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This month's Mission Report gives you a look at a man who grew up at the Mission and is now faithfully managing the Maternity Clinic.

Tuesdays are Special!

Tuesday is a special day for the expectant mothers who come for medical review at the Namikango Maternity Clinic.

Most ladies will come to the clinic on foot, some walking several miles. On average 100 mothers will show up every week for the ante natal clinic. The Malawi government recognizes the role this clinic plays. They set guidelines which we follow.

But what makes Tuesdays so special?

Tuesday is when Brethren from the Namikango Bible School come to share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus with these women before the nurses begin their work. It is a wonderful opportunity as women from varied religious backgrounds are in one place eager to listen to God's Word being taught.

An expectant mother usually has eight opportunities to listen to the Gospel (one opportunity very month) before she finally delivers. After her child is born, we continue to see the mothers with treatment and training in raising healthy children and

we continue to treat their children without cost until they are 5 years old.

Bro. Symon heads this area of work and receives his support from the Mission. On this particular Tuesday morning, **Bro. Chitani Bakali** will be speaking to the women. They are eager to hear his message.



Bisani





Remembering ■ ■ ■ by Mark Thiesen

... Concluded From Last Month

Fond memories fill my thoughts as I review my work at Namikango. There are several things I feel especially good about; 1) Securing Godly men as teachers and staff; 2) Hiring Bisani; 3) Providing a means for the students to become more like Jesus. And 4) uniting people of God.

1) The men who are now on staff are outstanding, humble, spiritual giants. But . . . we did have to do some Weeding out of the staff for that to happen. That meant removing men who were more self-centered than Christ-centered. This was a difficult task and took a lot of time in prayer.

2) And speaking of spiritual giants, my work was immensely blessed by discovering **Brother Bisani** and by persuading him to join us at Namikango. This was no simple feat. Here was a successful, well-educated and well paid engineer. But above all, he was a man of God, truly a spiritual giant. I recommended to the Elders that we hire him and pay him substantially more than we were accustomed to paying any Malawian. This meant raising our already strained budget. The Elders agreed and we brought this man of integrity on board. Thankfully, trust in this decision has been shared by the good supporters back in the States and the funds needed to hire Bisani has become a reality. This was a wise decision and he has already served the Mission well, helping us operate more efficiently and with transparency.

3) Another accomplishment I feel good about is introducing into our curriculum a way for the students to learn from the very beginning how to open their hearts to the Lord and how to live and look more like Christ. They not only learn the Word but they live it. The lesson books are being redesigned so that the students and teachers will pause during their studies and reflect on their own relationship with the Lord. A time of prayer, devotion and mentoring is scheduled within each course. Although it took time to get used to, the students and the teachers have received this time of "getting closer to the Lord" with open arms. The results in this shift in our efforts will be felt for generations.

4) We have seen real friendships develop and cooperation grow between people from different tribes and areas. This counters the worldly tendency to divide and be isolated from those who are different from us. We have encouraged unity and brotherhood among Christians from all three regions of Malawi, Northern, Central, and Southern, by frequent contacts and through inviting



Mark Thiesen

speakers from other areas to come to Namikango and by sending Namikango teachers to different areas of the country. It may very well be that it was because I was raised in Northern Malawi that God called me to come to Namikango as His way of saying 'Love your brother.'

I have confidence in what lies ahead. **Ben and Becca Hayes** are an outstanding young couple, very dedicated to serving God, and their gentle nature will fit well with the Malawian culture. It is amazing how God selects the right people at just the right time for His work. He has groomed Ben and Becca for a special journey ahead.

Getting back into life in the States has been a big change for us and we are still transitioning. After an absence of 8 years, it takes some adjustment. It has been good to be back to living where electricity and gasoline are in good supply, and where life is fairly smooth. But we do miss the daily interactions with the Malawian staff and workers. We just miss being in the middle of the Namikango ministry. We now live in a small town in Missouri, surrounded by relatives and church members. This has made the move easier and has provided our children with a sense of stability. Our children are adjusting well and . . . we have come home.

Our present plans are open to the Lord's leading, to walk through the doors He chooses to open. We may not be involved in overseas mission work now, but we firmly believe that in God's providence He will have work for us no matter where we are. Era and I are both looking for work, trusting the Lord to provide. We don't intend to move far right away, though we are prepared to follow wherever He leads. We know that no matter where we go, He will be with us.

And, we will not forget our dear brothers and sisters in Malawi. We plan to remain involved in the Namikango work in every way possible.



