

## A History of Sikalongo Mission Part 2: The Late Colonial Years, 1931-1947<sup>1</sup>

By Dwight W. Thomas\*

### Introduction

#### *The context in 1931*

Sikalongo Mission Station in 1931 after Myron Taylor's death was an established institution with a variety of programs. Although small by comparison to other Brethren in Christ stations, the Sikalongo congregation was solid and growing. Membership in 1931 was 22, with 32 in the Enquirers Class.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the boarding school was said to be thriving with an enrollment nearly twice the size of the Macha boarding school.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, a regular non-boarding day school for elementary students had an enrollment of thirty students. The Taylors had laid a strong foundation during the 1920s, but the time was ripe for enhancement and expansion of the existing facilities and programs.

The broader context of 1931, which influenced mission work at Sikalongo, included the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression which followed. While funding was somewhat more difficult, the 1931 financial report noted:

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<sup>1</sup> I want to acknowledge a number of people for help with this essay. Rev. Dennis Mweetwa's feedback gave an especially helpful Zambian perspective. Dr. Daryl Climenhaga's feedback was equally useful in areas related to general mission history. The Cullen, Mann and Hershey families provided valuable materials and personal anecdotes which have enriched the story immensely.

<sup>2</sup> "Africa Statistical Report 1931," *Handbook of Missions Home and Foreign of the Brethren in Christ Church*, 1932, 41. Hereafter referred to as *Handbook of Missions*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

We rejoice and thank God for the way the needs have been supplied through the year, while it was necessary to reduce Africa's maintenance to \$2,000.00. However, the English Pound has dropped considerable so that the actual deduction would not be \$1,000.00.

While the cry of depression is heard everywhere and while all of us are feeling the effects, we still did not need to go into debt, nor did we have to tell those who were ready to go to the field, "We have no money to send you."<sup>4</sup>

Missionaries not only had to pay for their own supplies; they also had to have money to pay teachers and workers. Sikalongo missionaries undoubtedly had to tighten their financial belts as a result of economic stress in the United States.

Significant governance changes had previously occurred in Northern Rhodesia in 1924 with the transfer of the territory from the control of BSAC (British South Africa Company) to the British Colonial Office.<sup>5</sup> A brief account of these decisions appeared in a 1924-25 government report:

The outstanding administrative event was the change of Government. Previous to 1st April, 1924, the Territory had been under the administration of the British South Africa Company, but coincident with the grant of responsible Government to Southern Rhodesia in October, 1923, a settlement of various claims in connection with Northern Rhodesia was arrived at between the Crown and the Company with a view to the assumption by the Crown of full authority over that Territory. By the Northern Rhodesia Order in Council, 1924, the office of Governor was created, an Executive Council constituted, and provision made for a Legislative Council. Mr. H. J. Stanley, C.M.G. (now Sir Herbert Stanley, K.C.M.G.) took the oath as the first Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Northern Rhodesia

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<sup>4</sup> Graybill Wolgemuth, "Annual Financial Report of the Treasurer," in *Handbook of Missions*, 1932), 48-50.

<sup>5</sup> For information on the history of missions and mission education in Northern Rhodesia, see the following: Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (New York: Africana Pub. Co., 1976); Robert I. Rotberg, *Christian Missionaries and the Creation of Northern Rhodesia, 1880-1924* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965); John P. Ragsdale, *Protestant Mission Education in Zambia, 1880-1954* (Selinsgrove [Pa.] Susquehanna University Press, 1986); Peter Desmond Snelson, *Educational Development in Northern Rhodesia, 1883-1945* (Lusaka: National Educational Co. of Zambia, 1974); Brendan Patrick Carmody, *Religion and Education in Zambia* (Ndola, Zambia: Mission Press, 2004).

on 1st April, 1924. The first meeting of the Legislative Council took place on 23rd May.<sup>6</sup>

The consequences of this change were several-fold. First, educational reforms accompanied the shift, bringing new requirements for mission schools and expectations for higher educational standards. British authorities appointed regional and national education inspectors to monitor these changes and Brethren in Christ mission schools found themselves under greater scrutiny than before. At the same time, the new British Colonial Office was more responsive to local social needs than the BSAC had been, and they were more willing to spend money to provide aid where needed. The government response to the 1931 famine which led Myron Taylor to go to the Zambezi Valley illustrates their commitment to meeting the social needs of the people. The new government road to the valley not only provided aid in 1931, but it also opened up new evangelistic opportunities for Sikalongo missionaries.

The missionary conference held in Sikalongo in July 1931 should have signaled the happy beginning of a new phase of work at Sikalongo. The schools were on firm footing, the church was doing well, and an expanded staff set the stage for serious outreach into neighboring communities. Unfortunately, Myron Taylor's unexpected death in September 1931 put things in turmoil and forced a sudden realignment of responsibilities. His death came just at the time when Sikalongo Mission needed a new infusion of energy and the efforts of an expanded staff. The Taylors had laid a solid foundation during the 1920s and Sikalongo Mission was ripe for enhancement and expansion.

The late colonial period of Sikalongo's history begins after Myron Taylor's death in 1931 and continues up to the decade prior to independence in 1964. Each phase within this timeframe posed different challenges and enjoyed unique opportunities:

- a. *Enhancing a Worthy Cause*: Anna Eyster and Cecil and Jane Cullen (1931-1938)
- b. *Consolidating an Established Ministry*: Anna Eyster and Roy and Esther Mann (1938-1945) and Anna Eyster and Elwood and Dorothy Hershey (1945-1947)

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<sup>6</sup> Beginning in 1924, the Colonial Office issued annual reports that describe the policies and activities of each year. See: British Colonial Office, "Northern Rhodesia - Report for 1924-25," (London, 1924).

c. *Adjusting to Changing Currents: 1947-1954*: David and Dorcas Climenhaga and others (1947-1954)

d. *Preparing for Independence*: Graybill and Ethel Brubaker (1955-1957), Robert and Aggie Lehman (1957), Lewis and Gladys Sider (1958-1959), George and Rachel Kibler (1959-1961), Keith and Lucille Ulery (1962-1966)

This essay covers only the first two of these phases, encompassing the tenures of Anna Eyster, Cecil and Janie Cullen, Esther and Roy Mann, and Dorothy and Elwood Hershey. Their work falls undeniably within the colonial era. By contrast, the Climenhaga years and the decade that followed bear the marks of pre-independence. The winds of political change were unmistakable during the 1950s. The latter two phases will be covered in Part 3 of the Sikalongo History.

### **Enhancing a Worthy Cause: Anna Eyster and the Cullens (1931-1938)**

#### *New workers facing fresh challenges*

After the death of her husband, Adda Taylor and her daughter, Anna, remained at Sikalongo until July 1932. She and Anna busied themselves with the work of the mission. Adda wrote about trips to the outstation schools.<sup>7</sup> Letters by others noted that Adda provided valuable information to the new missionaries about local issues. Nevertheless, she and Anna left the field in June of 1932 and returned to the United States, where Adda took up residence at Messiah Home in Harrisburg. In Cullen's words:

Sister Taylor felt that it was the will of the Lord that she return to America, so in June she and Anna bid farewell to the land where she had spent so many years in useful service. Her departure has left a vacancy which none other can fill both among the missionaries and among the native Christians.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "Adda E. Taylor, "From Sikalongo Mission, S. A. - March 17th," *Evangelical Visitor*, May 23, 1932, 175.

<sup>8</sup> Cecil I. Cullen, "Sikalongo Mission Report 1932," *Handbook of Missions*, 1933), 22-23; Irvin W. Musser, "Secretary's Report," *Handbook of Missions*, 1933, 5-6.

With the departure of the Taylors, the resulting mission staff in 1931 consisted of inexperienced missionaries who were relatively new to Africa, several seasoned African workers, the recently-arrived Arthur Kutwayo, and two local evangelists. Jesse Chikaile continued to play a critical role in the schools while Peter Munsaka carried the responsibility of mission manager, overseeing local workers. Arthur Kutwayo held an increasingly important role as a teacher and spiritual leader, and the evangelists carried on the work of village visitation and preaching.

*Biographical sketch of Cecil I. and Janie Cullen*

Cecil and Janie Cullen, along with their son, Roy, arrived in Africa in early 1931. The Cullen family came from Ontario, Canada. Cecil was the son of Henry and Almeda Cullen, and Janie was the daughter of Albert and Cylinda Baer. They married in Welland, Ontario in 1923. Their wedding certificate indicates that both Janie and Cecil were affiliated with the Canadian Brethren in Christ at the time of their marriage. The wedding was announced in the *Evangelical Visitor*.<sup>9</sup> The Cullens had their first son, Roy, in 1924.

After a brief period of deputation, they sailed for Africa, arriving at Matopo in December 1929.<sup>10</sup> The Cullens served briefly at Mtshabezi, and were then transferred to Sikalongo after the missionary conference of July 1931.<sup>11</sup> The primary reason for Cullens' transfer to Sikalongo was to help the Taylors manage the Mission, thus freeing Myron to do evangelistic work beyond the immediate area of Sikalongo.



*Cecil and Janie Cullen and son. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

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<sup>9</sup> "Marriages," *Evangelical Visitor*, November 26, 1923, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Charles F. Eshleman, "Enroute to Africa," *Evangelical Visitor*, December 9, 1929, 7.

<sup>11</sup> H. H. Brubaker, "Sikalongo Report 1931," *Handbook of Missions*, 1932, 19-21.



*Sikalongo Mission staff. From left to right: Anna Eyster, Elizabeth Engle, the Cecil Cullen family. Photo courtesy of Cullen Photograph Collection.*

### *Biographical sketch of Anna M. Eyster*

Anna Eyster also arrived at Sikalongo in late July 1931. She came to replace Anna Engle as the headmistress for the Sikalongo Boys School, releasing Engle to be transferred to Macha to “reopen the girls school.”<sup>12</sup> Anna was born in Kansas in 1900 to Jesse and Malinda Eyster.<sup>13</sup> When she was two, Anna and her parents left Kansas and headed to Africa. Stopping at Chicago Mission and Harrisburg along the way, they departed from New York in April 1902.<sup>14</sup> Eysters continued in missions in Africa until July 1913, working most of the time among the miners in the Johannesburg mines. Jesse and Malinda Eyster, along with Isaac and Alice Lehman and Jacob and Mary Lehman, were part of a collaborative mission effort in the Johannesburg area aimed at evangelizing mine workers. They were associated with an organization called the South Africa Compounds’

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<sup>12</sup> Brubaker, “Sikalongo Report 1931”, *Handbook of Missions*, 1932.

<sup>13</sup> “Anna M. Eyster - 1900-1976,” *Evangelical Visitor*, September 10, 1976, 15.

<sup>14</sup> Jesse R. and Malinda Eyster, “As He Leads We Follow,” *Evangelical Visitor*, March 1, 1902, 99; Jesse R. and Malinda Eyster, “Sailing for Africa,” *Evangelical Visitor*, April 15, 1902, 150; Jesse R. and Malinda Eyster, “Arrived Safe,” *Evangelical Visitor*, June 1, 1902, 218-219.

