


1945

# African Missions of the Church of Christ in Northern Rhodesia

[Alvin Hobby]

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# AFRICAN MISSIONS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NORTHERN RHODESIA



## General Remarks

Northern Rhodesia is a British Colony, about the size of the State of Texas, lying between the Equator and the Tropic of Capricorn, almost in the center of Africa south of the Equator. This makes the seasons in Northern Rhodesia just the opposite of those in the United States, and also causes one long rainy season and one long dry season each year, each about six months in length. The tropical heat is somewhat tempered by the high altitude of the country and the fact that the rainy season coincides with the summer.

The population of the colony consists of some 2,000,000 natives of various tribes and languages, a few hundred British Indians, found mostly in the



*African woman in native village. Notice the reed through her nose, the beads, bracelets, etc.; about her neck, legs, and arms.*

shops in the towns, and about 15,000 Europeans, mostly English and Dutch, living mainly about the mines on the Copper Belt, in big towns, and on farms near the railway line.

The natives of Northern Rhodesia are mainly an agricultural people, raising by primitive methods such crops as corn, beans, millet, pumpkins, cassava, etc. However, in areas where tsetse flies do not prevent, many cattle are raised, and farming methods are improving. Besides farming, many natives work in the mines, on the railway line, and in the sawmills. The white people of the country are mostly government officials, managers of farms, stores, and various public or private enterprises, and railway workers.

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## History

Church of Christ mission work was begun in Northern Rhodesia about 1920 when Brother John Sherriff began making preaching trips which carried him north of the Zambezi River. He spent some time there himself and left some native teachers to continue what had been started. Later, more white workers came, more or less to settle, open mission stations, conduct schools, do evangelistic work, and to help in spreading the Gospel in any way they could, especially in the Southern Province of Northern Rhodesia.

Workers that have followed Brother Sherriff to this mission field, and the dates of their first arrivals are as follows: The Shorts, 1923; Lawyers, 1926; Merritts, 1926; Scotts, 1927; Reeses, 1929; Browns, 1929; Hobbys, 1938; Sister Rowe, 1938; Orville

Brittall, 1938; Shewmakers, 1939; Miss Claassen, 1943; E. L. Echols, 1944; Brittall Family, 1946.

The above workers have not all remained on the Northern Rhodesia field continuously since they went there. The Shorts left in 1928 to go to the States, and returned to Southern Rhodesia to help with the work about Huyuyu. After the Lawyers had been on the field for about a year Brother Lawyer was killed; and Sister Lawyer, after about one more year, returned to the States. The Browns, soon after having returned to Africa in 1938, after a furlough in America, left Northern Rhodesia, spent some time in Cape Town and later started Nhowe Mission, near Macheke, Southern Rhodesia. The Scotts went to Cape Town in 1943, on account of Sister Scott's health. The Merritts and the Reeses have both been home on furlough for about two years each, and the Merritts have spent some time in Cape Town. Sister Rowe went home in 1943; and the Hobbys left Rhodesia in 1945, expecting to return in 1947. Then the Brittells spent six months at the Cape, leaving only the Shewmakers and Brother Echols who have not been off the Rhodesian field since they arrived.

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## *The Missions*

### SINDE

Sinde is our oldest mission station in Northern Rhodesia, located about 20 miles north of Livingstone and about 7 miles west of the railway line running to the north. Work was first started at this place by some of Brother Sheriff's native workers. But the mission station was opened by the Shorts in 1923. Besides them, at various times, the Lawyers,

Merritts, Reeses, Scotts, Browns, Shewmakers, Brittells, and Brother Echols have had a part in the work that has been done at Sinde. From 1929 to 1937 the Reeses were largely responsible for the work there. But since 1940 the station has been operated largely by the Shewmakers and Brittells.

