

# St. Bridget Parish Newsletter

Volume 4

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Issue 1

**T**his month's newsletter is about our sister parish, Namitembo Mission, and the new Trade School project that our Pastoral Council formally endorsed this past June. It's an exciting project that promises to be the "crowning jewel" in the overall work that has been undertaken these last six years at the main complex at Namitembo Mission and at the seven "outchurches" included in the mission area.



From the beginning of our relationship, the thrust at Namitembo has been Education -- one of our own core values here at St. Bridget, and the need identified by the people of

Namitembo themselves. In pursuit of that end, in the past six years St. Bridget has provided the means for the building or refurbishing of elementary classrooms at the main complex in Namitembo and at schools at each of the outchurches. We have provided the resources to build teacher housing, necessary for the staffing of the schools. We've built classrooms for the main high school at Namitembo and for a second high school underway at Matola, part of the Namitembo area. The people of Namitembo have themselves contributed to all these efforts, especially through the making of bricks used in this construction. These schools will provide a solid, basic education that will be the foundation for thousands of children, year after year, for years to come.

The Trade School is intended to *further build on this education* to provide *marketable life skills!* Remember that adage about the fish: "If you give a hungry person a fish, you relieve the hunger for a day. But if you teach a hungry person to fish, you provide for a lifetime." Read on...

## ***A Relationship Between Communities***

In 1996-97, then-pastor Fr. Quigg was in Ireland on sabbatical, where he met a Montfort priest by the name of Fr. Owen O'Donnell, superior of the Namitembo School

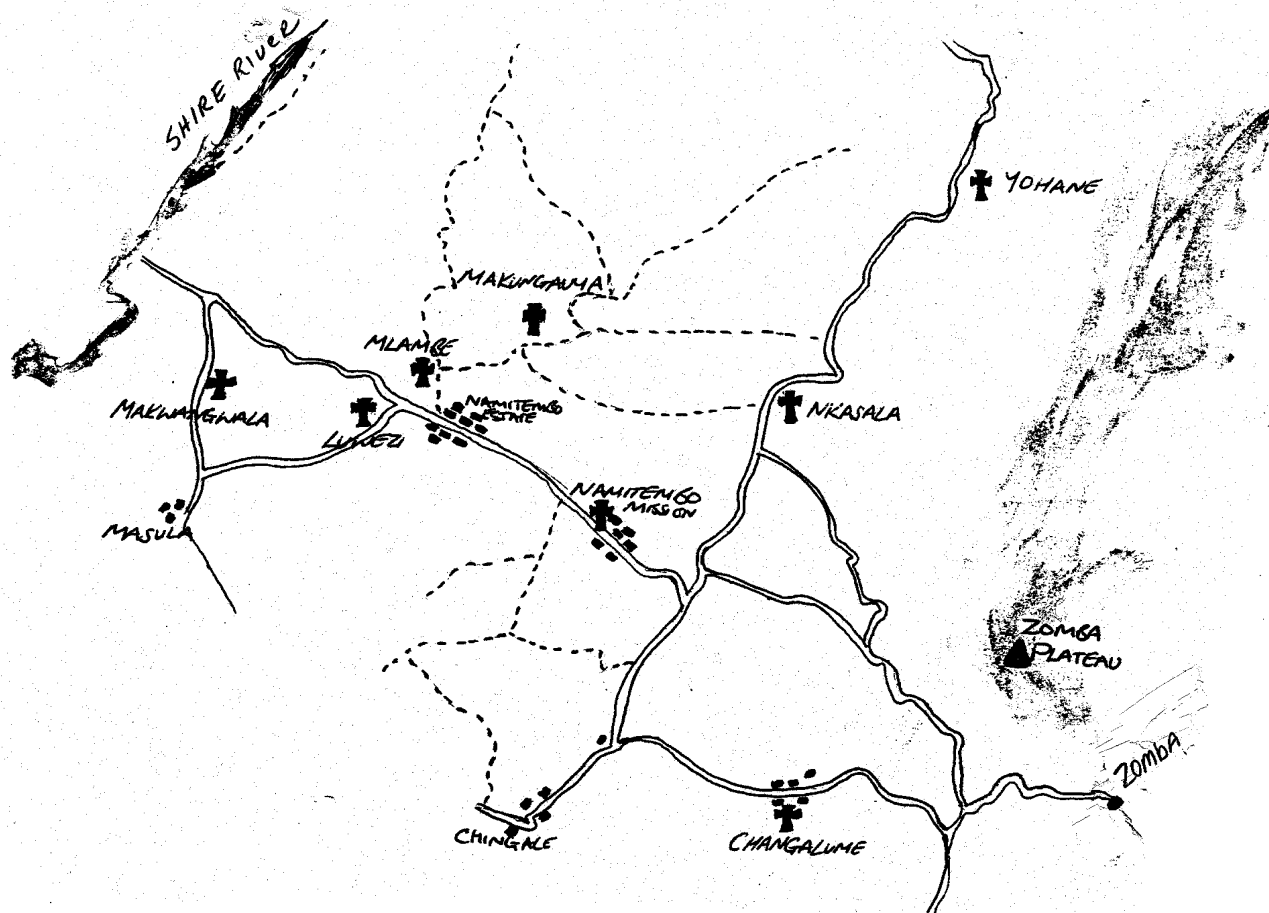
and Mission in Malawi, Africa. He was struck by the stark poverty in Malawi, one of the poorest countries in the world, especially considering the material blessings that we at St. Bridget enjoy. His initial attempts to initiate a dialogue with Owen about a "sister parish" effort did not get very far, however; Owen felt that fundraising, even from a generous parish, could only last a while, and that people would tire of it. What would be necessary was a relationship -- people from St. Bridget would have to come to visit the people of Namitembo, so that we could become friends who would learn about each other's lives.