Mission. It was started by a number of interested Christians in Transvaal, led by A. W. Baker. The Eysters were in charge of a school for African evangelists in Fordsburg.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, Anna spent most of her formative childhood years surrounded by the missionaries and the mission work of Johannesburg. It undoubtedly felt like home to her.

After the Eysters returned to the United States in 1913, they moved to Navarre, Kansas.<sup>16</sup> However, Jesse Eyster made frequent missions appearances around the country during the next four years on behalf of Brethren in Christ Foreign Mission Board and they continued to be listed as missionaries on furlough. Increasingly, he was engaged as a revivalist and involved in so-called “Tabernacle Meetings” (revivals in tents). In 1918, he and the family held tent meetings along the Pacific Coast. Ultimately, the Eysters bought a house in Upland, California in 1919, and Jesse continued his tent evangelism.<sup>17</sup> He later became the pastor of the Chino Brethren in Christ church.

The Eyster family’s move to the west coast put them in Upland just prior to the start of Beulah College.<sup>18</sup> Anna graduated from Pasadena High School in 1919 and became one of the first students at the newly-established Brethren in Christ school, graduating in 1922.<sup>19</sup> That she was an eager scholar is evident in her later attendance at UCLA and Claremont College and her acquisition of Practical Nursing credentials. Her parents obviously valued education and encouraged her educational pursuits.<sup>20</sup> Anna spent the next several years at Beulah helping as a teacher.

Anna Eyster’s arrival at Sikalongo in 1931 marked a new beginning both for the boys school at Sikalongo and for Macha Girls School. While Anna Engle worked to improve the quality at Macha, Anna Eyster did the same at Sikalongo. Eyster remained at Sikalongo Mission longer than

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<sup>15</sup> Jacob N. Engle and John M. Sheets, “From Africa to India,” *Evangelical Visitor*, February 21, 1910, 12-13; General Missionary Conference, “Report of the Proceedings of the First General Missionary Conference: Held at Johannesburg, July 13-20, 1904” (Johannesburg, 1905), 212.

<sup>16</sup> Jesse R. and Malinda Eyster, “From Africa - Our Home Coming,” *Evangelical Visitor*, August 11, 1913, 21-22.

<sup>17</sup> Hannah Eyer, “Tulare, California,” *Evangelical Visitor*, November 4, 1918, 28-29; Hirman Alderfer, “Upland, California,” *Evangelical Visitor*, October 20, 1919, 15.

<sup>18</sup> E. Morris Sider, *A Vision for Service: A History of Upland College* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1976).

<sup>19</sup> 1921 Beulah College Yearbook, (Upland, CA: [Beulah College], 1921).

<sup>20</sup> Her father, Jesse, was president of Beulah College for a period of time.

any other American missionary, serving there from 1931 until 1949, and it is difficult to overstate her impact on Sikalongo schools. She trained a generation of Brethren in Christ educators, many of whom became educators or church leaders.

In addition to the newly-arrived American missionaries, the 1931 Sikalongo staff included the two loyal standbys, Jesse Chikaile and Peter Munsaka, whose biographies appeared in Part 1 of this history. Both men had been at Sikalongo Mission since the early 1920s and played critical roles in both educational and practical spheres. Prior to Taylor's death, Arthur Kutuywayo, a Zimbabwean convert, came to Sikalongo to help. All three of these African men went with Taylor to the Zambezi Valley prior to his death.



*Anna Eyster, 1922. Photo from  
1922 Beulah College Echo.*

*Biographical sketch of Arthur Kutuywayo*<sup>21</sup>

Arthur Kutuywayo was born in eastern Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia at the time), somewhere near Melsetter. A detailed biography of his life is yet to be written, but fortunately we know some details about his life. According to Graybill Brubaker, Kutuywayo was converted in 1914 and began school at "Situ Mission which was about eight miles from his home."<sup>22</sup> This undoubtedly refers to "Rusitu Mission Station," which was founded in the late nineteenth-century, stills exists, and is located near the border of Mozambique.<sup>23</sup> After completing Standard V in 1922, Kutuywayo taught for several years. He resumed his education at Mt. Selinda Mission School, where he completed

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<sup>21</sup> Choosing a spelling for Kutuywayo's name is extremely complicated. The name is not uncommon in Zimbabwe and I found five different spellings of the family name in the course of my research: Kutuywayo, Kuchwayo, Khuzwayo, Kuzwayo, Ndliwayo. I use "Kutuywayo" because this was the spelling he used.

<sup>22</sup> Kutuywayo is frequently mentioned in the *Evangelical Visitor*. This biographical information comes primarily from A. Graybill Brubaker, "Knight in Armour: Arthur of Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, May 21, 1956.

<sup>23</sup> Mark M. Loomis, South Africa General Mission: Rusitu Mission Station (November 16, 2016 2016), retrieved February 1 2017 from <http://www.rhodesianstudycircle.org.uk/south-africa-general-mission-rusitu-mission-station/>.





*Anna Eyster and bicycle in front of Sikalongo Boys School. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*



*Arthur Kutwayo. Photo from Evangelical Visitor, May 21, 1956.*

his Standard VI (grade 8) with an Industrial and Teacher Training Certificate. Brethren in Christ mission leaders in Southern Rhodesia somehow learned about him and his training and asked him to go to Northern Rhodesia to help in Brethren in Christ mission schools. He arrived at Sikalongo in 1931 and remained there until his death in 1977.<sup>24</sup>

During his early years, Kutwayo taught all subjects in the lower grades and industrial arts to all of the students. He was chosen as deacon in the local congregation and served on denominational boards. Kutwayo regularly preached in services, but he was especially known for his powerful prayers. He reportedly moved unpredictably between his native Sindebele, Tonga, and English in the middle of his prayers. He continued to work up to the end of his life, delivering a message at the hospital on the day he died.<sup>25</sup> Although the date of his birth is uncertain, he probably lived to be about 80 years old.

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<sup>24</sup> "Arthur Kutwayo," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 25, 1977, 15.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

*Biographical sketches of two Pilgrim Holiness women*

Interestingly, the Sikalongo staff in 1931 included two visiting missionary women: Ethel Jordan and Mary Loew. Jordan and Loew were Pilgrim Holiness missionaries who arrived at Sikalongo Mission in 1931.<sup>26</sup> Their circumstances were unique. The Pilgrim Holiness began missionary work in Northern Rhodesia in 1930, when Ray Miller and his wife came to Northern Rhodesia in 1930 to establish work at Jembo Mission Station east of present-day Pemba. Loew and Jordan were stationed with them. Unfortunately, Ray Miller fell ill with Malta fever very soon after their arrival, and the Millers had to return to the U.S. Pilgrim Holiness mission policy would not allow two female missionaries to operate a mission station without a man in charge, so Ethel Jordan and Mary Loew came temporarily to Sikalongo Mission.<sup>27</sup> While at Sikalongo, these two women assisted Brethren in Christ missionaries in their work, notably helping Ruth and Adda Taylor in evangelistic work in Siazwela and the valley just south of Sikalongo. The date of their arrival at Sikalongo is uncertain, but Mary Loew is mentioned as early as November 1930.<sup>28</sup>

The presence of Loew and Jordan at Sikalongo Mission is interesting. Relationships between various missionary societies in Africa were generally quite good. However, a peculiar set of circumstances complicated the relationship between the Pilgrim Holiness and the Brethren in Christ. Lila Coon, a Brethren in Christ missionary from southern Ohio, had been at Macha from 1921-1926. A series of unhappy events led her to leave Africa. She eventually left the Brethren in Christ Church under a cloud and attended

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<sup>26</sup> The story of Pilgrim Holiness efforts in Africa can be found in several books: Paul Westphal Thomas, *Regions Beyond: A Brief Survey of the Foreign Missionary Enterprise of the Pilgrim Holiness Church* (Indianapolis, IN: Foreign Missionary Office of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, 1935); Norman Neal Bonner, *This Is South Africa: A Consideration of the Pilgrim Holiness Missionary Work in the Union of South Africa and Swaziland, Foreign Missionary Study Course* (Indianapolis, IN: Foreign Missionary Office of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, 1954); Annie Laurie Eubanks, *These Went Forth: Biographical Sketches of Pilgrim Missionaries* (Indianapolis, IN: Pilgrim Holiness Church Foreign Missions Department, 1960); Paul Westphal Thomas, "An Historical Survey of Pilgrim World Missions" (B. Div. thesis, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1963); Paul Westphal Thomas and Paul William Thomas, *The Days of Our Pilgrimage: The History of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, Wesleyan History Series* (Marion, IN: Wesley Press, 1976).

<sup>27</sup> Adda E. Taylor, "Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 2, 1931, 46.

<sup>28</sup> Loew accompanied Ruth Taylor on a trip to neighboring valley in 1930. Ruth E. Taylor, "A Week End Kraal Visit," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 16, 1931, 60.

God's Bible School (GBS) in Cincinnati, a school with strong connections to the Pilgrim Holiness denomination. Lila and Ethel attended GBS together and there is strong evidence that Jordan's coming to Africa was inspired by Coon's stories about Northern Rhodesia. Although both the Brethren in Christ and the Pilgrim Holiness have continued to work side by side and have had significant points of collaboration, there has also been a long-standing undercurrent of ambivalence between the two denominations.<sup>29</sup>

*Accomplishments of the Eyster-Cullen years*

Sikalongo Mission expanded significantly during the Eyster-Cullen years, moving well beyond the immediate area of the mission station. Cecil Cullen worked tirelessly to increase the number of outschools and expand and strengthen evangelistic efforts. He was helped in this by Zambian teachers and evangelists as well as Adda Taylor and the two Pilgrim Holiness women. With help from Peter Munsaka, Cullen also mounted an aggressive campaign to improve the buildings at the mission, repairing some buildings and replacing several significant buildings. At the same time, Anna Eyster took measured steps to improve the quality of education at the Boys School, elevating its status in the eyes of the Zambians and British educational authorities alike. Arthur Kutwayo and Jesse Chikaile played important roles in helping her achieve her goals.

Perhaps no other event captures the spirit of this new period better than the trip Sikalongo missionaries took to the Zambezi Valley in July 1932. Myron Taylor's 1931 excursions had set the stage for expanding Brethren in Christ mission work into the valley, but his untimely death stalled the vision. It seems that the remaining Sikalongo missionaries were determined to honor his death by not allowing his efforts to go in vain. Anna Eyster's detailed description of the trip conveys a palpable excitement.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> For a history of God's Bible School, see Larry D. Smith, *A Century on the Mount of Blessings: The Story of God's Bible School*, 1st edition. ed. (Cincinnati, OH: Revivalist Press, 2016); "Lila Coon: Lila Coon Ginter," *The Missionary: A True Story* (Minneapolis, MN: Printed by Osterhus Pub House, 1968); Claudia Peyton: Don McMellon, *From Darkness into Light: Forty-Six Years in Africa* (Chattanooga, TN: B I M I Pub, 1970); Ethel Jordan: Alberta R. Metz, *Ethel Jordan: Zambia, Wesleyan Missionary Hero Series* (Marion, IN: The Wesleyan Publishing House, 1982).