### NAMWIANGA

Namwianga Mission is located about 3½ miles south of Kalomo, a small town on the railway line, 83 miles north of Livingstone. Namwianga was started in 1932 by the Browns and Scotts, and operated by them until 1938 when Brother Merritt came to take over. In September, 1938, the Hobbys and Sister Rowe arrived. And in 1940, when the Scotts left to move to Sinde and later to Livingstone, the Reeses came to Scott's place, Namwianga Home, which adjoins the mission farm. Miss R. J. Claassen, whose parents live at Bulawayo, S. Rhodesia, arrived in 1943, when Sister Rowe left. And Brother Echols after about eight months at Sinde, came to Namwianga in August, 1945, about a month before the Hobbys left to go to Cape Town to await passage to America, and a little before the Merritts left to go to Kabanga.

Namwianga, due to its central location with respect to the other missions, and its facilities, has been made a sort of central station, serving the whole area in providing "higher education," a Girls' School, and Teacher Training.

### KABANGA

The site for Kabanga Mission, about 50 miles east of south of Kalomo, toward the Zambezi Valley, was chosen by Brother Short and Brother Lawyer in

1926. And the following year work was begun there by Brother Lawyer and Brother Merritt. After that Brother Merritt was largely responsible for the work at Kabanga until 1935, when he and his family went home on furlough and Brother Scott took charge of the mission, although the Shorts were there about a year and the Browns about three years. In 1937 the Merritts returned and remained at Kabanga about a year before coming to Namwianga to take charge of the work there. After 1937 no white missionary was stationed here until 1945 when the Merritts returned. However, work in the Kabanga area continued all along, mainly by native workers supervised by Namwianga.

## LIVINGSTONE

Livingstone is one of the largest towns in North-



*Church house at Livingstone*

ern Rhodesia, and the largest in the area where we work. Normally it has a population of about 1,000 white people and about 6,000 to 7,000 natives. We have no regular mission station there but for several years there has been a church and a school near one of the native locations. Until about 1943 the Scotts were largely responsible for the supervision of the Livingstone work. Since that time the Shewmakers and the Brittells, at different times, have been located here, and have been responsible for the work, as well as that in the area of Sinde Mission. Bro. Scott built a new church house before he left for Cape Town; and in 1945, Bro. Shewmaker began work on a new, up-to-date five-room school house, which when completed will be a credit to the Northern Rhodesia work as a whole, as well as that in Livingstone.

## SITES FOR NEW STATIONS

The government has asked us to open a new mission station on "virgin soil," to the northwest, near the Kafue River. And there is a possibility of a new station at Mulobezi, a sawmill town about 100 miles northwest of Livingstone, and connected with Livingstone by a private railway of the sawmill company. But in the past it has not been possible to open stations in these areas because of lack of funds and new workers. (Note: The locations of the sites for these possible new stations are indicated on the map by triangles.)

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## *The Work*

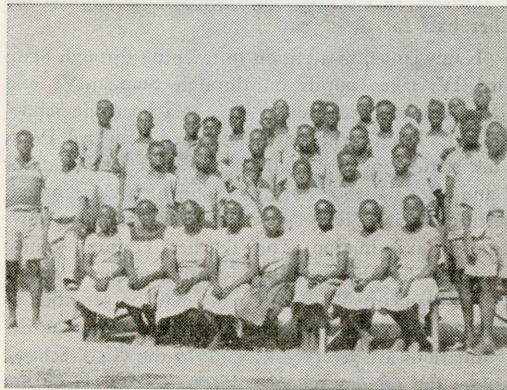
Work on the Rhodesian field is varied; and in the past the missionary has been expected to be more

or less a jack-of-all-trades. However, under the present organization of the work in Northern Rhodesia the situation has been remedied somewhat, and the worker may be given, to a certain extent, the work he is best qualified to do. Some building is necessary; and there is generally some farming and shop-work to be done, especially on the mission station. Translating and other phases of literary work and printing are very needful and helpful to the work as a whole. Also, wherever the missionary goes he finds illnesses, such as malaria, sore eyes, tropical ulcers, itch, cuts, burns, snake bites, etc.; so that he has to do some doctoring or first aid work, trying to get the severe cases to the nearest hospital which may be 50 to 100 miles away. And in the past, a very considerable amount of time has been used in teaching one's own children, using correspondence lessons supplied by the Southern Rhodesia Government and paid for by the Northern Rhodesia Government. These lessons are quite satisfactory, the chief objection being that this work takes so much of one's time. However, most of the African missionary's time is normally spent in connection with one or more of the following phases of the work.