With that understanding, and after much conversation, a formal five-year agreement was drawn up and approved by both communities, which was renewed this June by our Pastoral Council. Our Elephant Stampede each September has become the visible event at which we raise funds, although many individuals have made personal donations, large and small, at other times over the years. One parishioner, for instance, had connections that provided funding (\$25,000) for a large Community Center; a few families themselves provided funding for individual teacher houses (at a rough cost of \$5000 per house); a couple of parishioners purchased a truck and lorry, another a computer [*Nota bene: Owen could use a new laptop*]; a couple have provided "matching donations" that have enlivened our Stampede efforts these past few years; and others responded generously toward famine relief these past two years.

The list of completed projects is too lengthy to list again here (check our web site at [www.stbridgetchurch.org/Africa.pdf](http://www.stbridgetchurch.org/Africa.pdf)), but two new projects in the past year are worthy of note: the construction of a new two-classroom



block for the Namitembo high school, and the construction of a second high school at Matola (see pictures). Our sister parish now sports the only two rural Catholic high



## Namitembo

schools in the country.

Projects such as these would probably never have continued to happen, however, without the interaction between our two communities, primarily between the delegations that have been exchanged over the years. Malawians have visited St. Bridget four times: Fr. Owen himself is visiting us now for the third time, and Fr. Raphael visited two years ago. St. Bridget has sent delegations to Malawi three times: Fr. Quigg, Lucio Dalla Gasperina and then-Council President Joe Simmons went the first time, followed by Louise Jarkow and Steve Murphy, followed again last summer by a delegation of nine, including five of our youth, Mary Jo Gasparich, and Denny Duffell. Fr. Owen was right: these first hand interactions between our two communities have brought us a legacy of friendship, understanding, and support.