<sup>30</sup> Anna M. Eyster, "A Week in the Zambezi Valley," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 12-13, 1932, 300.

The eventful time which we had been eagerly anticipating had arrived, and nineteen of our boys as they stood in line for work were chosen to be our carriers to the Zambezi Valley, the one of the many sections of this vast continent which yet lies in darkness and superstition. We watched the boys as they chose their loads, many carrying their burdens on a pole between two of them. Besides our own provisions, bedding and personal effects, the boys had their blankets and some food for themselves with salt to trade for more meal. We were thrilled as we saw them leave, with Arthur, one of our native teachers and evangelists accompanying them, for were we not going to join them the following day?<sup>31</sup>

As she indicated, a number of African helpers either went ahead or accompanied the missionaries into the Valley, including Arthur Kutuywayo, Musa and Joshua Moono. The last two had served as Sikalongo evangelists for many years and are known to have gone to the valley on the evangelistic trips before Myron Taylor.<sup>32</sup>

The trip occurred sometime during June or July 1932 (the holiday months). During their stay in the Valley, they camped very near the place where Myron Taylor had been attacked by the lion. Surprisingly, they drove their Ford vehicle for part of the distance. Eyster's account occasionally reads like an adventure novel:

Up hills and down we travelled, but the declines were in the majority; over a rustic bridge Bro. Cullen had to drive the car, while Sr. Cullen, Sr. Jordan and Sr. Loew (two visiting missionary sisters) and myself stood on the opposite bank and prayed, fearing lest the car might go through to the water below... The road, if you could call it such, was almost impassable at places, for the washouts caused by last season's rain were terrible, and it was with great ingenuity that the driver got through. The car, because of its age and the condition of the roads, needed assistance frequently; many times we pushed up hills, and through sandy river beds. After having had many difficulties, and having passed and repassed our boys many times, we were met on the road by two natives who escorted us across the half mile of veldt

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

to Chimpande's Village where we expected to camp. We arrived at 5 p.m., having gone a distance of thirty five miles.<sup>33</sup>

Fortunately, the Cullens documented some of this trip with photographs. They photographed one of the difficult river crossings as well as "Chimpande's Village." Recent research has established a connection between this local headman (Chimpande or Siampande) and Myron Taylor's death.

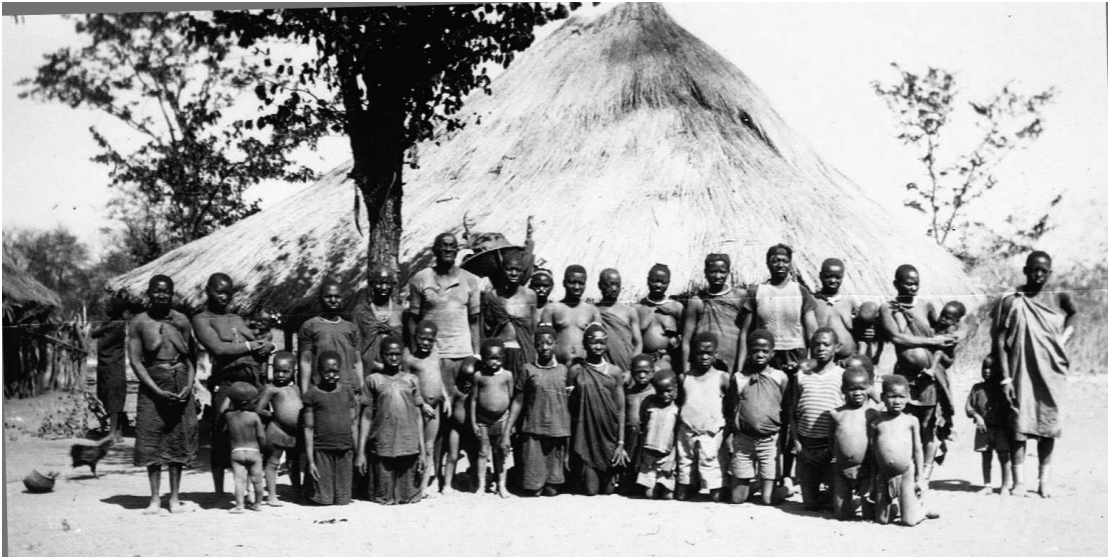


*One of the difficult river crossings in the Valley. Photo courtesy of Cullen Photograph Collection.*

Although it might be easy to direct condescending criticisms at Eyster's quaint account, the missionaries clearly made this trip with serious intentions. They wanted to expand the ministry of Sikalongo Mission into the Zambezi Valley through active evangelism and the establishment of schools to serve the local people. Cullen continued to maintain a presence in that locale and to pursue this agenda during his entire seven years of missionary service. Eyster closed the account with a brief footnote related to Myron Taylor's death:

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.



*Chimpande's Village. Photo courtesy of Cullen Photograph Collection.*

Perhaps it will be of interest to the readers to know that the lion that attacked Bro. Taylor and was the cause of his death has been killed. It was identified as the same because of the sore on its leg by Dr. Gerard of the Kanchindu Mission in the Valley.<sup>34</sup>

Conflicting accounts exist regarding who ultimately killed the lion, but the event was understandably still fresh in the missionaries' minds. Dr. Gerrard's name appears in other articles in the *Evangelical Visitor* as do the names of some other missionaries associated with Kanchindu Mission.<sup>35</sup>

Two staff changes occurred soon after the 1932 Zambezi Valley trip. David and Mabel Hall arrived in Choma on August 18 to join the Sikalongo missionaries.<sup>36</sup> And a year later, in July 1933, the two Pilgrim Holiness women left Sikalongo to join Rev. and Mrs. Harry Reynolds in restarting Jembo Mission Station.<sup>37</sup> These staffing changes do not seem to have had a negative impact on Sikalongo Mission work:

The boarding school has increased in numbers so much so that we had to buy grain for food, making an additional expense. We are pleased to notice the marked interest in the Bible classes and the good attendance in the Inquirer's Class on Sunday. A number of boys

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>35</sup> For more on the life of Dr. Gerard, see John W. Gerrard, *Africa Calling: A Medical Missionary in Kenya and Zambia* (London, New York: Radcliffe Press, 2001).

<sup>36</sup> Mabel E. Hall, "Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 13, 1933, 13.

<sup>37</sup> Metz, *Ethel Jordan: Zambia*, 25.

have expressed a desire to give themselves for the work of the Lord. We regret to say that there is little response to the Gospel among the villages near the Mission.

A number of villages farther afield earnestly request schools and the preaching services are well attended when the native preachers hold services. We hope to find suitable teachers to send to them in the near future if funds are available. The interest in the outschools already opened is good. This is especially true of the two schools most recently opened. A goodly number at both schools have enrolled in the Inquirer's Class.<sup>38</sup>

Cecil Cullen's 1933 report gives a clear sense of the mission priorities of the time: (1) equipping and growing the church; (2) expanding and enhancing the schools; and (3) replacing deteriorating buildings and beautifying the Mission.

#### *Equipping and growing the church*

Equipping the church is integral to any mission station. At Sikalongo, this meant growing the church through "Inquirers Classes" followed by regular baptisms of those deemed worthy. Inquirers Classes were evidently a common feature of Brethren in Christ Missions judging from the frequency of their mention. A similar practice occurs today in the Zambian church prior to approval for baptism. The 1933 Sikalongo report indicated that eight were ready for baptism and 14 were in the Inquirers Class. The report also noted that they had baptized the first outschool member.<sup>39</sup>

A noteworthy baptism occurred at Sikalongo in 1935. The Brethren in Christ mission superintendent, Henry H. Brubaker, arrived in May from Southern Rhodesia to encourage the missionaries and to participate in baptism and love feast. He and other Sikalongo missionaries continued to Ndola the following week for a missionary conference. Anna Eyster wrote the following description of the events of June 1-2, 1935:

June 1. At the midday service our small church could not accommodate the three hundred and sixteen who were present. Quite a number of

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<sup>38</sup> Cullen, "Sikalongo Mission Report 1932," *Handbook of Missions*, 1932, 22.

<sup>39</sup> David B. Hall, "Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, March 27, 1933, 13; "Sikalongo Report 1933," *Handbook of Missions*, 1934, 70-71.

these came from the village schools. In the late afternoon after the service, Bro. Brubaker baptized sixteen in the nearby river. Four of this number came from Fundabanyama's School, where the situation had been especially trying, but God has been answering prayer. One of these four is a leper. A young widow was also reinstated in church fellowship.

June 2. Early in the morning we commemorated the death and suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. God met with us in a very precious manner. After the midday service all the missionaries went to a village where a child had just died. Here there was a short service.<sup>40</sup>

The site of this baptism was no doubt the same place where Sikalongo baptisms have been held for many decades. Only in recent years has the church baptized in a man-made baptistry.



*Baptismal service at Sikalongo Mission. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

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<sup>40</sup> Anna M. Eyster, "News from Sikalongo, June-July," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 30, 1935, 12.



Brethren in Christ missionaries recognized the need to indigenize the church. Although it might be true that the process was slow, progress toward indigenization occurred periodically.<sup>41</sup> Southern Rhodesia had African deacons in its congregations long before Northern Rhodesia, and Macha preceded Sikalongo. However, in 1933, the Sikalongo congregation chose Jesse Chikaile as their deacon. The *Evangelical Visitor* published the following information:

A deacon has also been chosen. The lot fell on Jesse. He came here to help in the work when it was in its infancy and has been a faithful worker ever since. We beg your prayers for him as he takes up this responsibility. Will you also pray for his wife? She is not of a hardy constitution and sometimes tired because of her condition.<sup>42</sup>

Chikaile served as the Sikalongo deacon for nearly 10 years. Unfortunately, he was removed in 1941 after taking a second wife. The issue of second wives among Zambian church leaders deserves closer scholarly attention but is beyond the scope of this article. Despite Chikaile's eventual dismissal, it seems that he carried out his responsibilities effectively.

Growing the church required appropriate materials. Brethren in Christ missionaries translated scriptures and published booklets from the earliest years. In order to understand the gospel, people needed scriptures in their own language. In order to worship corporately, missionaries believed they also needed hymnals. Sikalongo played a role in accomplishing this goal. A longstanding need for a plateau Tonga hymnal resulted in the publication of the denomination's first edition of the Chitonga hymnal.<sup>43</sup> Sikalongo staff members were intimately involved in the editorial and publication process. Final preparations for the hymnal occurred at the end of 1936. A news item from the *Evangelical Visitor* simply said: "Sept. 14. Brother Cullen and Sister Eyster take Sibanda to Macha. They meet with the other members of the

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<sup>41</sup> Other scholars have written about this issue extensively. See Lazarus Phiri, *The Brethren in Christ Mission in Zambia, 1906-1978: A Historical Study of Western Missionary Leadership Patterns and the Emergence of Tonga Church Leaders* (University of Edinburgh, 2003); Stan Shewmaker, *Tonga Christianity* (South Pasadena: Calif., William Carey Library, 1970); Glenn J. Schwartz, "The Brethren in Christ in Zambia" (M.A. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1975).

