

## Closing Ceremony by Eric Gephart

On Friday, Namikango Mission held a closing ceremony for the 42 students who had been studying on campus for the last three weeks. These students came to Namikango in the beginning of April with the goal of finishing up the classes they needed in order to graduate from the Village Bible Schools in September. Since this year marks the official end of the curriculum being used in the Village Bible Schools, these students needed a chance to finish their studies before the new curriculum begins next year.

The classes on campus were different this time, with four teachers teaching a total of seven classes over the three-week period. This meant a rigorous study schedule for students, and a tough teaching and grading period for teachers. Everyone had to adjust to the new schedule. However, the students and teachers all rose to the challenge of an accelerated program. When the students were not in one of their many classes, they could be found working in the Namikango fields - helping us harvest our corn crop or holed up in the library - assisting each other with the course material.

We are proud to announce that of the 42 students, 18 have now completed their studies. The remaining students still have several classes they need to complete; they will return in the beginning of May for the second, and final, three-week course designed so that these students can graduate.

Overall, we are very proud of these students and their hard work, dedication, and commitment to learning more about our God and His desire for all of us to be a part of His Kingdom.

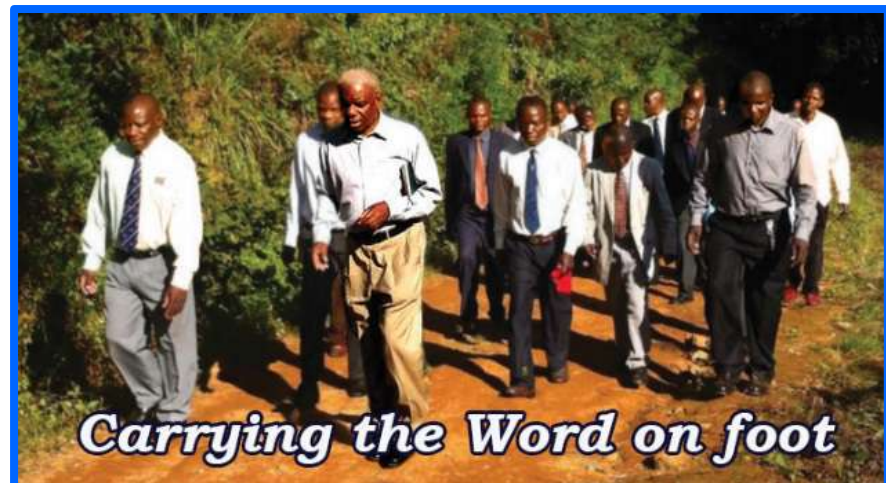
## Following in the Steps of the Master

When the 42 students came to Namikango to finish their studies, they were invited to an extra blessing. As part of their training, we arranged teaching opportunities at five neighboring congregations.

Students were sent to these congregations which were about four miles apart . . . and their travels were on foot. . Some came back with sore and hurting feet, but they got to experience the "Jesus way of travel" from place to place."

We appreciate the congregations hosting our young teachers. More visits are planned next month as the students finish their final month of Bible School studies.

*Symon J. Katete*



## The mystery of the Trinity

by Ben Hayes

For the first time since starting our Discipleship Journey Groups, we held a joint seminar where we brought both groups together. This was a special event and was an opportunity for everyone to get better acquainted. The primary reason this was special was due to the focus on loving God.

Loving God - as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - was the theme as we studied [the mystery of the Trinity](#). Over the past year, questions have arisen in our Journey Groups about the Trinity, many of which we have all probably faced; how are the three one, and yet separate? What does this tell us about who God is and who we are?

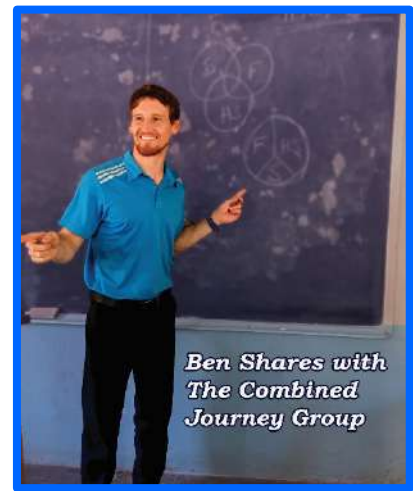
Over the course of the few days, we were able to study Scripture, look at some history and consider how the early church dealt with this. At one point, we gave people a chance to go up to the board and draw a diagram to explain the Trinity as best they could.

This was a lot of fun, as each diagram was critiqued by the other members, and what we soon realized was that every drawing and analogy, while helpful, was lacking somewhere. This led to the most wonderful conclusion (and perhaps the main lesson of the time together), that the very core of who God

is, is relational and is love. There is no way to confine that to a diagram on a board, or an intellectual discussion. The Trinity is not ultimately something to be explained and made sense of, but rather a relationship to be entered into, to participate in, and to be experienced.

