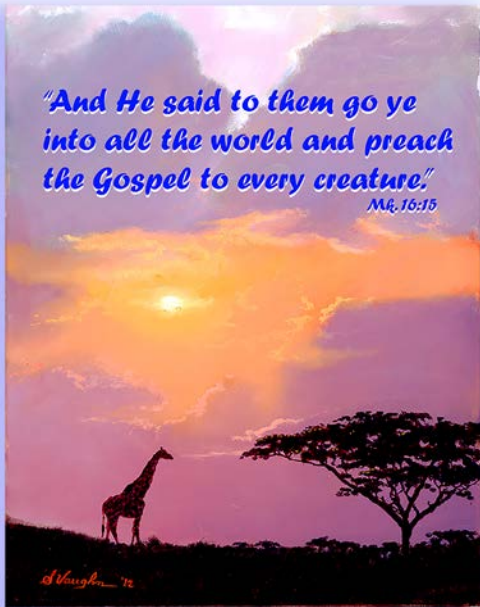
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## A Wonderful Reminder

As we come near the end of our furlough, we couldn't be more grateful for what God has done during our time here. Though we have been busy traveling and sharing news about Namikango, we've also had a great time to relax with family and friends. While we are here in the states, we continue to receive good reports from our Malawian team at Namikango about how things are running. It's a great blessing for both Ryan and me to be away and know that things are operating smoothly because of the capable staff that exists back in Malawi.

One of the highlights of our time here was the Namikango board meeting, held in Lubbock a couple weeks ago. This was one of the best meetings we've had yet, with many items covered and resolved as well as good time to pray and read God's word together. I am amazed every time I have the opportunity to be with this board and the godly people that God has brought together to help lead this work. Being together was just another wonderful reminder of how God's kingdom moves because his body, the church, collectively helps it to move, and not only because of the missionaries, or church leaders or

preachers. In our case, the support and prayer we receive from those stateside and from this board is immense, and without such, Namikango would not be where it is.

Our family leaves for Malawi in September, while Ryan and Justine stay on to continue their furlough. We are looking forward to getting back, and we continue to ask for your prayers for both our families as we travel and adjust to the change in environments. Thank you all so much for blessing us and making our furlough so good.

**Ben Hayes**