<sup>42</sup> "Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, November 20, 1933, 12.; "Sikalongo Report 1933," *Handbook of Missions*, 1934, 56, 71.

<sup>43</sup> See Dwight W. Thomas, "Inyimbo Zyabakristo: The Chitonga Hymnal of the Zambian Brethren in Christ Church," *Brethren in Christ History and Life* 28, no. 3 (December 2005), 502-566.

hymnal committee.”<sup>44</sup> What roles Cullen and Eyster had on the committee are unknown. Interestingly, the title page of the hymnal indicates the place of publication as Sikalongo. This is surprising, given the prominence of Macha as the original site of Brethren in Christ work in Northern Rhodesia. Nevertheless, the Brethren in Christ church in Northern Rhodesia published its first hymnal in the Tonga language in 1936. Titled *Inyimbo Zyabakristo*, revised editions of the hymnal are still used today in the Zambian church. Subsequent Brethren in Christ publications in Northern Rhodesia continued to indicate “Sikalongo Book Room” as the publisher. The 1945 Executive Board Minutes indicate that missionaries produced a “Tonga Primer,” which was handled and distributed by the Sikalongo Book Room.<sup>45</sup> The church needed these sorts of materials in order to pursue its work.

### *The work of Sikalongo evangelists*

Another dimension of growing the church fell to so-called “native evangelists.” American missionaries, no matter how gifted or experienced they were, could not reach every village, nor could they fully identify with or understand the local villagers. Understandably, local believers could better deal with cultural issues and relational dynamics, and Brethren in Christ missionaries understood this. Arthur Kutwayo, Jesse Chikaile, and Peter Munsaka helped with some village visitation, but their responsibilities at the mission gave them little extra time. Consequently, four paid Northern Rhodesian evangelists worked fulltime visiting villages and doing evangelistic work on behalf of Brethren in Christ missions.

Sikalongo’s two paid evangelists during the Eyster-Cullen years were Joshua Moono and Musa.<sup>46</sup> Both men began as evangelists under the Taylors and had accompanied Myron to the valley in 1931.<sup>47</sup> The mission paid them a stipend with the expectation that they would make regular visits to villages and hold evangelist meetings.<sup>48</sup> An excerpt from Henry H. Brubaker’s brief

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<sup>44</sup> E. Engle, “Sikalongo Notes,” *Evangelical Visitor*, February 1, 1937, 14-15.

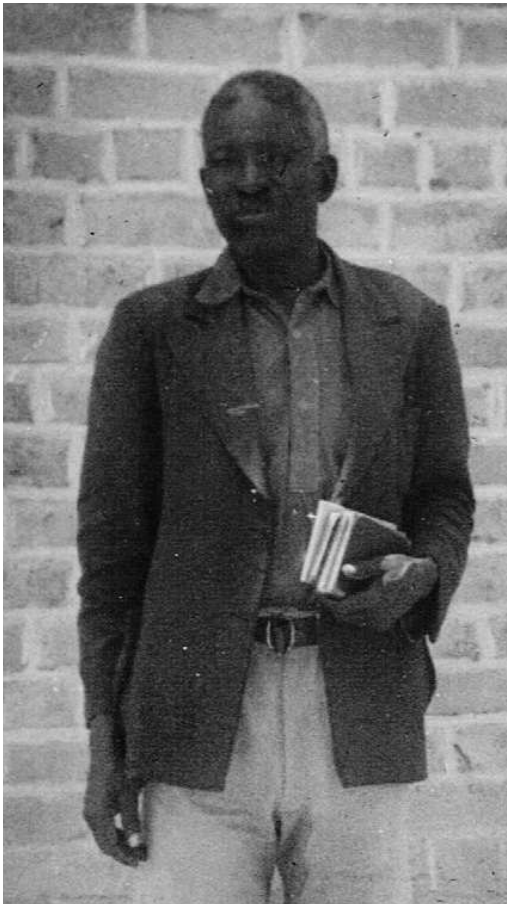
<sup>45</sup> African Mission Executive Board Minutes, April 4, 1945.

<sup>46</sup> Musa’s name appears frequently in the historical record, but I have been unable to discover his family name.

<sup>47</sup> Cecil I. Cullen, “Sikalongo Mission. Particulars Concerning Brother Taylor’s Death,” *Evangelical Visitor*, October 26, 1931, 348-349.

<sup>48</sup> “Africa Financial Report - 1933,” *Handbook of Missions*, 1934, 76.

biography of Joshua Moono indicates the sort of work local evangelists did: During the past year Joshua was engaged in evangelistic work for four and one-half months. He held meetings at all ten outschools once and went back the second time to several places. He also held meetings in two areas where we have no regular preaching appointments. As a result of his meetings eleven joined the Inquirers Class for instruction preparatory to baptism. In addition to these there were a number of others who were strengthened and helped spiritually.<sup>49</sup>



*Evangelist Mafulo while doing evangelistic work at Sikalongo. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

Two Macha evangelists, Mizinga and Mafulo, also helped do evangelistic work in the Sikalongo district.<sup>50</sup> Both men served as Brethren in Christ evangelists for many decades and made regular visits to preach at semi-annual revivals at Sikalongo or to help with evangelistic work in communities near the outschools. These men were two of the most influential Brethren in Christ workers during the mid-twentieth century.<sup>51</sup> Both had deep roots in the Brethren in Christ missions and both continued in ministry until their deaths. Mafulo was one of the first students to come to Macha Mission in 1908. After completing his studies at mission schools, he taught in outschools. However, it seems that evangelism was a stronger gift than teaching. He made regular visits to the Sikalongo District to help with evangelistic work. Mizinga was a skilled evangelist and a respected

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<sup>49</sup> H. H. Brubaker, "Report of African Evangelistic Work, 1936," *Handbook of Missions*, 1937, 23-26.

<sup>50</sup> The spelling of Mafulo's name continues to present challenges. The caption under Anna Eyster's photograph spells it "Mafula." More recent orthographic practices prefer "Mahulo." I have chosen to use "Mafulo," which was the spelling most commonly used while he was alive.

<sup>51</sup> "Notes from a Sikalongo Diary," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 7, 1935, 14.

servant of the church. His spiritual sensitivity and his understanding of local politics served the church well.

*Expanding and enhancing schools: Sikalongo Mission schools*

Expanding and enhancing schools in the Sikalongo District was the second goal of the Eyster-Cullen years. From the beginning, Brethren in Christ missionaries established and operated schools. It was their belief that schools contributed to church work by influencing the minds of young people and by providing a strong Christian presence in local communities. The strategy was similar at each location: (1) establish a strong mission station with a thriving school, which would serve as an anchor; (2) extend the influence of the central mission station through smaller local “outschools” staffed by graduates of the mission; and (3) build and nurture local congregations as extensions of the school by using the head teachers as the local church leaders.

The Taylors and Steckleys accomplished the first of these objectives during the 1920s; Anna Eyster and the Cullens advanced the strategy during the 1930s. Eyster set about the task with enthusiasm from the moment she arrived. That the Sikalongo Mission staff was trying to improve the mission schools is clear from Harvey Frey’s 1932 report. He noted the trend at Sikalongo Boys School: “...it is specially [sic] gratifying to see that our Boys’ School at Sikalongo and Matopo have shown such a marked improvement, both as to numbers and as to the quality of the work done.”<sup>52</sup>

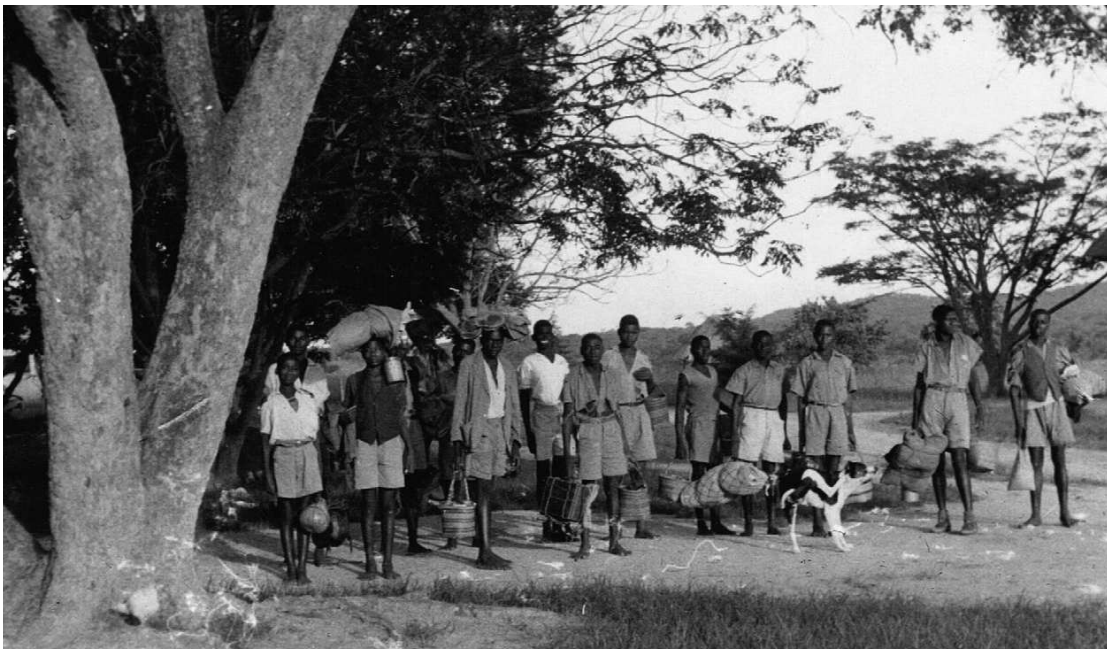
Throughout most of the 1920s, the schools at Sikalongo and Macha were coeducational. According to Harvey Frey, Macha was “passing through a severe crisis” at the end of the decade.<sup>53</sup> This might account for the fact that the Macha school closed during the first half of 1931. It reopened after the 1931 missionary conference as a girls-only school with Anna Engle as its headmistress, and simultaneously Sikalongo became a boys-only school with Anna Eyster as headmistress. The rationale behind the division was ultimately to improve the educational results of both schools.<sup>54</sup> It is clear that the separation of boys and girls boarding schools was fully in place by 1931. Girls

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<sup>52</sup> Harvey J. Frey, “Africa General Report 1932,” *Handbook of Missions*, 1933, 12-14.

<sup>53</sup> Harvey J. Frey, “Annual Report, Macha Mission, 1928,” *Handbook of Missions*, 1929, 26-29.

<sup>54</sup> Anna R. Engle, John A. Climenhaga, and Leoda A. Buckwalter, *There Is No Difference: God Works in Africa and India* (Nappanee, IN: E.V. Publishing, 1950), 123.



*Boys from Macha Mission arriving at Siklaongo. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

from Sikalongo walked to Macha in order to take the higher standards, and boys from Macha walked to Sikalongo. This pattern continued to the middle of the twentieth century. Anna Eyster documented this in a photograph from one of her two photo albums.

