

It is Time to Share-Out by Susan Hayes

As we arrived in a small African village, to the area designated for a Share-Out, we immediately noticed a large group of women and some men sitting in front of the mud huts waiting for us. The women had bright colored kitenge cloths wrapped around their waists. The orange, red, blue, purple, yellow, and green colors seemed brighter than usual against the brown of the mud huts behind them. They all rose to their feet as our car pulled up and they began to sing.

Traditionally, the African men and women celebrate the arrival of visitors. But, this time, this event was not about the visitors. It was the day of the **Share-Out**.

A Share-Out is the event that happens typically after 9 months for the women and men that are a part of Village Savings & Loan (VSL). They have saved as a community for these months and this was the day they would get their savings and earnings returned to them. They Share-Out the money to the members of the group and a small amount is also given to support the community's needs or projects. This VSL group was predominantly women.

Discipleship Journey

We have made efforts for the Mission staff to have more personal time together. This year, all the staff along with the five summer interns, were introduced to the newly unveiled Staff Discipleship Journey Group. The Journey Group idea began in 2016, led by some of the Namikango staff and local village church leaders. There are now two Journey Groups underway. This is an ongoing program and, moving forward, will occupy one day a month for us all to come together.

On our first day, after enjoying tea and lunch, we teamed up in five groups of four or five members for Discovery Bible Study. We met in the Zomba Botanical Garden where we took time to reflect on Luke 15: 11–32. Our team was comprised of one sister and three brethren from the visiting interns.

We learned from this study that God our Father does not change and will always find us wherever we have strayed, whether within the "house" or out there in the "wilderness."

We also benefitted by sharing with the other groups at the end of the meeting. The main focus is the

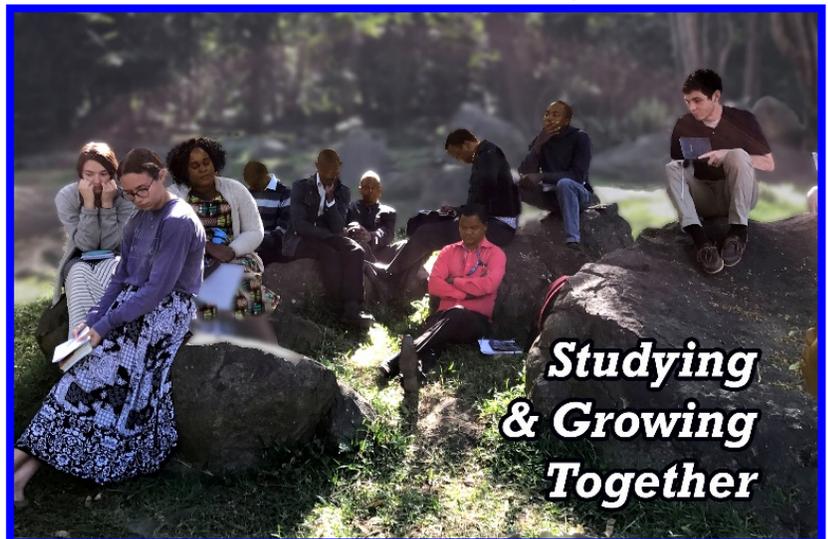
The joy and excitement in the air was palpable. We could all feel it. As the VSL officer counted out each person's money, everyone was genuinely excited for each other and sang and clapped and celebrated each other's successes.

There was a real feeling of accomplishment and victory as each person was handed their savings. It is hard to put into words the looks on these people's faces – absolute joy, dignity, empowerment, strength, confidence, acceptance, community. What an honor to witness this event! We will never forget it!



transformation of hearts and minds of participants through the teaching of Scripture. We would like God's truth to continually speak to us as individuals and as a group.

It is our hope that, by the end of the journey, *team spirit* and *unity* among members of the staff will be the result. We look forward to more of these meetings and anticipate that they will help us grow together and become more useful disciples who will make other disciples. [Symon Katete](#)



"Houston, we have a problem . . ."

We were told to make preparation for the storm - Hurricane Harvey. We did. We prepared to go to Terry and Cathy's (oldest son and his wife) where they have a large generator and we would feel safe. It was calm Saturday night and we were planning to go to Terry's early Sunday morning after church, just before the storm was on us.

During the night, Saturday, my wife Anita called out, "Sidney, the fan is making noise." I looked on her side and the fan on the floor was splashing water. I looked on my side and saw my shoes floating by like a boat. I didn't know they were water-proof; they didn't even get wet inside. We got out of bed and waded around in ankle-deep water, then looked outside where the yard and street resembled a lake. We couldn't go anywhere or do anything, so we went back to bed where it was dry. That didn't last long.

We still had lights and cell phones and we called Terry and said, "Are you ready for some visitors?" He said "Sorry, Dad, but all roads in and out of our area are impassable because of high water. But," Terry said, "Cathy was up through the night and has located a nearby hotel that has a room available and she reserved it for y'all."

