

Extreme Damage at Ntonda School

by Eric Gephart

It was a normal school day . . .

Friday, January 18th at Ntonda Primary. Ntonda is a First through Seventh Grade school with 1,800 students that is sponsored by Namikango Mission.

Heavy rain clouds rolled across Southern Malawi as the students gathered for classes. It is the middle of the rainy season here, so these ominous clouds were nothing unusual. They promised a good rain for the local crops. As the day wore on the storm got darker and louder. This too, was normal for the rainy season. However, this particular storm stirred up winds so strong that it frightened the children. At one point, the teachers and students noticed that the roof of their classroom was shaking and beginning to lift up.

Acting quickly, the teachers moved the students from two of the five classrooms. Minutes later the roof not only lifted up, it blew completely away! Students had taken shelter in another school room but the winds began to tear the roof off that building. Again, the children had to quickly leave that classroom as well. They watched more of the roofs being blown away. Then, even the brick walls began to come down under the intense winds of the storm.

When the storm finally subsided, the school leaders sent all the children home so they could review the damage caused by the storm. The first block of classrooms lost its roof plus had significant structural damage. The second block had three classrooms destroyed in the storm.

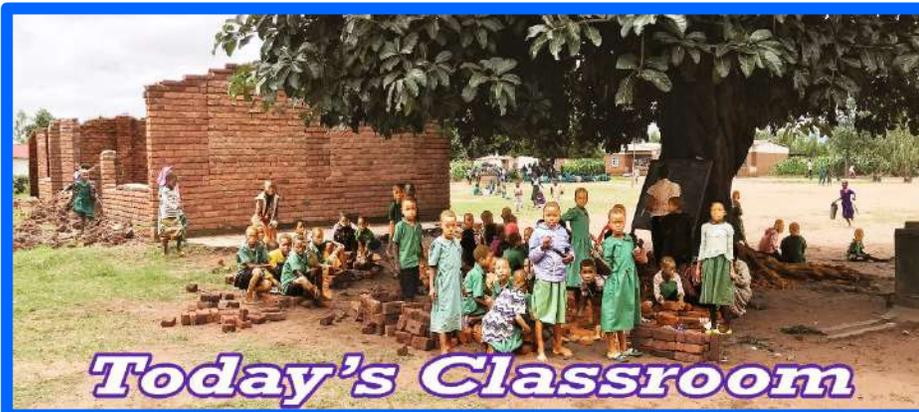
The damage was so significant that the buildings will not be able to be repaired – they must be torn down and completely replaced.

The Ntonda community, the local chiefs, and the school committee assessed the damage. They will save as much of the tin and bricks as possible for later use.

Namikango Mission sent a delegation to review the damage and discuss a way forward. As of now, the students will be having their classes outside under the large trees on campus. Of course, this is by no means a long-term solution. Even short-term it is difficult because we still have several months of rainy season left and the students need a safe environment in which to learn.

We will need lots of generous support to help us restore this once vibrant school and we will begin rebuilding as soon as we can. Namikango Mission and the Christian Relief Fund have been responsible for the building and maintenance at Ntonda School. If you wish to help, mark your check "School Repair" and Send to: Namikango Mission, Box 21, South Houston, TX 77587.

Ben reports on estimates he has received - the two school blocks will cost from \$50,000 to \$80,000 each. This means that a minimum of \$100,000 will be needed . . . and these expenses will be on top of the expenses for projects already underway at Namikango Mission - where we will need approximately \$300,000 to finish our ongoing work toward getting us ready to open the English Bible School at Namikango. Please remember all these needs in your prayers. God will show us the way!



What a powerful image

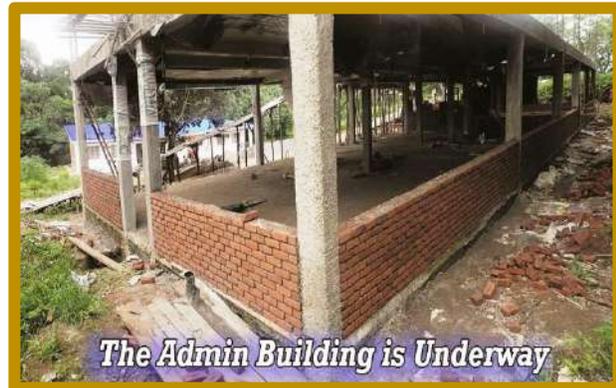
*I was amazed in our recent bedtime Bible reading of Luke 9 --- you know this story; there were 5,000 men who needed to be fed and the apostles had only 5 loaves and 2 fish. Yet with Christ by their side, they were able not only to feed the entire crowd, but to have 12 baskets-full left over. That means there was ONE full basket of food left for each apostle. **What a powerful image.** Just when we think something is impossible, we wind up with more blessings than when we started. We may feel we have "only" a limited amount of help to share with others, but God can perform wonders with our gifts to Him, even the smallest of gifts. AND amazingly, we often wind up with more than when we first began. Sidney Vaughn*