### The Trade School Proposal

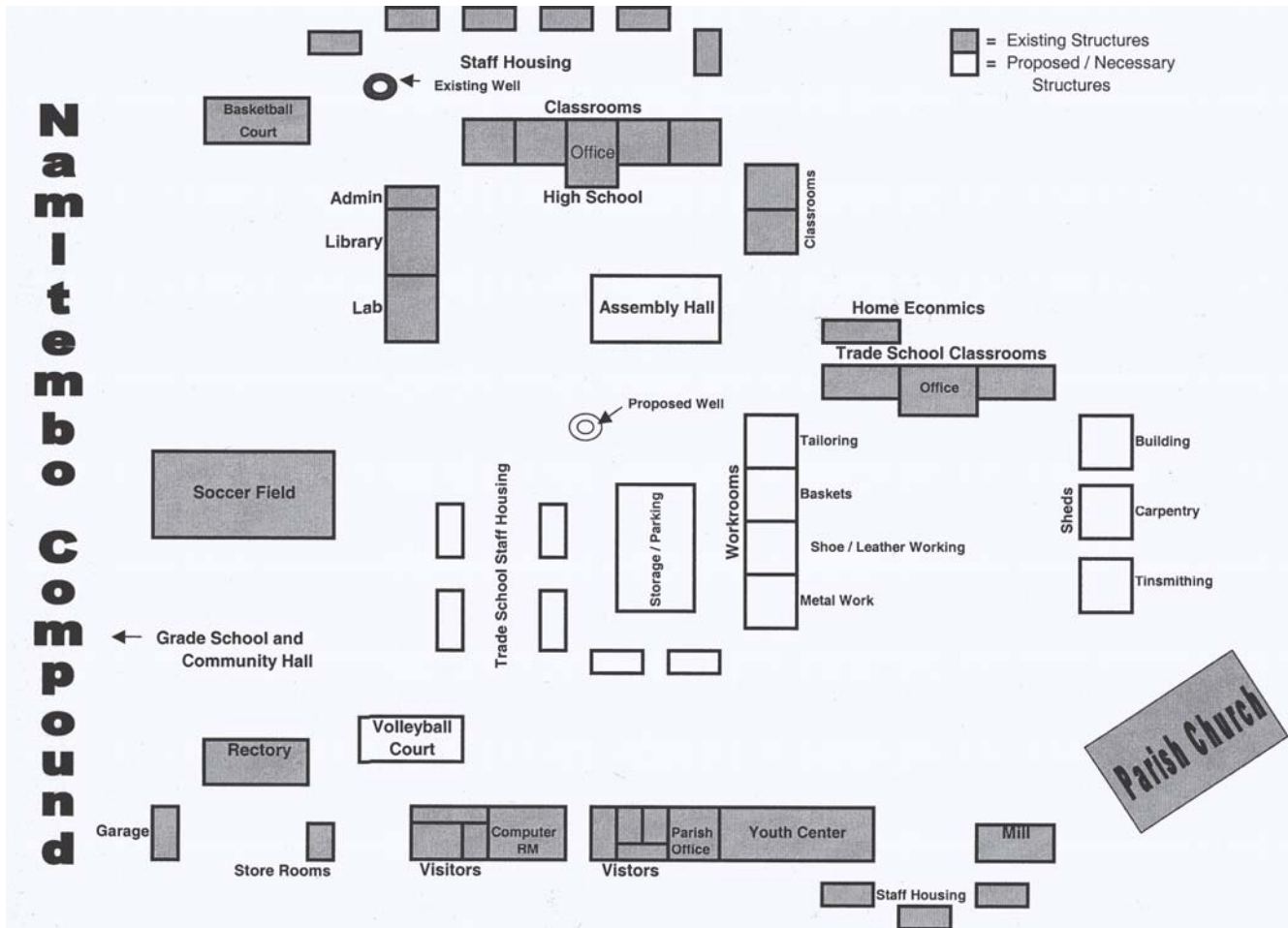
During the visit last summer, Denny pointed out to Fr. Owen that the initial 5-year agreement between our two communities was ending. “Was there,” he asked, “a need or work still left undone – a worthy challenge?” Owen



said that yes, there was – and in fact, the bishop himself was coming to Namitembo to present it!

The proposal from Bishop Chamgwera

(and, of course, Fr. Owen) is the most ambitious project yet: the establishment of an Agricultural and Trade School at Namitembo. The support and involvement of the diocese is essential, since (unlike the other schools) the teachers would not be government employees; involving the diocese qualifies teachers for pension and other benefits. Proposed skills are tailoring/sewing, basket work, leatherwork (shoes, etc), building/masonry, carpentry, tinsmithing, home economics (including health and nutrition), computers, and agriculture. Certification for these trade skills is being explored from local and international sources.