### MISSION SCHOOLS

Each mission station attempts a school program, and to the average native African a mission is a school. Of course the one big aim in operating schools is to promote the cause of Christianity. It is felt that daily contact with the native in the classroom is one of the best ways of producing strong Christians. So the Bible is taught daily and stressed above all the other subjects, which are taught in accordance with the Government Syllabus, assuming that an in-

telligent Christian should normally be stronger than an ignorant one. Again, on the mission station there are the regular Lord's Day Services and Prayer Meetings during the week which all the pupils are required to attend. All this gives many opportunities for contacting, teaching, and converting the African, as well as developing and training native preachers and teachers to work among their own people in the villages.



*Some of the pupils and Teachers-in-Training  
at Namwianga Mission*

Sinde Mission conducts a school which takes pupils, both boys and girls, through Standard IV; or about grade six. The main subjects taught are Bible, Reading (both Vernacular and English), Writing, Arithmetic, Singing, Hygiene, Nature Study or General Science, Geography, History, Civics, and Handwork. Since there are many villages near Sinde there

are generally only a few boarders, most of the 150 to 200 pupils being "day students."

Keeping pupils on the mission as boarders presents many problems and difficulties. But in some ways it is the best arrangement because it takes the pupils away from the village environment more than otherwise and may help some to be better Christians than they would be in the villages where temptations are numerous and strong. Boarders generally go to school half of the day and work on the mission the other half for their food.

Namwianga, in addition to teaching through Standard IV, takes pupils on through Standard VI and offers Teacher Training, as well as a boarding school for girls. Pupils who have completed Standard IV at other stations may come to Namwianga for Standards V and VI (grades 7 and 8), after which Government Certificates are given on successfully passing a government examination. The Teacher Training course is mainly for the training of native teachers, generally ex-Standard VI pupils who may be sent out to teach in the village schools. But pupils from the denominations are accepted as well. In the Girls' School, besides the regular school subjects, special classes are offered in Hygiene, Child Care, sewing, knitting, cooking, basketry, etc. The total enrollment of Namwianga is generally 150 to 200, including five or six teachers-in-training and twenty to thirty girls.

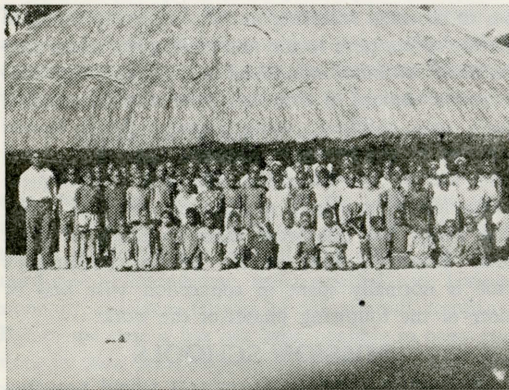
In the Kabanga area there are several out-schools, one only two miles from the mission. So the school work on the mission station is generally limited to Standards III and IV, acting as a central school for the surrounding village schools.

At Livingstone, where all the pupils are "day

students," classes are offered for both boys and girls through Standard IV. The enrollment is generally 200, and there will likely be a big increase when the new school building is completed.

## VILLAGE SCHOOLS

The village schools are all taught by native teachers, educated and trained perhaps on the mission station, and supervised by a missionary who may be designated as Manager-of-Schools. These schools teach through Standard II (about grade 4), and most of