The 1931 statistical report shows two paid native teachers at Sikalongo Boys School (undoubtedly Chikaile and Kutwayo) and 78 students enrolled. From 1931 onward, the Sikalongo Mission staff worked diligently to strengthen and improve the mission schools. For most of the 1920s, Jesse Chikaile had served as the primary teacher at Sikalongo during the 1920s. Arthur Kutwayo's arrival provided another strong teacher to supplement the growing needs of the school. During the ensuing years, the teaching staff and enrollment at Sikalongo remained relatively flat, but the staff gradually improved their qualifications through advanced training at Matopo Teacher Training School and other places.

Since the early 1920s, two schools had existed at Sikalongo Mission: a boarding school and a day school. However, the new arrangement of upper elementary training for boys at Sikalongo and training for girls at Macha lent greater importance to Sikalongo and Macha day schools for the lower grades. This necessarily led to the need for dedicated teachers for Sikalongo Central

Day School. The first teacher mentioned by name was “Muchindu.”<sup>55</sup> The photograph below pictures the Central Day School with Nathan Muzyamba as the teacher. In 1943, the day school moved across the stream north of the mission to its current location on the hill.<sup>56</sup>



*Sikalongo Central Day School with Teacher Nathan. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photo Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

### *Expanding and enhancing schools: The teachers*

Like teachers of other Brethren in Christ schools in Africa, Sikalongo teachers wanted to improve their qualifications. Missionary leadership understood the need for further training and encouraged teachers to continue their education in a variety of ways. Some were sent to training schools outside the country, and others to training institutions in Northern Rhodesia. As early as 1915, Frances Davidson sent David Moyo to South Africa for advanced study in order to increase his effectiveness at Macha.<sup>57</sup> At Sikalongo, the need became increasingly evident during the 1930s.

The Brethren in Christ had established a teacher training school at Matopo Mission, and Northern Rhodesian missionaries began to send people

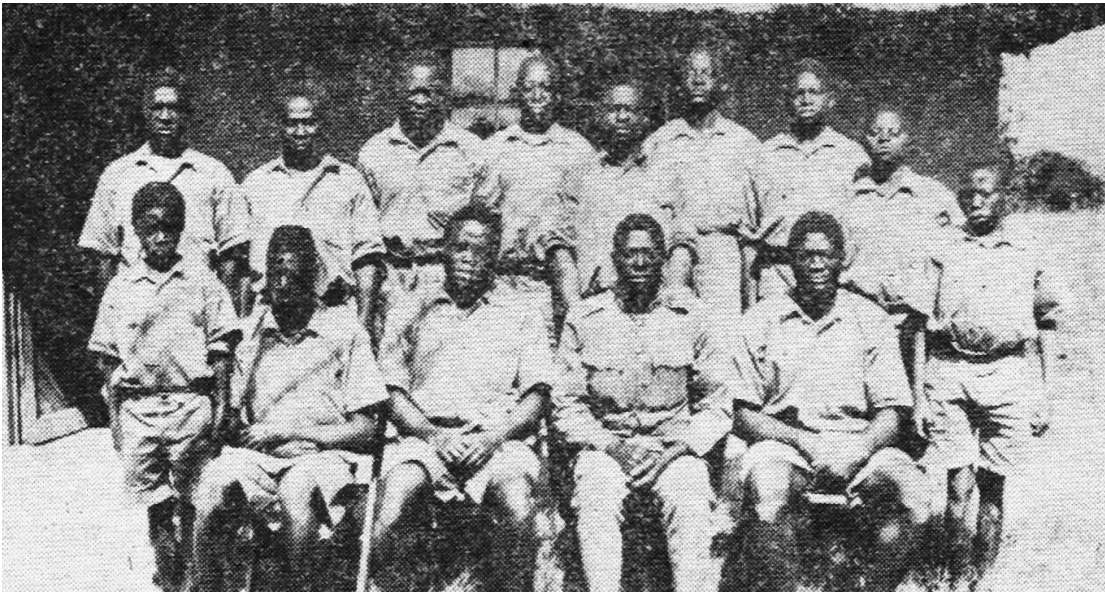
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<sup>55</sup> “Sikalongo News Notes. Feb. 1, ‘35,” *Evangelical Visitor*, April 1, 1935, 14-16.

<sup>56</sup> Anna M. Eyster, “August at Sikalongo,” *Evangelical Visitor*, January 17, 1944, 12.

<sup>57</sup> Dwight W. Thomas, “A Biographical Sketch of David (Ndhlalambi) Moyo,” *Brethren in Christ History and Life* 33, no. 3 (December 2010), 271-321.

there for advanced training. In 1932, David Munsaka (son of Peter), Paul Mudenda, and Muchindu Moono went to Matopo.<sup>58</sup> Muchindu finished in 1935 and returned to Sikalongo to teach the Central Day School: “Muchindu is enrolled as teacher in the Sikalongo Central Day School and to assist in the Boarding School. He is the first Sikalongo student to complete Teachers’ Training at Matopo Mission. We have hopes of him being a spiritual asset in our school.”<sup>59</sup> A 1932 photograph conveys Eyster and Cullen’s desire to develop a new generation of teachers for Brethren in Christ schools.



*Sikalongo teachers in training. Photo from Evangelical Visitor, September 12, 1932.*

Scores of Northern Rhodesian Brethren in Christ students continued to go to Southern Rhodesia for advanced study during the 1930s, 40s and 50s. A preliminary list of Sikalongo students who studied in the south in the 1930s includes: David Munsaka, Muchindu Moono, Paul Mudenda, Joni Munsaka, Ethan Siamalambo, Harrison, Adam, Mishack, Jameson, Albert, Moses, and Wilson Muchindu.

Several Sikalongo teachers received specialized teacher training within Northern Rhodesia. Jesse Chikaile went to Mazabuka in 1935 for training as a “Janes teacher.” Anna T. Janes founded the Janes Foundation in

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<sup>58</sup> Taylor, “From Sikalongo Mission, S. A. - March 17th,” *Evangelical Visitor*, May 23, 1932, 175.

<sup>59</sup> “Sikalongo News Notes. Feb. 1, ‘35,” *Evangelical Visitor*, April 1, 1935.

the United States in 1907 for the purpose of training African-American teachers with little education or experience. The idea migrated to Northern Rhodesia several decades later. Grants from the Beit Trust and the Carnegie Corporation led to the establishment of the “Jeanes Training Institute” in Mazabuka in 1929. A veteran Methodist missionary, J.R. Fell, became its first principal. The training model emphasized teaching practices directly related to village contexts and needs. John Ragsdale characterized the program as follows: “The teacher training syllabus included methods of teaching, phonics for teaching reading, the use of arithmetic problems taken from village life, the use of plans and maps, and practical experience in teaching under close supervision.”<sup>60</sup> Chikaile finished his Jeanes training in 1936 and began to apply his new techniques in Sikalongo outstation schools soon thereafter.<sup>61</sup>

Nathan Munsaka, another Sikalongo student, advanced his education through four years of study in Lusaka. Esther Mann noted that Munsaka returned to Sikalongo in 1938 to resume his teaching duties.<sup>62</sup> The government established a “Native Trades School” in Lusaka in the early 1930s, and this is probably where Munsaka received his training.<sup>63</sup> The following gives some idea of the nature of his studies:

Nathan, one of our former school boys who was in school here from 1929 to 1935, and who has been at Lusaka Trade School the last four years, has now finished his Course and is here as an industrial teacher. He, with the help of some of the school boys who are here during holiday, are plastering the new shop and store-room, and they have also been making doors for the shop and screening the windows with a fine wire mesh.<sup>64</sup>

The government description noted that the Lusaka school was “for the training of carpenters, masons, and bricklayers.” Munsaka is sometimes subsequently referred to as the mission “builder,” a title in keeping with his new training.

At the beginning of the Eyster-Cullen years, Sikalongo had two teachers, Jesse Chikaile and Arthur Kutwayo. Capable as they were at the time,

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<sup>60</sup> Ragsdale, *Protestant Mission Education*, 108.

<sup>61</sup> Cecil I. Cullen, “Sikalongo Outstations (1936),” *Handbook of Missions*, 1937, 40-41.

<sup>62</sup> “Annual Report of the Social and Economic Progress of the People of Northern Rhodesia, 1935” (London: 1936).

<sup>63</sup> Esther Mann, “December at Sikalongo,” *Evangelical Visitor*, Feb 27, 1939, 13.

<sup>64</sup> “Word from Sikalongo for January,” *Evangelical Visitor*, March 27, 1939, 13.



they had little formal training. By the time Cullens left, four teachers were on staff at Sikalongo Mission, several with specialized training, and nearly a dozen teachers were assigned to the various outstations. With help from others, Anna Eyster and the Cullens made significant progress during the 1930s toward enhancing the quality of Brethren in Christ education in the Sikalongo District.



*Sikalongo teachers in about 1940: Muchindu Moono, Arthur Kutwayo, Laban Mudenda, and Nathan Munsaka. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

### *Expanding and enhancing schools: The outschools*

The 1931 statistical report indicates that two outstations were open that year, each with an African teacher.<sup>65</sup> Another report claims that the school at Singani was established by David [Chonga] in 1931.<sup>66</sup> Mboole, with its proximity to Sikalongo and its increasing importance, was probably another early outschool.<sup>67</sup> In 1932, the number increased to three “unordained

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<sup>65</sup> “Africa Statistical Report 1931,” *Handbook of Missions*, 1932, 41.

<sup>66</sup> Adda E. Taylor, “From Sikalongo Mission, S. A.,” *Evangelical Visitor*, May 23, 1932, 175.

<sup>67</sup> Cecil I. Cullen, “A Sunday at Sikalongo,” *Evangelical Visitor*, July 18, 1932, 237.

evangelists in charge of outschools” and Siazwela could have been the third outstation school since, according to Ruth Taylor, it was established after the missionary conference of 1931 with Shadrack as its first teacher.<sup>68</sup>

Whatever the exact sequence of outschool beginnings, the number of outstations increased dramatically during the Eyster-Cullen years. Annual reports show a steady increase in the number of outschools: two in 1931, four in 1932, five in 1933, eight in 1934, eight in 1935, 10 in 1936, and 10 in 1937. It appears that, in addition to improving the Mission Station schools, Cecil Cullen was determined to expand the number of outschools. His efforts at Sinazeze illustrate this desire. After a 1934 visit to Kanchindu Mission in the valley, an *Evangelical Visitor* article noted:

In September Bro. Cullen and Bro. Hall had the opportunity of visiting Kachindu Mission of the Wesleyan Methodist Church[Kanchindu] where they received the warmest hospitality. ...They visited our only village school in the Valley where Tom is endeavoring to point the people to Christ.<sup>69</sup>

The itinerant work of the evangelists contributed to strengthening the outschools. During the course of the Eyster-Cullen years, the following outstation names appeared in the *Evangelical Visitor*: Mboole, Siazwela, Mudukula, Moyo, Singani, Fundabanyama, Sinazeze, Masopo, Munyonzo, Siabukululu, Nakeempa, Siamvula.