As someone else has helpfully said, if you try to explain the trinity using logic, say with mathematics, you run into a problem. Math is a language, but not a personal one. You can't say, "I love you," in mathematics. If God is a loving relationship at the core, and we were made in the image of God, then it means that the meaning of life is to exist in a loving relationship with God and with each other.

"Love God and love your neighbor." An invitation to relationship with a really, really good God. That...is good news.



## Improved ways of farming can provide a better future for Malawians

by Ryan Hayes

After droughts and floods devastated Malawi, we felt called to go out to the villages and farms and teach the people ways to improve their gardens and their farming. Though the rains have been sparse this year, the conservative method of farming we teach/demonstrate (namely zero tillage, composting, & soil coverage) has allowed for the maize and beans to grow strong and healthy. We proved its effectiveness through the example set here at Namikango.

We also plant a small portion of maize in the traditional style to show the contrast of the two different ways of farming. As with other years, it was very evident again this year. There are differences of several feet in height and differing sizes of stocks that dramatically shows the conservation method is superior if done correctly, AND, this can be done by any village farmer with similar results. We are

continually convinced that this method provides a **better future for Malawians** especially when rainfall is scarce and dry spells longer.

Jesus taught lessons about everyday matters: "A farmer went out to plant some seeds . . . some seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. . ." And Jesus finished with a message that touched their souls. That is what we hope for, by teaching better ways of producing food, we gain trust of the people so when we tell them about Jesus, they willingly listen.

Many farmers have already begun implementing these methods while others are understandably fearful of change. Please pray for all Malawian farmers, especially for those whose harvests this year will not be sufficient to provide food for their families.

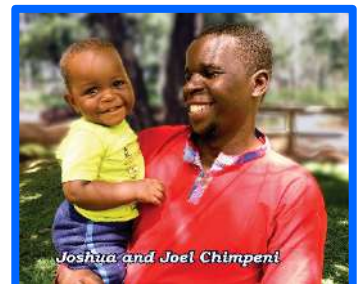


## It Lights Up Your World

by Ben Hayes

In the last two and half years, we've seen six of our key staff members get married with children soon to follow. We know children are one of our greatest blessings. It doesn't matter what culture you are in, kids are the same. And when you can make a child smile, like little Joshua Chimpeni here . . . it lights up your world.

I think Jesus said something about himself and children being linked, that if you do something kind for one of these "little ones" it's been done to Him as well. It's no wonder kids are so wonderful. They bear the very mark of the Kingdom of Heaven.





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## MONTHLY REPORT • Namikango Mission

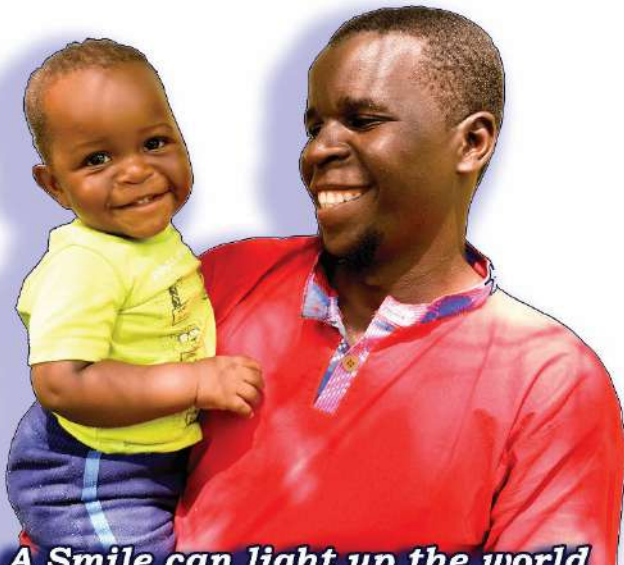
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*A Smile can light up the world  
Meet Joshua and Joel Chimpeni*

## A Mountain Top Experience by Symon John Katete

When you get to the top of Zomba Mountain you will know Peter's experience when he said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." (Matt. 17: 4)

This is the feeling we had when the Mission staff took time off to relax and interact with each other. We visited the Trout Farm on top of Zomba Mountain on Monday. For some, it was the first time to visit Zomba Mountain. The weather was cool, with clear skies, an indication that a beautiful day was awaiting us.