*A Village School*

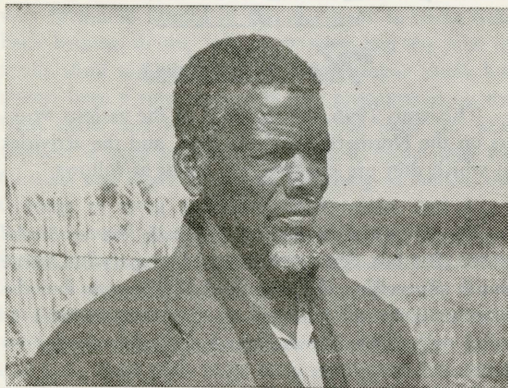
the natives, even of those that ever go to school at all, do not attend any other school. The school term is normally 150 days, beginning about April and continuing until October or November. During this time the Manager-of-Schools tries to visit each school at least twice, inspecting the work being done, making

notes of the needs of the school, and doing what he can to encourage the teacher and to offer advice for the improvement of the work as well as contacting the village people, and, when possible, holding a service in the village at night. At other times, between these visits, the teacher may come, or send, to the mission for his monthly wages (perhaps from five or six dollars to fifteen or twenty dollars) and school supplies, or to report some difficulty that has arisen. Generally about ten or twelve of these schools are supervised from Namwianga, and five or six from Sinde. And the total enrollment of all the schools, including those on the mission station reaches about 1500.

### EVANGELISTIC WORK

Just as the best teacher of the native is the native himself, so it is likewise true that the native is the best one to preach to his own people, the most successful evangelistic work among the African being done by the African himself. Both Namwianga and Sinde keep full time native evangelists on the field; and some have grown in the faith sufficiently that they go about preaching on their own, a goal toward which all African missions and missionaries aim. However, the work has not advanced enough that this most important phase of it can be left to the African entirely; and the missionary himself tries to spend some time travelling among the villages and preaching. For many reasons this can best be done during the winter, or dry season, from about May until August or September. It is easier to travel at this season and there are fewer mosquitoes. The people are not very busy with their crops or other work and not scattered as they are during the rains. Also,

the missionary may have more time for such work during the winter, since the mission schools are not in session then.



*Mooka, a native Christian who preaches in his and nearby villages in the area of Kabanga Mission*

This phase of African mission work presents some difficulties and has some inconveniences connected with it, especially for the white man. Most of the travelling must be done either on foot or by bicycle with native carriers following with the necessary supplies, provisions, etc., for camping. Cooking is done on an open fire; and the bed is made on the ground using some grass to afford a little softness and keep the blankets out of the dirt. A day's journey may be from 5 to 15 or 20 miles a day; and the number of villages visited depends upon their proximity to one another in the area being visited. As stated before, the Manager-of-Schools may do evangelistic



work while out inspecting the village schools. And in spite of the inconveniences, many enjoy such work as this, since it offers one a pleasing change after the monotony of nine months in the classroom.

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## *The Workers*

This year, 1946, the locations of the various workers on the Northern Rhodesia field, and the activities in which they are engaged, are about as follows;

### SINDE

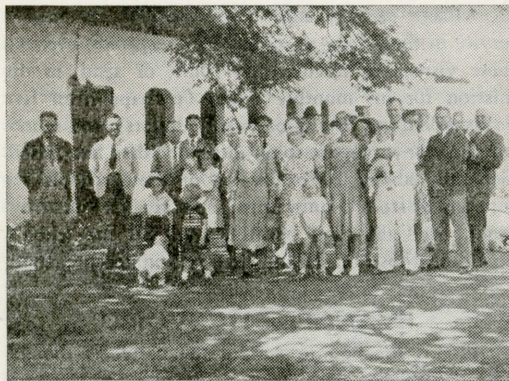
The Shewmakers and the Brittells are at Sinde, where Brother Shewmaker is Missionary-in-Charge and is supervising the schools at Livingstone and the out-schools in the villages of that area, as well as being responsible for the erection of the new school house at Livingstone.

Brother Brittell has been released from mission duties to do evangelistic work in the villages, at the same time making tentative plans for starting an orphans home as soon as conditions may permit.

### NAMWIANGA

Brother A. B. Reese is Missionary-in-Charge at Namwianga, having the general oversight of the work and supervising a much needed building program. Brother E. L. Echols is the Principal of the schools on the mission and has charge of the boys' compound. Brother Boyd Reese has charge of the Teacher Training and is the Manager-of-Schools for the Namwianga and Kabanga areas. Sister Reese teaches in the morning school on the mission and helps with the special work of the girls. Miss Claassen has charge of the girls' compound and the girls' manual work\*and

helps teach in the morning school, that is, Standards IV to VI.