The Final Phase – Admin. Block by Ben Hayes

Construction on the Administration Building is progressing well. The floor for the second level of the building has been laid and the walls and structure for the second level will now be worked on. We have paid for the construction of this building in phases and now need to pay for the final phase (\$41,800). This building is part of our overall plan towards the Bible school on campus and needs your continued support. As mentioned previously, this building will provide a place for our expanding office staff as well as freeing up other existing space which will be used for the new Bible school.

If you would like to contribute towards this important project by helping complete the payment for the Admin. Building, it would make a massive impact on our current financial situation. We're thankful for all your prayers and support.

Blessings, [Ben](#)



There and Back Again...

In January, I had the unique blessing of making a quick trip back to the US to attend the Namikango Board Meeting. The team here was very supportive with my being away for the two weeks and it was very beneficial to get to be with the Board Members as we discussed Namikango's future. In addition to the meeting, I also had the chance to visit several individuals and congregations in the West Texas area with Bob Mize, who has been helping Namikango fundraise for upcoming projects.

I finished off my trip in Houston with some special time with my parents. All in all, it was a great trip, though I was glad to be back with my family and team in Malawi. The change from cold (in the US) to hot and rainy (in Malawi) was a stark contrast. When I arrived back the rainy season was in full swing. One of my Malawian co-workers noted when I returned to the office, that I looked "different."

"Do I look larger?" I asked, as that is the typical stereotype assumption for missionaries who go back to the US and eat a lot. "No" he said, "you just look...very white." "Ahhh...well yes, it was cold in the US."

Both Africa and the US have parts of "home" for me. It's a blessing to be reminded of the good friendships we have at home and here with those we work with. It's good to be back.

[Ben Hayes](#)



Annual Planning

Like many of you, every year at this time, we spend a lot of time planning for the upcoming year and reviewing the previous year. Ryan, Eric, and I met with people from each of our departments and spent several weeks planning for our ministries. We then came together as an entire staff and shared our goals for the year together. It's a busy time, but also very fruitful and necessary. We appreciate your prayers as we ask God for guidance in how best to make the largest impact possible in 2019.

[Ben Hayes](#)





Dear Sidney,
Thank you for your faithfulness in the Namikango Mission work. Mauriene and I appreciate you and your family. We would like to give to the Building Fund Drive and the Operating Fund Reserves. Our love and prayers –
Truman & Mauriene Hayes

Great work guys! Hope to see you all soon.
God bless! *Nathan & Rachel Nash*

In loving memory of
Murrell & Elgie Spence
Don & Linda Lipsey

In loving memory of
Thelma Clark
Duane & Lisa Mize

This contribution is from the Evergreen, TX, Church of Christ in honor of **Judge (Joel) Whitmire** who has preached here since his youth. He has had to retire to an assisted living facility due to his Parkinson's Disease. Please use this toward the Medical facilities.

Sending this check in memory of our folks – **Murrell & Elgie Spence**. Thank you; we enjoy getting our Newsletter from Namikango Mission and seeing all the good work being done in God's name.
Don & Linda Lipsey

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Call to Prayer

On Sunday, Jan. 27th, the Board of Directors led a special Day of Prayer on behalf of Namikango Mission at congregations across the brotherhood. **We ask for your continued prayers.**

- Pray for the team in Malawi
- Pray for the Board of Directors
- Pray for the 2019 Capital Campaign Fund Drive
- Pray that every outreach effort will result in the salvation of souls

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If you'll use smile.amazon.com and select "**Namikango**" as your designated **NGO**, whenever you make online purchases there, **Amazon will donate** a percentage of the sale **to Namikango Mission.**



New Fence/Sign

The new fence was completed a while back and we have received many good comments about how nice it looked, but there was still something missing - a major piece.

This last week we finally got to install the 6-foot-long sign on the fence. It makes a bold statement for those driving by that this is "Namikango Mission." This is a nice addition to an already good-looking property. **Ben**