*Mboole Outstation with teacher John Muchimba and pupils. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

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<sup>68</sup> “Africa Statistical Report 1932,” *Handbook of Missions*, 1933), 33; Taylor, “A Week End Kraal Visit,” *Evangelical Visitor*, February 16, 1931.

<sup>69</sup> “Notes from a Sikalongo Diary,” *Evangelical Visitor*, January 7, 1935.

Most of the outschools established by the Brethren in Christ still exist today, and many continue to maintain connections to the denomination.

*Expanding and enhancing schools: The students*

Brethren in Christ students with leadership gifts continued to come to Sikalongo Boys School to receive training. Although most of the first generation of denominational leaders were educated at Macha, nearly every mid-twentieth century Brethren in Christ leader attended or taught at Sikalongo Boys School: Peter Munsaka, Sampson Mudenda, Ammon Mweetwa, Jonathan Muleya, Stephen Muleya, and Davidson Mushala. Moreover, a number of former Sikalongo students rose to positions of regional and national importance, notably Elijah Mudenda and Daniel Munkombwe. To some degree, each of their stories was shaped by their experience at Sikalongo Boys School.



*Sikalongo Boys School exercise drills. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

*Sampson Mudenda: From eager convert to the first Macha overseer*

According to his testimony, written while he was in Standard IV (grade 6), Sampson Mudenda was converted in Macha under the ministry of Rev. J. Lester Meyers. Mudenda first came to Sikalongo in 1935 and was baptized there in 1936:

In 1935 Mufundisi Winger sent me here to Sikalongo Mission. Then I was baptized in the year of 1936. My heart was happy to be one of God's children. This year I am in Standard IV (6). I hope that I

shall be a worker of God. I am sure that Mufundisi Myers has done much for us, especially for us Macha people. We still remember about him. May God's Holy Name be worthily praised forever. Sampson M. Mudenda, Student at Sikalongo Mission.<sup>70</sup>

This implies that he came for Standard I (grade 3), having studied sub-A and sub-B (grades 1 and 2) near his home village. Mudenda was a determined student with a keen mind. This was evident even at Sikalongo Boys School. He participated in a student strike at the boys school in 1938, but his father sent him back to Sikalongo (see below). Of the boys who walked back to Macha, he was the only student mentioned in Anna Eyster's account: "Sampson Mudenda, one of our Standard IV boys, who stood out the first time, but was in the group of strikers the second time, was sent back by his father. He made his confession to the school and has been reinstated." It was apparent that Sampson Mudenda had both a strong character and a desire to obey, necessary qualities for leadership in the church.<sup>71</sup>



*Sampson Mudenda and family. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

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<sup>70</sup> Sampson Mudenda, "Testimony," *Evangelical Visitor*, May 22, 1939, 15.

<sup>71</sup> Anna M. Eyster, "November at Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 30, 1939, 13.

Mudenda went on to become one of the most influential leaders of the Zambian Brethren in Christ during the middle of the twentieth century. He served in a variety of capacities before being chosen as one of the first two overseers of the church in Northern Rhodesia. He, along with other Brethren in Christ from Northern Rhodesia (Peter Munsaka, Davidson Mushala, and Kalaluka Muchimba), went to Wanezi for advanced religious studies; in 1956, he and Peter Munsaka were ordained, the first African Brethren in Christ from Northern Rhodesia to receive that distinction.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Mudenda was a powerful force in the church, serving on church committees at the highest levels and representing the church at national and international events. When the time came for the North American church to transfer full authority to the Zambian church, it was Sampson Mudenda who accepted the letters of transfer. It naturally came as a surprise, then, when he was not chosen to be the first African bishop of the Zambian church in 1976.

*Replacing deteriorating buildings and beautifying the station*

In 1935, Cullen wrote: “We find ourselves facing a heavy building program as most of the buildings are pise (Mother Earth stamped into forms and allowed to harden by the sun) with grass roofs. These are rapidly deteriorating and must be replaced before too long. We use the school boys for making and burning bricks, but there are other expenses connected with building that make it necessary to go cautiously.”<sup>72</sup> The need to enhance the Mission Station had been clear even in 1931. And, soon after the Halls arrived, Cecil Cullen, David Hall, and others began to repair and replace buildings at Sikalongo. Anna Engle claims that David Hall designed and built the house currently reserved for Sikalongo’s pastor. Called the “cottage,” it was reportedly designed and built in 1933.<sup>73</sup> The presence of two married couples with children, Anna Eyster, and the two Pilgrim Holiness women undoubtedly contributed to the sense of urgency for a new house.

Halls left Sikalongo in 1934 and were replaced by Elizabeth Engle.<sup>74</sup> This deprived Cullen of a skilled building companion. Mabel Hall seems to have

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<sup>72</sup> Cecil I. Cullen et al, “Sikalongo Mission Report 1935,” *Handbook of Missions*, 1936, 66-67.

<sup>73</sup> Engle, Climenhaga, and Buckwalter, *There Is No Difference*, 139.

<sup>74</sup> Cecil I. Cullen et al, “Sikalongo Mission Report 1934,” *Handbook of Missions*, 1935, 39-40.

been especially sickly during her Sikalongo years, eventually forcing their return to the south.<sup>75</sup> Halls' departure also left Cecil as the only male missionary at the station. He and David Hall seemed to have had a good relationship; not only was Hall a good builder, but he also accompanied Cullen on several hunting expeditions. Lions were quite common at Sikalongo in the 1930s. Both men apparently enjoyed hunting and were quite proud of the lions they killed near the mission station.<sup>76</sup> With their transfer to the south, Cullen lost a friend who was both a hunter and a builder.

Nevertheless, Cullen realized the need to replace both the church and the boys' school and set about the task with diligence. The new school building was situated just east of the current church. Built in two stages, the first side was completed in 1937. The second side was completed in 1939, soon after the Manns arrived at Sikalongo.<sup>77</sup> The finished building appears in the photograph below and, although other buildings have been added since, the 1939 building still exists in 2017.



*Sikalongo Boys School building. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

The church building was equally inadequate. So, in January 1937, Cullen pleaded with American supporters to send money to build a new church. American donors responded with \$250 and work began immediately.<sup>78</sup> By July 1937, Cullen had laid the cornerstone and by October, the building was in its final stages. The rafters were raised in October 1937, and the roof

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<sup>75</sup> "Sikalongo Report 1933," *Handbook of Missions*, 1934.

<sup>76</sup> Cecil I. Cullen, "Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 5, 1933, 12.

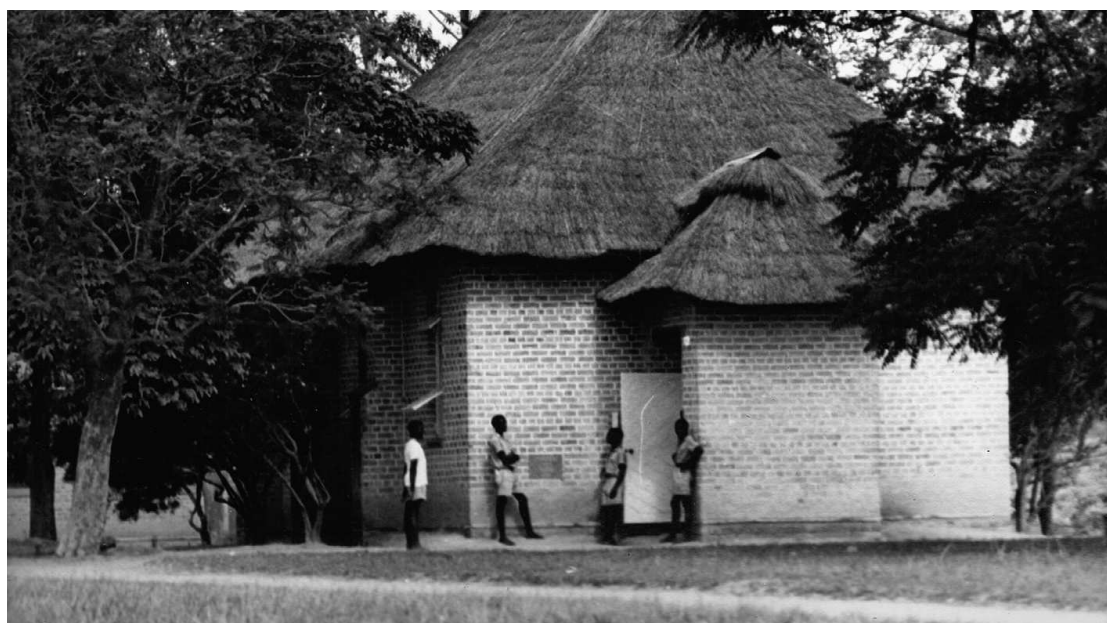
<sup>77</sup> H. H. Brubaker, "Sikalongo Mission Report 1939," *Handbook of Missions*, 1940, 74-78.

<sup>78</sup> Cecil I. Cullen, "Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, March 29, 1937, 13.

THOMAS: A History of Sikalongo Mission, Part 2



*The Sikalongo Church cornerstone. From left to right: Cecil Cullen, H. H. Brubaker, Elmer Eyer, Walter O. Winger. Photo courtesy of Cullen Photograph Collection.*



*Completed Sikalongo Church building. Photograph courtesy of Africa collection in the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

was thatched by the end of October, just in time to protect the congregation during the coming rainy season. Dedication for the church took place on May 1, 1938. Unfortunately, Cullens had left two months earlier so Cecil was unable to witness the dedication.

Jesse Chikaile spoke at the dedication:

In 1915, God's Word began to be preached in the Sikalongo District. This was like a farmer plowing new land. Later services were held in the old shop. In 1920 the old church was built. Here we saw the Word of God go forward. It was like a spark which has been fanned into a flame. There is no one who began with me: some have gone; others have returned to sin; but God has chosen more workers to push forward His work.<sup>79</sup>

### *Myron Taylor Memorial Bell*

Although not a building, the Myron Taylor Memorial Bell is a distinctive architectural feature of Sikalongo Mission. Erected in 1936, it has occupied its current spot for over 80 years. The following account appeared in the *Evangelical Visitor*:

It has been thought for some time that a good bell would be very useful at Sikalongo. Some years ago a donation of ten dollars was made toward a bell by someone in the home land. After the passing of Bro. Taylor, Sr. Taylor expressed a desire to add to this amount and have a bell bought in remembrance of Bro. Taylor.

During one of our African Conferences, it was suggested that any of the Missionaries who would like to assist in this way had the privilege of doing so. Several of the native Christians also assisted as they were able. Some of the friends of Bro. and Sr. Taylor who live in Choma also contributed toward the purchasing of the bell. The amount received was sufficient to buy one of real bell metal.