*Group of Northern Rhodesia missionaries. Represented in this picture are the Merritts, Shewmakers, Brittells, Hobbys, Miss Claassen, Eldred Echols, Reeses, and Shorts.*

Besides the above, Brother and Sister W. N. Short have just recently come to Namwianga from Southern Rhodesia for the purpose of starting a school for white children on the farm known as Namwianga Home, which adjoins the mission. Such a school is badly needed for helping contact white people of the community, as well as providing a school for the missionaries' children, since in the past the teaching of even one child has taken a large part of the time of one of the parents, or both. This school was opened in January, 1946. Brother Short also does a considerable amount of printing,

including tracts in the native and Afrikaans languages, and is now printing the eight-page "Glimpses of Africa" giving monthly news, etc., relative to the African mission field and a twelve-page religious paper "Rays of Light," for distribution among many of the white people living in Africa.

### KABANGA

The Merritts recently went to Kabanga for the purpose of reopening the mission, which had been without a white missionary since 1938. Brother Merritt is repairing some of the old buildings, in some cases making additions to them, and making such new buildings as are needful. He has opened a school on the mission for Standards III and IV, and does evangelistic work in the nearby villages, visiting and encouraging the village schools in that area, which have continued all along, having been supervised from Namwianga.

### ON FURLOUGH

Sister Myrtle Rowe left to go home on furlough the latter part of 1943. While on the African field she had charge of the Girls' School at Namwianga. She expects to return in 1946.

The Hobby family which left Northern Rhodesia in September 1945, hopes to return in the summer of '47 and continue helping with the school program.

### NEW WORKERS

One of the greatest needs of the Rhodesian field today, as well as the entire African field, is new workers. And the present workers are hoping and praying that others may find it in heart to give their lives to the Master's cause in this field. New workers could be used to relieve some of the old workers on

the field and to enlarge the work that has been started, as well as to open new mission stations. Room for the enlarging and the expansion of the work is almost unlimited. And the government at present is very favorable toward it. But the work is being held back because of the lack of workers and the lack of funds. And although the need for proper funds has always been a very great need, the missionaries on the field agree that just at this time the need for new workers is even greater. It is good to know that the Garretts and Sister Rowe are returning to Africa, the Garretts to work in Southern Rhodesia and Sister Rowe to work in Northern Rhodesia, and that Sister Rowe is being accompanied by a young lady, Miss Sibyl Rickman. Brother and Sister Geo. F. Hook have recently arrived in Southern Rhodesia to help with the work at Nhowe Mission. Brethren Foy Short and J. C. Reid plan to go soon to work in Northern Rhodesia. And it is hoped that there may be others who are willing and who can go and help with the work in this area.

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### *Present Needs*

Some of the present, financial or material, needs of the field are outlined in the following letter, signed by all the male missionaries on the Northern Rhodesia field, authorizing Brother Hobby to receive and forward gifts to meet such needs:

Church of Christ Missions,  
Northern Rhodesia, Africa.

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to certify that Alvin Hobby is authorized to receive and forward gifts in whole or in part for

any or all of the following:

1. Well for Namwianga. \$300.00
2. Reserve tanks. \$100.00
3. Used or new microscope.
4. 16 mm. or 35 mm. motion picture projector, old, crank model.
5. Four army-style, tropical camping outfits.
6. Any sort of tools for woodwork shop.
7. Seats for church house. \$150.00
8. Furniture for three schoolrooms.
9. Monthly contributions for General Mission Fund.
10. Printing equipment, or funds for buying.
11. Funds to help buy farm for mission use.
12. Funds for buying furniture for the new, five-room, school building at Livingstone.

Signed:

W. N. Short  
J. D. Merritt  
A. B. Reese

Eldred L. Echols  
R. B. Reese  
J. C. Shewmaker  
O. D. Brittell

A brief description of the above needs follows:

1. In the past the water supply for general mission purposes has been very unsatisfactory at Namwianga. A nearby "river" supplies some and dug wells supply the rest. But the "river" is scarcely more than a row of connected water holes, except during the heaviest rains, with many reeds which harbor the parasites of a tropical disease called bilharzia from which several school boys fall ill each year. And the wells soon run low and the water becomes muddy. A government drill is available for about \$300.00 each, and Namwianga certainly needs at least one good well.