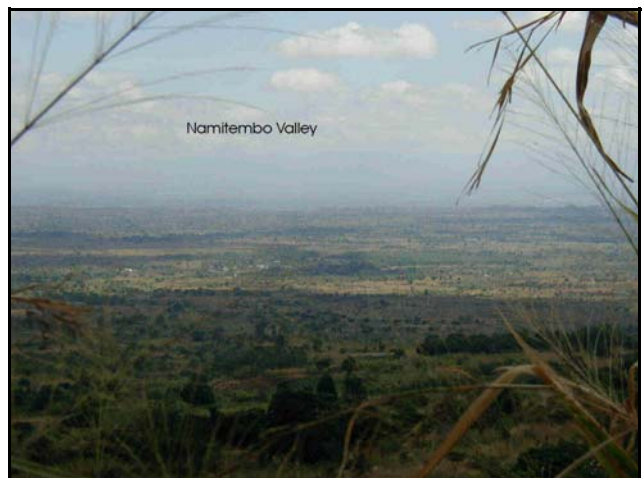
In a region of severe poverty, threatened cyclically by famine, whose adult leadership is being devastated by AIDS... skills like these can be the lifeline for a nation.

The project construction and curriculum will be phased in over 3-5 years, with the agricultural phase developing more slowly because of the greater costs for equipment and irrigation. The site plan shows the classrooms, teacher housing (the administrator's house should be finished before Owen returns), and other structures needed for the project, with the available farmland lying to the northwest.

The project is intended to be self-sufficient when fully underway – in part through a cooperative sharing with students from the goods they produce. The agricultural piece is particularly promising: irrigation will allow two growing seasons, and a tractor will greatly increase productivity. Consider: in the past two years there have been famines in Malawi because of the vagaries of weather... what if the people had more capability to adapt to those extremes?!

The project will cost in the neighborhood of \$250,000, with the needs for a successful first year at approximately \$40,000. What would these monies go for? Some samples: 5 staff houses @ \$6,000 each, 3 sheds @ \$4,500 each, workroom and assembly hall blocks @ \$12,500 each, reconditioned tractor & implements @

\$24,000, a pick-up @\$17,500, 4 irrigation wells @ \$9,000 each, 3 dams @\$2,500 each. Annual salaries? The Administrator's salary would be \$2,000, groundstaff about \$1,200, and 5 tutors at about \$900 each.



Questions? Now is the best time to ask – Fr. Owen will be in town through the weekend of the Elephant Stampede, September 13th!

Take the African Challenge -- join us next Sunday. And write the biggest check you can afford to the **Namitembo School Fund!**

# ST. BRIDGET CHURCH

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## *Elephant Stampede* *Sunday, September 14th* *1:00 PM* *Magnuson Park*

### **Elephant Stampede Registration Form**

**5K Run/Walk—Sunday, Sept. 14, 2003, 1 PM.** Please print clearly. One entrant per form—copies ok.

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Age as of 9/14/03 \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you plan to attend the Stampede Barbecue?  Yes  No If Yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_

For official use only

#### **PLEASE PRE-REGISTER.**

By mail through Sept. 12. Registration: \$20 adult thru Sept. 12, \$25 after; \$5 children 6-14; under 6 FREE. Make checks payable to: *Namitembo School Fund*, 4900 NE 50th Street, Seattle, WA 98105. Or pay in person at St. Bridget Church, 4900 NE 50th, Seattle, 206-523-8787 or Super Jock 'N Jill, 7210 E. Greenlake Drive N., Seattle, 206-522-7711.

**READ THIS BEFORE SIGNING!** I know that running a road race is a potentially hazardous activity. I should not enter and run unless I am medically able and properly trained. I agree to abide by any decision of a race official relative to my ability to safely complete the run. I assume all risks associated with running or walking in this event including, but not limited to falls, contact with other participants, the effects of weather, including high humidity, traffic and the conditions of the road, all such risks being known and appreciated by me. Having read this waiver and knowing these facts and in consideration of acceptance of my entry, I, for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf, waive and release St. Bridget Church, and all sponsors, individuals, volunteers, support organizations, and their representatives and successors from all claims or liabilities of any kind arising out of my participation even though said liability may arise out of negligence or carelessness on the part of the persons named in this waiver. I grant permission for all of the foregoing to use any photographs, motion pictures, recordings or any other record of this event for any legitimate purpose. **Parent or legal guardian must sign if athlete is under 18: This is to certify that my child has permission to compete in this event, is in good physical condition and that event officials may authorize necessary emergency treatment.**

Signature/Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian if Participant is under 18 years/Date