

NEWSLETTER

NAMIKANGO MISSION

“STILL FOCUSED”

As I rode over the rough, red dirt roads to Kanini Church of Christ, I imagined B Shelburne and Roland Hayes riding the same roads almost 60 years ago when they first came to Malawi. As Ben, Eric, and I shared in fellowship with this church, I thought, “In all that has grown and changed at Namikango Mission, there is one thing that has never changed. Empowering and training church leaders is the core of what we do as a mission.”

During the 14 days in January I spent in Malawi, seeing the work of Namikango Mission firsthand for the first time, the same theme was abundantly clear every day: “We are focused on training church leaders!”

In the little village of Kanini, the work of the mission really started to unfold for me after that church service. I sat on a mat in a little mud hut eating nsima with Symon, Sam, Eric and the Hayes family. Both Sam and Symon personify the type of humble servants that the Discipleship Training Institute will focus on as the future leaders of the church in Malawi.



Cameron and Eric with the church leaders in Zomba
As much as our ministries, such as the maternity center with over 80 babies born per month and the agricultural work with training over 45 lead farmers, are making a tremendous impact for the Kingdom of God, there is no greater need or desire than to make disciples. In Matthew 28:19, first command Jesus gives is this: “Therefore go and make disciples...”



Ben Hayes preaching at Kanini Church of Christ

I saw disciple making in action almost every day during my trip. Whether it was with the HIV/Marriage trainers that were encouraged to share their lessons with their church members, the Women’s Ministry where Zione shared about the Holy Spirit, or the Discovery Bible study questions with the Village Savings and Loan group, biblical lessons and personal accountability were evident in every area. As I sat with the church leaders in Zomba, discussing the new Discipleship Training Institute, the excitement in the room was palpable. The churches have a real desire to go deeper studying the Bible and have many capable young people to step into this opportunity with Namikango for the future of the church in Malawi. As the questions came from around the room of preachers and leaders, there was no question of the desire to go deeper with disciple making with their young church leaders.

For nearly 60 years, through leadership changes, cultural adaptations, and ministry advancements, Namikango Mission remains resiliently focused on training church leaders as we seek to fulfill the work God has called us to accomplish. I’m thrilled I was able to witness this from the small church in Kanini to the leaders in Zomba and help continue the efforts of training church leaders in Malawi.

-By Cameron Mayhill

“NAMIKANGO’S NEWEST EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY”

The deafening sound of the rain crashing against the tin roof paused the third interview of the day. As we sat in silence, listening to the roar of the passing shower, I had time to reflect on the answers Assani, the young man across from me, had been giving. Three Namikango staff members and I have traveled to the central and northern regions of Malawi to interview candidates interested in enrolling in the first class of Namikango’s Discipleship Training Institute. These candidates have been all ages and from all kinds of backgrounds, but this young man brought enthusiasm to the process.

The Discipleship Training Institute (DTI for short) is Namikango’s newest educational ministry offered to the Church of Christ in Malawi. The curriculum is comprised from Namikango’s other ministries and follows in the rich history of theological education offered through the mission. DTI is an intensive, three-year program that seeks to transform students into disciples of Jesus with the skills to read and interpret the Bible, lead in local churches, and bring community development to local communities. Only twenty-four years old, Assani is still fresh out of school,

and he brings the discipline and sharp answers of a student used to exams. He sits straight in his chair holding a folder with his government documents, ready to produce the necessary qualifications when asked. We have passed through the introductory questions typical of an interview, and have moved into the English oral examination, where we test the candidate’s English skills as well as get a glimpse of their theological stance.

The DTI has been a long-planned vision of Namikango Mission. First conceived around six years ago, it was born out of the churches’ request for a more rigorous training program, offered in English, on Namikango’s campus. While the Village Bible schools were meeting the demand for easily accessible Bible training for anyone interested in the program, there existed a need for a more rigorous training program aimed at future (or current) church leaders interested in building the Kingdom of God in Malawi. From these requests, the seeds of the DTI were planted and have been slowly growing and building to this day, where I’m sitting with the first candidates in the small rainy town of Ntchisi.



The rain momentarily paused Assani's interview, punctuating and giving gravity to his last answer. Symon had just asked him why he was interested in this program at Namikango. Assani's eyes lit up immediately, and as the rains began pattering the tin roof he explained that he had known about Namikango since he was a child, but never expected to have the chance to go train there. When news of this new program reached his village, he couldn't believe his ears. He knows men who have trained with Namikango through the Village Bible Schools and has seen their work with the church. His dream has been to step into the same role and help unify the church through good biblical teaching.

Assani, like the other candidates, has a deep desire to build the church in Malawi. Each candidate is asked about problems they see in the church, and each has noted the same issue: a lack of biblical understanding always leads to division. As another candidate, Micah noted, "When no one can understand the Bible, the church divides itself. Namikango is the place where we learn how to read [the Bible] well and unify the church."

Assani after his interview for DTI



Zione meeting with ladies during a VBS committee meeting

Our trip not only focused on interviewing potential students for DTI, but also served to maintain relationships with the churches. We have also been meeting with VBS committees across the central and Northern region. These committees have held a vital role with Namikango for decades as collection points for the Village Bible Schools, helping oversee, coordinate and ensure smooth running of the schools, students, and teachers. In our meetings with them, we have heard about their dreams for the VBS, their concerns, and their thoughts for change. In every meeting I am reminded of the words of Assani and the rich heritage of Namikango's educational programs. Even in these far-flung villages dotting the green landscapes of Malawi's remote districts, the mission's name is synonymous with Bible education, a voice for unity, and an encouragement for churches. It is a humbling experience to step into that legacy, to help carry that vision forward with the DTI, and to work with my Malawian brothers and sisters as we build the Kingdom of God here in these maize-laden hills.

-By Eric Gephart

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NEW ADDRESS

As of January 11, the address for mailing donations has relocated to Lubbock, Texas! Our new address for receiving donations is:

**NAMIKANGO MISSION
PO BOX 16528
LUBBOCK, TEXAS 79490**

E-NEWSLETTER

As we start a new format with the print newsletter, we are also in the process of sharing this as an electronic newsletter. Please know that we are still committed to the print newsletter, but would love for you to sign up for the electronic format. Please visit <https://namikango.org/get-involved/connect-with-us/> to sign up for the e-newsletter.

FINANCIALS AND DONOR LIST

Some of you have asked why we haven't included the financials and donor list in our new format. At this time, we will have financials available on a quarterly basis and will produce an annual report at the end of the year. We feel that this will give a more accurate picture of our financials as a mission.

We are committed to transparency and want this to be clearer to donors. With the list of donors and memorials, we want to honor each of you in different ways throughout the year. Look for more on both of these in the near future! Thank you again for your partnership in the Gospel.



STAY CONNECTED

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