Various ways were suggested as to how it might be erected, including the suggestion of approaching the Railway officials for a donation of four steel rails to be used as a structure. This was done and they very willingly gave the rails. We now have a bell that rings in

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<sup>79</sup> Anna M. Eyster, "Dedication of New Sikalongo Church," *Evangelical Visitor*, August 1, 1938, 13.



memory of our Brother whose activities in preaching the Gospel can never be forgotten. May the chimes of the bell ever be a challenge for others to take up the work where he was called to lay it down.<sup>80</sup>

Although seldom used anymore, the bell remains today where it was placed 80 years ago.



*Myron Taylor Memorial Bell under construction. Photo courtesy of Cullen Photograph Collection.*

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<sup>80</sup> Sikalongo News Notes, "Evangelical Visitor, June 22, 1936, 11-12.

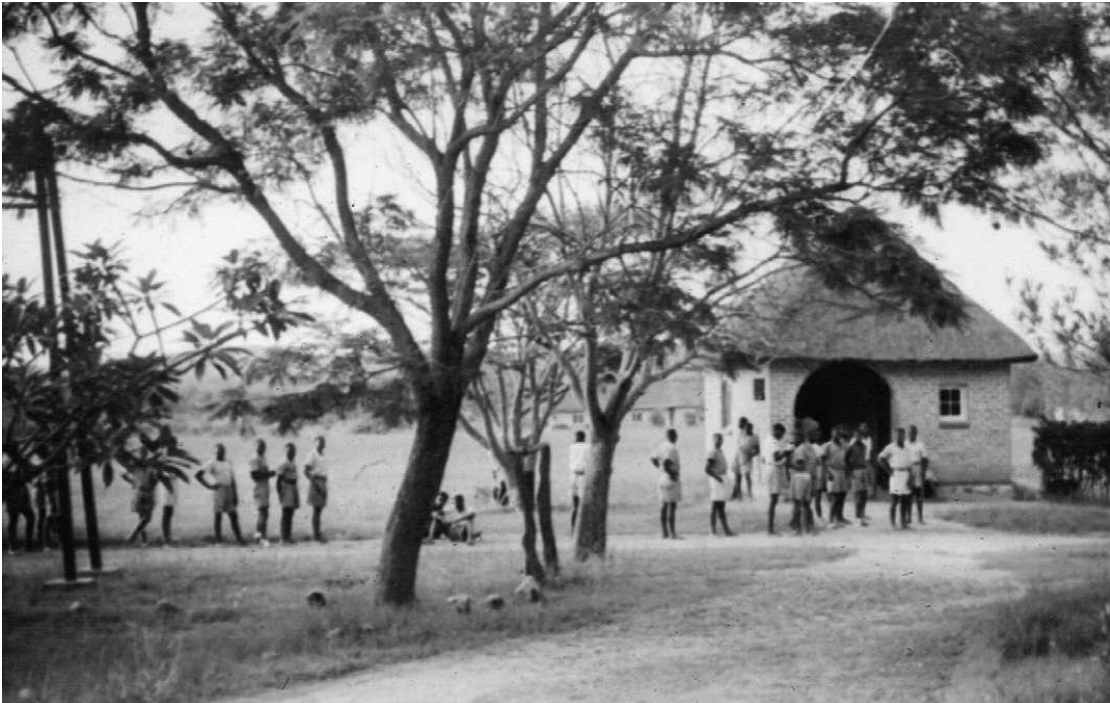
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The grounds surrounding the main house also received a face-lift during Cullen's tenure. Builders added decorative entrances to both the front and end of the building, and everything was freshly-painted. The photograph below is probably from about 1935. We know this because the Myron Taylor Memorial Bell is absent. Myron Taylor built this main house in the 1920s and it remained until the 1960s, when it was torn down and a new house built on the same location.



*Sikalongo Mission, circa 1935. Photo courtesy of Africa collection in the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

Determining the chronology of some Sikalongo buildings is difficult. The superintendent's office, for example, was in use by the mid-1930s, but its exact date of construction is unclear. The photograph below includes the Myron Taylor Memorial Bell so it had to have been taken after 1936. The size of the trees suggests a possible date of 1940. Whatever its history, this building—with its unique arched entrance—has remained one of Sikalongo's landmarks for many decades.



*The superintendent's office, Sikalongo; students returning to school. Courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

### *Concluding observations*

Cullens left Sikalongo in March of 1938. During their tenure, they significantly expanded and enhance the mission station, both materially and otherwise. They established new outstations; supported Anna Eyster's efforts to improve Sikalongo Boys School; renovated or built a number of new buildings; and encouraged advanced training for national teachers as a means of enhancing education. Along with others such as the Halls, Elizabeth Engle, and Annie Winger, the Cullens and Eyster advanced the worthy cause begun by Adda and Myron Taylor at Sikalongo Mission.

The church held a farewell for Cecil and Janie Cullen on Sunday, March 20. Chief Singani attended the farewell and Jesse Chikaile spoke on behalf of the African believers. The Sikalongo staff accompanied the Cullens to Choma on Monday and saw them off. They returned to Canada, intending to come back to Africa; however, other circumstances kept them in Canada for the rest of their lives.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Kenneth Cullen, interview with the author, Grantham, PA, February 1, 2016.

## Consolidating an Established Ministry: Anna Eyster and the Manns (1938-45)

### *Anna Eyster and the Manns (1938-45): The 1938 context*

By 1938, Sikalongo Mission was well-established. The station had relatively new buildings and an expanded network of ten outstation schools with native teachers. The Boys School had 75 boarding students with trained African teachers helping Anna Eyster. Knowledgeable African workers such as Jesse Chikaile, Peter Munsaka, Arthur Kutwayo, and Joshua Moono provided a reliable human resource infra-structure for continued ministry. Such was the state of affairs when Roy and Esther Mann arrived in March of 1938.

### *Biographical sketches of Roy Mann, Grace Miller Mann, and Esther Thuma Mann*

Roy H. Mann met Grace Miller at Messiah Bible School and Missionary Training Home where they both studied in preparation for mission work. Grace began her studies in September 1918 and graduated in June 1922; Roy had graduated in 1921. They married in January 1922 and, after Grace's graduation, they set sail for Africa in August 1922.<sup>82</sup> The Manns began their African mission work in Northern Rhodesia at Macha Mission. There was some turmoil in Brethren in Christ missions at the time, making their arrival somewhat difficult. Frances Davidson departed from Macha under a cloud of miscommunication and hurt, and the Manns entered the picture right at that difficult moment.<sup>83</sup>

Tragically, less than two years after their arrival, Grace died of a severe form of malaria called "black water fever." The death of his wife did not

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<sup>82</sup> Roy Mann's recollections of his work in Africa can be found in Roy H. Mann, *I Remember: My Life of Missionary Service*, ed. Robert T. Mann (Mechanicsburg, PA, 2002). Grace Mann's early life and her calling to mission work are briefly described in her obituary: "Obituaries: Grace Miller Mann," *Evangelical Visitor*, May 12, 1924, 8. A more complete account can be found in Jesse L. and Emma Meyers et al, "Macha Mission - March 17," *Evangelical Visitor*, May 12, 1924, 12-13.

<sup>83</sup> For more about the turmoil at Macha, see E. Morris Sider, "Hannah Frances Davidson," *Nine Portraits*, ed. E. Morris Sider (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1978), 159-214; Thomas, "A Biographical Sketch of David (Ndhilambi) Moyo."

dissuade Roy from his call to mission work and he remained on the field. He continued at Macha for some time and then transferred to Matopo Mission in Southern Rhodesia. He was transferred again briefly before his furlough in 1930. Upon his return to Africa, he was again stationed at Matopo.



*Roy and Esther Mann with Ruth and Robert. Photo courtesy of Roy and Esther Mann Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

Those who knew Esther Thuma Mann all agree that she had a “strong personality,” so perhaps it is not surprising that her story is unique. She arrived at Matopo Mission in February 1936 at the age of 23.<sup>84</sup> Esther studied nursing at Dayton, Ohio and was initially assigned to care for Harvey Frey, who was suffering from cancer. Frey died in May 1936, leaving Esther without an obvious portfolio. According to her children, her practical nature resulted in a surprisingly brief courtship and subsequent marriage to Roy Mann in June 1936.<sup>85</sup> Esther gave birth to their first daughter, Ruth, in May 1937, and soon thereafter Roy and Esther were assigned to replace Janie and Cecil

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<sup>84</sup> H. H. Brubaker, “General Report, Africa, 1936,” *Handbook of Missions*, 1937, 15-23.

<sup>85</sup> Ruth Zook, interview with the author, January 30, 2017; Robert Mann, interview with the author, January 28, 2017).

Cullen at Sikalongo Mission. The Manns arrived at Sikalongo on Saturday, March 12, 1938. They met with local headmen and Chief Singani on Tuesday, March 15 in order to get to know the local leaders, thus beginning the work without hesitation.<sup>86</sup>

*“Those were the hard years”*

March 1938 thus marks a new phase for Sikalongo Mission—the Eyster-Mann years. For the next seven years, developments at Sikalongo Mission resulted from the leadership of the Manns and Anna Eyster, with assistance and guidance from loyal African helpers. According to her children, their mother considered their time at Sikalongo to be “the hard years.” Both Roy and Esther referred to this in later years. Roy said: “It was the most difficult period of our missionary activities for various reasons. It was during the war years, and we had famine, money was short ... and we had the most malaria during that period...” Esther expressed similar feelings in letters to her family.<sup>87</sup>

Although they accomplished many positive things between 1938 and 1945, a review of the circumstances reveals some justification for Esther’s sentiments. Sikalongo was a very remote place in 1938. It was situated at the edge of Plateau Tonga territory bordering the escarpment to Zambezi Valley, a locale which was considered one of the most “primitive” regions of Northern Rhodesia at the time. Although they were linguistically and culturally Plateau Tonga, the Sikalongo people were considered somewhat “backward” by both missionaries and other Tonga Brethren in Christ. Exacerbating the state of affairs was the fact that Roy Mann suffered serious bouts of malaria, literally standing at death’s door for a time. Additionally, Roy administered both the Sikalongo and Macha mission stations for some of their time. By the early 1940s, Roy’s furlough was long overdue, and World War II made it clear that there was no immediate end in sight. Moreover, the war added anxiety and financial stress to the situation. Although the missionaries were geographically removed from the war, it weighed on the minds of many.

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<sup>86</sup> Anna M. Eyster, “March Breezes for Sikalongo,” *Evangelical Visitor*, June 20, 1938, 13.

<sup>87</sup> Esther Mann, “Letters from Africa,” 1938-1945.

A number of scholars have suggested that the two world wars might have undermined the confidence of local peoples such as the Tonga, leading them to question the moral authority of the British and of the white missionaries.<sup>88</sup>

The situation within Sikalongo Mission was also difficult at times. Their long time worker and deacon, Jesse Chikaile, was dismissed after he took a second wife, and several teachers were dismissed for various reasons. Lastly, Sikalongo students contributed to the turmoil early in the Mann's tenure by going on strike. The last of these circumstances may have set the stage for Esther's feelings about Sikalongo.