2. Reserved tanks are needed for storing the water for use when needed. The estimated cost of these is about \$100.00.

3. The microscope would become a part of the General Science equipment at Namwianga.

4. Brethern Hobby and Brittell have experimented with the showing of lantern slides on the mission and in the villages to illustrate Bible stories, etc., and find that bigger audiences can be held for a longer time this way than by any other means yet tried. This projector would be used in the same way and should prove even more educational than the slides used in the past.

5. The camping outfits would be used by missionaries while travelling among the villages doing evangelistic work and inspecting the village schools. And this type would be especially useful during the rains, or just at the end of the rainy season, when mosquitoes are still plentiful.

6. African students are all very desirous of learning shopwork. But in the past it has been very difficult, or impossible, to offer courses in woodwork on account of the scarcity of tools. Such tools could be used at Namwianga.

7. None of the missions on the Northern Rhodesia field have separate church houses but use the school houses for the regular services of the church, with the result that most Africans think that the school and the church are about the same thing. The reasons for the desirability of separate houses are about the same in Africa as in America. So plans are being made for the building of a separate church house at Namwianga immediately and about \$150.00

is needed to buy materials for making the seats.

8. The three schoolrooms are being built at Namwianga now, and all need desks. These can be bought in the U. S. A. and shipped to Northern Rhodesia at a cost of \$300.00 to \$400.00 per classroom, or funds can be sent and purchases made there.

9. In the past general mission expenses such as those connected with the upkeep of the missions, new buildings, native teachers' salaries, etc., have been met by the missionaries themselves, who have taken the necessary amounts from their own personal funds. This has often amounted to \$40.00 or \$50.00 per month, per missionary family. And at times when it was not possible for the missionaries to contribute such amounts, the work had to suffer. Regular monthly contributions of any amount to be applied to the General Mission fund are acceptable and welcomed.

10. Printing equipment is needed by Brother Short in his printing work. The following articles could be put to use immediately: (1) 6 steel galleys, 24" x 4½", (2) 1 cabinet No. 118. (3) 4 pair upper and lower cases. (4) 8 double cases. (5) 2 rule cases. (6) 1 hand numbering machine, No. 41, American. (7) 40 lbs. 10 point type, old style, No. 2. (8) 6 lbs. 8 point type.

11. A place is needed for the building of the school for white children. "Namwianga Home," which joins the mission farm, is available. This farm has already been rented for one year, with the option to purchase, the price of purchase being 1000 lbs., or about \$4100.00, \$2050 down at the end of 1946, and the other to be in two installments of \$1025 each.

12. About \$2500.00 is needed for properly and

fully equipping the new, five-room school building at Livingstone. And it is thought that when this equipment is purchased, the government will make a grant to the mission large enough to cover about half of this expense. However, the mission must meet the original expense, so that any amount the Government may give as a grant-in-aid can be used for other purposes. \_\_\_\_\_○\_\_\_\_\_

## *How To Help*

The above list of needs is given so that anyone who may be interested in having a part in the African work can choose from the variety of definite, present needs presented the item that he is most interested in or can most conveniently have a part in, either by a cash donation or otherwise. If anyone has any of the articles mentioned in items 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 that he is interested in contributing, these can be sent to Brother Hobby who will be responsible for shipping them on to Northern Rhodesia or keeping them and taking them when he returns to Africa. Cash donations to help on any of the other items will be forwarded to Northern Rhodesia immediately and receipt acknowledged by the proper ones there. It is suggested that churches give this work a definite place in their budgets so that substantial help may be given without too big a burden to anyone, and that all may consider it the Lord's work, as it is, and trust in the promise that "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." II Cor. 9:8. Send all gifts or inquiries to Alvin Hobby, 803 East Market Street, Searcy, Arkansas.