We tried to go to the hotel but high water blocked the way so we went back home. They located another hotel; it was in the opposite direction and further away, but, amazingly, we were able to find roads that were not under water. It was surprising that a room was even available and that we were able to drive there. Upon arriving, we found that one of our own church members, Kim Andrews, was the hotel manager. We felt welcome and so blessed.

The weather report said the storm would hit Sunday. I guess Harvey didn't listen to the weather reports, because he hit us hard Saturday night. Our little city had 42 inches of rain in one day's time. That is a record we would rather not have. In 51 years of living at this location and through many storms, we had never had water in our home . . . until now. Our office was also flooded, along with our daughter Robin's home.

After a few days of wading and waiting, the waters receded and the sun returned; we then began the long process of

tearing out the water soaked floors and walls and things. Rebuilding is not even on the horizon.

On the second day of clean-up we were surprised with a real treat: about 10 people from New Beginnings Church came and helped by cleaning and carrying out debris all day long. And we had not even asked for help. They just came.

Every day since the storm we have seen some kind of special blessing

- Terry & Cathy found us a place to stay
- Kim was manager there
- We still had electricity and a/c for the clean-up work
- NBC church members helped clean out
- Paul Anthony brought a dehumidifier [a church member who purchased several units just to give away as aid]
- Robin was able to set up our temporary office in her home
- We have flood insurance – after \$20,000 out-of-pocket (home & office) – but, we have it!
- AND, my wife Anita greets me with a smile and reminds me of our blessings daily.

God is good! We are very blessed and making progress – slow but steady.

It is so awkward to be on the receiving end of things. It is so much easier to be offering a helping hand than to be receiving one. But we are thankful for all who have helped – with work, financially, and with your prayers.

We are blessed beyond words. Thank you.

Sidney Vaughn





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Champions by Ben Hayes

After officially being a team for less than a year, the Namikango Football [aka soccer] Club (NFC) has just been crowned Champions of the Thondwe area. Led by team captain (and our Maintenance Assistant at Namikango), Joel Chimpeni, NFC finished a league tournament in which we won First Place. And just last week we won a tournament comprised of the top four league finishers. The final game came down to penalty shootouts, against a Zomba team that we had previously lost to, and tied once. So, one might say that the victory was sweet indeed. It was recently mentioned in a staff meeting that word has travelled fast about these boys from Thondwe, and it seems we are now solidly on the radar of the larger Zomba football community.

The start of this football team has been positive in several other ways in addition to having fun and winning. Staff members have mentioned several times how our relationships have been

greatly strengthened with local Village Chiefs around Namikango, as well as community members who either parent the children or take interest in cheering at matches.

During the training sessions, a word of encouragement from Scripture is often given by Joel, to remind these men that football is not the most important thing. A recently shared testimony of one of the players made its way to us, and it was very encouraging. This particular guy had been known to be obnoxious, both to his parents and the village, and was known for excessive drinking. After being on the team for the last few months and listening to the messages, he's made a change and given up drinking. His parents talked about the change they had seen in their son, and attributed it to his being part of this team.

It's great to see God working in all areas of life and ministry. And this particular venture is a fun one to be a part of.



God Bless each of you as you go about spreading His Love.
I am so impressed each time I read your reports.
The way you're helping these people is so innovative and wise.

Blessings & Prayers,
Darleen West

In loving honor of [Sidney Vaughn](#)
for all he does for the Mission work.
Our love and prayers,
[Doug & MaryChris Wilks](#)

Thank you for the wonderful work you're doing at Namikango Mission! We honor you and thank God for the sacrifice of so many to spread *the Word*.

This gift is given
in loving memory of
[Erin Almanza](#)
– precious granddaughter and niece.
[Lillie and Louise Rogers](#)

God bless and many thanks to all who work and serve so many in the name and praise to our Lord.

Sidney, you've done a great job of taking care of the Mission business for many years.

May God bless you!
[John T. & Maebelle Francis](#)

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New Vehicle

Most of our work involves going out into villages, where roads are rough and off-road vehicles are needed. We have two heavy-duty vehicles to handle this, and they are used almost non-stop. Even so, there is a good deal of city driving that takes place – to the nearest bank in Zomba (20 min. away), and to the larger city of Blantyre (45 min. away).

There we handle business that we can't do in Zomba. These trips are normal and often. We've had a smaller 4-door sedan type vehicle that has served this purpose in previous years, but its time is now up.



Our off-road vehicles naturally aren't great on gas mileage, and thus we need to replace the small vehicle now. We can get a good, small, 7-seater Toyota that will fill many needs and serve multiple purposes.

Having this vehicle will keep us from being stranded at the Mission when the other two vehicles are out on ministry trips. If anyone feels the desire to contribute to this need, it will make a large impact on day to day operation. Thank you for all that you do to continue supporting the work here!

[Ben Hayes](#)