Our little girl Dana, born in Malawi, will be 7 in January.



My Story by Symon John Katete.

I am the first born in a family of 11 children. My father John was one of the early Mission teachers. I am now 53 years old, the father of four. My first memory of Christ is when my parents used to sing “Jesus loves me, this I know.” I would imagine that Jesus was up there in the clouds watching me. Sometimes when I looked at the clouds hovering on the top of Zomba Mountain I would think, “That must be where Jesus lives.”

I have many good memories being raised at Namikango Mission. I remember making bricks for construction of buildings and cutting firewood for the kitchen during many preachers meetings. We had a lot of baptisms during these years and I remember each time we went down to the Namikango River it was a time of celebration.

After finishing high school I went to Lilongwe Technical College where I was trained in mechanical engineering for five years from 1980 to 1985. I am still studying Bible lessons through distance learning with SHBI (South Houston Bible Institute). I have completed “Old Testament History 1” and the “Christian Growth Course.” I am now studying “The Life of Christ.” I have also attended seminars on evangelism and reaching out to Muslims.

It is an honor for me to be here and working as the overseer of the Maternity Hospital. I feel God has prepared me for this and I want to serve Him faithfully. I know I could be earning more money in other work, but I am satisfied with what I am doing and I know the Lord will continue to bless and give me His grace.

God holds the future in His hands and it is my hope that Namikango Mission School will continue to grow and that the standards of study will increase. I also pray that the maternity clinic would grow and be a blessing to many.

Symon John Katete

What is our purpose for having the Clinic?

The Maternity staff is made up of nurses. A Head Mid-wife is in charge of the births. There are nearly 100 births here each month. A government organization pays the staff and the Mission provides upkeep on the buildings plus we support Brother Symon Katete, the Maternity Administrator. Symon is a fine man, the son of a retired Mission teacher. We do not have a doctor on hand but there is a full hospital 10 miles north in Zomba. The women prefer to have their babies at Namikango rather than at the regular hospital. This is an amazing reputation to have.

The purpose behind our Mission in Malawi is not to run a hospital or to provide aid, though we do this in many ways.

Our mission is to teach the Gospel to men (and women) who can go among their own people and make disciples. Jesus often helped people who were hungry or ill, but His real mission was to bring the Good News of salvation to people. They saw His good deeds and miracles and were then willing to stop and listen to what He had to say.



The good things we do, like treating sick babies, shows the people our sincerity in what we teach. People trust us; they know our motives are pure. The work being done at the Clinic says to the people, “We are here to help, not to rob.” When our teachers speak, people listen.

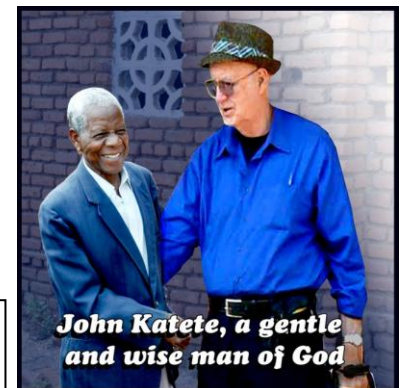
In his father's steps

It was some 30 years ago when I first met John Katete. He was a Bible teacher at Namikango Mission. On a visit there, I went on a tour with John to several village churches. Good crowds came even though it was midweek. I got to know and appreciate John on this trip, both in the village services and especially in the car as we traveled. There are several things that stood out about this man. For one, he knows the Bible and can quote nearly all of it from memory. I compare him to Brother G B Shelburne in this. While I was amazed at the extraordinary depth of Bible knowledge of this wise man, even more impressive was his gentle, humble nature. He is highly respected by the staff and by the people in the villages wherever we went. John is now retired and lives in his home village. He is no longer able to travel long distances to teach, but he does teach at the Mission seminars from time to time.

His son Symon, taught the Bible for a while at the Towanda School where we have over 1000 students. Then he was called to the Mission to supervise the Maternity Hospital, where he serves today. Symon has brought a high degree of accountability to this area and stopped a lot of financial waste. He, like his father, is a humble and wise servant. Now, we get word that Symon's son, Fatsani, is actively involved at the Mission also as a nurse intern. What is the saying? “The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.”

I can see this born out in the Katete family. What a godly heritage! The work that you are supporting in Malawi has an impact on many generations. God is honored.

Sidney Vaughn



I was pleased to be reunited with John on my trip in 2009.

John Katete, a gentle and wise man of God