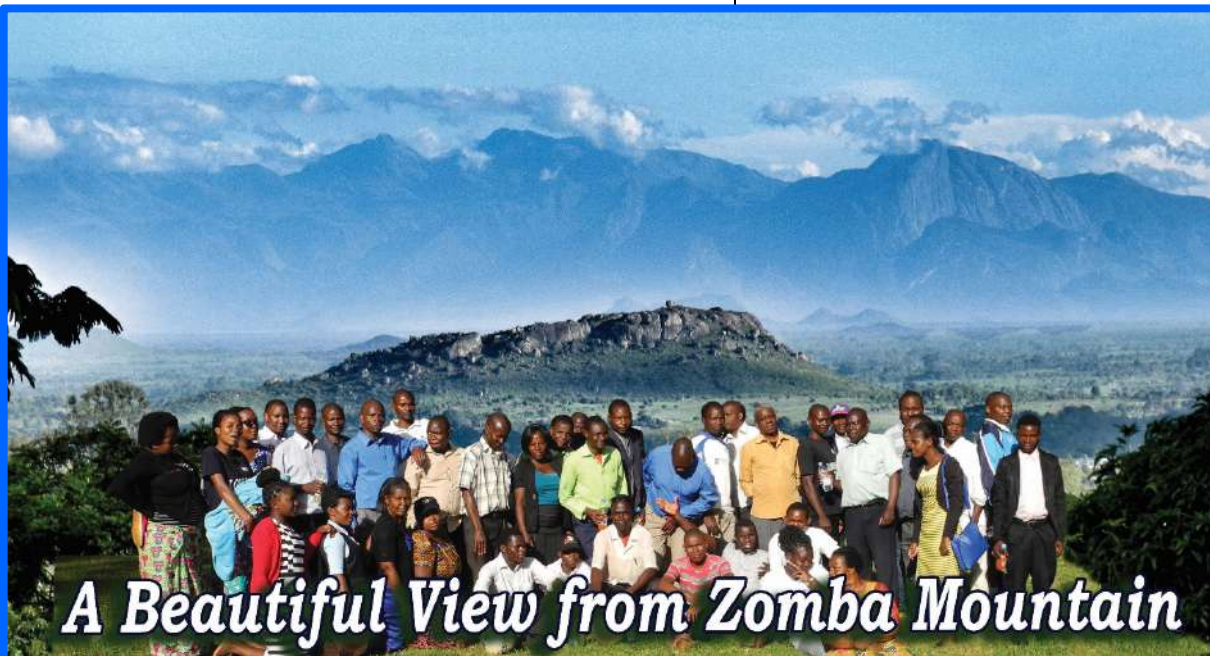
As we climbed up the winding road, everyone was in a good mood - eagerly anticipating the day ahead.

The views were amazing. From there, one could see the City of Zomba, the Phalombe Plains, and even the Mulanje Mountain Range in the distance.

This was an important time together because it brought together staff members who otherwise don't get to be together as one family. Games were played included football (soccer)

for men, the women played netball, while others just went running and chasing and laughing joyously.

This is a time that we will not forget. It has been a building and strengthening of the team spirit among all the workers. We plan to have other staff events in the future. May God bless Namikango Mission.



*A Beautiful View from Zomba Mountain*



Many blessings to you all for being His hands and feet to so many! Vivian Thane

I enjoyed ministering in Malawi in 1990, 1994, and 1997 – 1998.  
Edward Miller

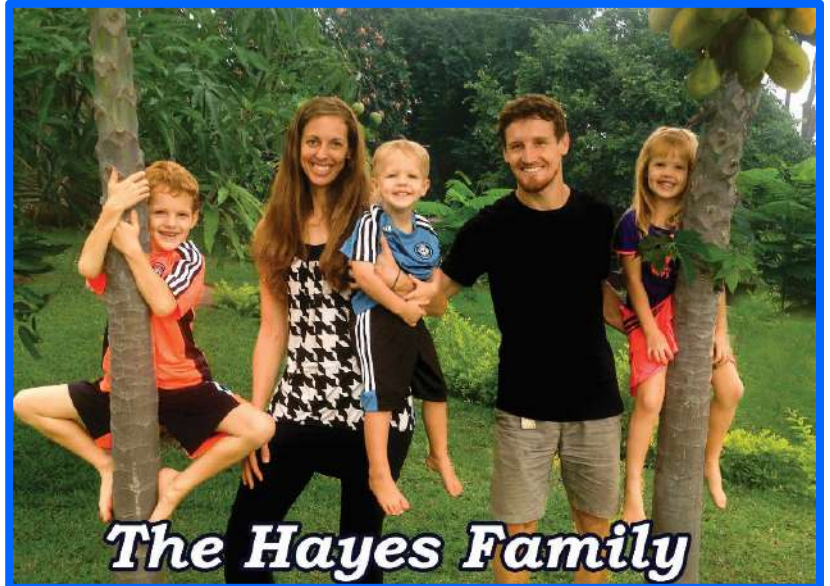
Never forget our Lord and His unspeakable gift for all of us - His faithful children. Velma Scott

## See You Soon

As we approach the summer, like many of you, there will be some long-distance travelling. Our missionary team will be going on furlough, with staggered departure/return times spread over the next 4½ months. Ryan's family left on May 14<sup>th</sup>, followed by Eric several days later. They should be Stateside now. My family leaves Malawi on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Each of us will be away for 3 months.

We're all looking forward to visiting family and friends and many who partner with us in the Mission work. We're blessed that the work in Malawi is in the good hands of our staff while we are away. Though we've always had a good solid staff who handled things well during previous furloughs, we are larger now and have more ministries. We now have committees and leaders over each department to oversee things while we're away. We have some very godly people on staff.

We'd appreciate your prayers for all our team's travels; it can be wearing on the kids (and parents as a result). We look forward to seeing you all soon. Blessings, Ben



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