### *The 1939 Sikalongo Boys School strike*

In the 1930s, tribal and regional loyalties in Northern Rhodesia were markedly stronger than they are today. Linguistic and cultural differences, as well as relational obligations and regional loyalties, influenced social alignments and decision-making processes. Some of these dynamics filtered into attitudes and relationships in the Brethren in Christ church. Specifically, local Brethren in Christ in Northern Rhodesia recognized a clear distinction between the "Macha people" and the "Sikalongo people." These understandings expressed themselves in 1939. In her report for October 25, Anna Eyster wrote:

A sad scene occurred this morning. Thirty of the thirty-five boys from Macha struck and walked home. It seemed that a feeling of territorial difference had been growing, and the climax occurred last Friday evening when they, a small group of them refused to listen to the head compound boy when he rang the retiring bell. They would not listen to Bro. Mann and Peter [Munsaka] this morning when they tried to reason with them.<sup>89</sup>

The conflict between the Macha boys and the Sikalongo boys continued for some time, requiring active intervention by parents and church leaders. Anna Eyster's subsequent entries noted:

Oct 27: A reply from Bro. Eyer at Macha stated that the Native

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<sup>88</sup> See the following: Stephen Charles Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Penguin Books, 1964); Paul Everett Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission: History through a Missiological Perspective* (WCIU Press, 2009).

<sup>89</sup> Anna M. Eyster, "Echoes from Sikalongo," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 2, 1939, 15-16.

Council will meet tomorrow morning to heal the breach which has been made.

Oct 28: Bro. Mann with five others left early for Macha. Arthur took Jesse's place and delivered an earnest appeal to those who were building on sand.

Oct 29: The affair is not settled. The Council, boys and Bro. Eyer are coming down next week. Please help us pray.<sup>90</sup>

Eyster revisited the situation in a later communication:

In order that we may understand a few items, let us recall one or two events in October. A large group of our boys from Macha had struck and gone home. One of the reasons was a division which had widened between the Sikalongo and Macha boys, causing bitter feelings between the leaders, who in turn influenced the others. It was decided by the Church Council that all the boys return to Sikalongo, and they with Bro. Eyer with us here try to bring about a peaceable settlement.<sup>91</sup>

After the Macha meetings of the previous week, the striking students, along with various church leaders, returned to Sikalongo in order to reconcile. Although the parties achieved some resolution to the conflict, the process was not smooth and one wonders whether the pivotal issues were ever fully addressed. Eyster's entries noted:

Thursday, [November] 3rd. The boys from Macha with Bro. Eyer and the Council arrived. They had been detained by heavy rains in Choma. The meeting lasted from 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The Native Brethren gave much good sound advice to all. We trust that peace has been restored.

Friday 4th. Prayer Day for compounds and locations. In the evening two of the group who had just returned the day before became insubordinate and refused to lock their bicycles in the bicycle room.

Saturday 5th. One of the two lads was dealt with and expelled. The Macha group is on the war path again. At length about twenty left, leaving about seventeen of their group to continue school at Sikalongo.

Tuesday 8th. Sampson Mudenda, one of our Standard IV boys, who

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Eyster, "November at Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 30, 1939, 13.



stood out the first time, but was in the group of strikers the second time, was sent back by his father. He made his confession to the school and has been reinstated.<sup>92</sup>

On Saturday, November 12, the local fathers of Sikalongo students were assembled to discuss the situation. A tenuous peace seems to have taken hold by December 1939, but these feelings of regional allegiance continued to haunt the Zambian Brethren in Christ church long after this incident.

### *Consolidating an established ministry*

In spite of difficult circumstances, the Manns and Anna Eyster made significant progress at Sikalongo between 1938 and 1945, consolidating the gains of the Eyster-Cullen years. Anna Eyster continued to improve the educational quality of the boys school, Roy Mann oversaw outschool developments and built a new dam to augment the water supply, and Esther Mann upgraded the clinic with her nursing expertise and systematic hard work. Educationally, Sikalongo benefitted from the coming of several new teachers, Joni Munsaka and Ethan Siamalambo, who had just completed their course at Matopo. Nathan Munsaka, who had helped before, returned from four years of trade school in Lusaka (see above).

However, other changes at Sikalongo may have contributed to an unsettled atmosphere between 1938 and 1941. Anna Eyster left for furlough in April 1939, interrupting the educational equilibrium.<sup>93</sup> By that time, Eyster had developed deep relationships with both the community and the students. Her replacement, Mary Kreider, did not have the advantage of such strong local support, undoubtedly making her job more difficult. Although the Tonga are generally very welcoming, it naturally took time for Kreider to develop close relationships. Furthermore, in 1940, Joshua Moono, long time Sikalongo evangelist, retired and was replaced by Samuel Munda.<sup>94</sup> And most notably, the dismissal of Jesse Chikaile in 1940 surely discouraged everyone and left a vacuum that would have been difficult to fill. Judging from Roy Mann's comments, the onset of World War II also seems to have weighed on

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Anna M. Eyster, "Home on Furlough," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 19, 1939, 14.

<sup>94</sup> H. H. Brubaker, "Report of Evangelistic Work, 1940," *Handbook of Missions*, 1941, 23-24.

the minds of missionaries in Northern Rhodesia. Although the selection of Peter Munsaka as deacon in April 1941 undoubtedly eased some uncertainty, these other changes must have contributed to making these the “hard years.”<sup>95</sup>

The arrival of Sampson Mwaanga and Isaac Munsanje in 1941 to help with teaching responsibilities probably provided additional stability to Sikalongo Boys School. Mwaanga was a gifted leader with the ability to inspire and challenge students.<sup>96</sup> I suspect his strong personality provided a controlling presence, but it may also have undermined missionary authority to some degree. Mwaanga came from a Brethren in Christ family in the Macha District. From all accounts, he was a capable teacher and a quick thinker. Moreover, we know that later in his life he became a strong political activist. His son, Vernon Mwaanga, played a significant role in the independence movement and later became part of Kenneth Kaunda’s new government. Vernon served as deputy high commissioner, ambassador to the Soviet Union and the United Nations, and minister of foreign affairs. Despite Sampson Mwaanga’s eventual political activism, the missionaries recognized his gifts and sent him for additional teacher training in 1942.<sup>97</sup> He returned in 1944 to teach the upper Standards at Sikalongo.<sup>98</sup>

Sending Sampson Mwaanga for additional teacher training was an indication of the seriousness of the missionaries’ desire to upgrade the quality of education at Sikalongo Boys School. Comments from mission reports and minutes often reflect similar aspirations. For example, Executive Board minutes from December 1941 noted that Standard VI was to be added to the school in August 1942.<sup>99</sup> The church was helped by government inspectors, who made regular visits to assess the quality of mission school education and the capabilities of its teachers. Esther Mann wrote regarding a 1943 inspection:

The school inspector, Dr. Winterbottom was here at Sikalongo for about a week. He inspected the Boarding school, also four outschools. We were glad for this contact with the Inspector. He seemed favorably impressed with the work carried on and with the progress of the

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<sup>95</sup> Anna M. Eyster, “April Echoes from Sikalongo Mission,” *Evangelical Visitor*, June 30, 1939, 13.

<sup>96</sup> Anna Eyster, “August at Sikalongo,” *Evangelical Visitor*, November 3, 1941, 9.

<sup>97</sup> Anna M. Eyster, “Echoes Old and New from Sikalongo,” *Evangelical Visitor*, November 23, 1942, 12-13.

<sup>98</sup> Esther Mann, “June at Sikalongo Mission,” *Evangelical Visitor*, October 9, 1944, 12-13.

<sup>99</sup> Esther Mann, “March: Sikalongo,” *Evangelical Visitor*, July 19, 1943, 12.



*Teacher Sampson Mwaanga with Standard VI graduating class. Courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

school. He also gave some very good constructive criticism.<sup>100</sup>

Sikalongo Boys School also sought to maintain quality education through rigorous examinations. Anna Eyster wrote proudly about her students in 1941: “Government Examinations for Standard IV. They [the students] surely worked hard and faithfully, and their efforts have been rewarded. All made the grade.”<sup>101</sup>

The difficulty of some examinations is surprising by today’s testing standards. The following questions were included in the Standard V (grade 7) examination:<sup>102</sup>

1. Tell me who or what the following were:
  - a. Who was a “Watchman” to the House of Israel?
  - b. Who would not defile themselves with the King’s meat?
  - c. Who was called the “weeping Prophet”?

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<sup>100</sup> African Mission Executive Board Minutes, December 26, 1941.

<sup>101</sup> Anna M. Eyster, “Sikalongo Breezes – Month of May,” *Evangelical Visitor*, August 25, 1941, 10.

<sup>102</sup> “Standard V (Grade 7) Bible Examination at Sikalongo,” *Evangelical Visitor*, February 16, 1942, 11-12.

- d. In which book and chapter would you find the story of the Potter?
  - e. Who through his pride became insane?
7. [Answer the following questions.]
- a. What prophet lived through the reign of three kings?
  - b. What man was called to interpret three king's dreams ?
  - c. Why did not the lions eat Daniel when he was thrown into their den ?
  - d. Who laid the foundation of the second temple?
  - e. Who repaired and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem?

The curriculum included a wide variety of subjects: English, Bible, mathematics, history, practical skills, and vernacular studies. Executive Board minutes from 1944 stipulated that the following vernacular books should be read: Std. I – Marko; Std. II - Makani a-Bibele lye-Ciindi; Std. Ill - Lweendo lwa Shinyenda kwa by John Bunyan (Pilgrim's Progress); and Std. IV - Lives of Eminent Africans (in Tonga). Ultimately, the goal of Sikalongo educators was clear: graduate well-trained students with both secular and religious knowledge.

However, students did more than merely study or work. Exercise, singing, games, outings, and other diversions punctuated the life of Sikalongo students. A 1942 entry noted:

Arthur Kutwayo, the teacher of Stds. I and II, asked Sr. Eyster to bring down the little folding organ so his children could better learn the hymn, "Lord I'm Coming Home." This organ which was brought out by Sr. Musser Brechbill still functions, and brings inspiration and blessing to us. As we sang down in the class room, others gathered and helped us. How the African loves music!<sup>103</sup>

The *Evangelical Visitor* also noted a few special moments which featured new technologies that certainly would have appealed to student curiosity:

Sunday 6. In the evening Sr. Eyster took Bro. Mann's victrola down to school and played it for the boys. A number of village people were in. How they did enjoy it!"

Monday 7. A mowing machine is actually cutting down the grass around the mission. We had to stop school for the pupils to see it work. We do thank the Lord for a special offering which made this

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<sup>103</sup> Anna M. Eyster, "Sikalongo Echoes from a Diary," *Evangelical Visitor*, January 19, 1942, 12-13.

most needful piece of machinery possible.”<sup>104</sup>

Other mission staff played important roles for Sikalongo students. One particular person deserves mention. Steleki Mudenda grew up near Sikalongo. His name (spelled differently) appears in 1931 describing him as “one of our herd boys.”<sup>105</sup> He reportedly moved away for a period of time, but eventually came back to Sikalongo and became a member of the staff. He was evidently multi-talented, serving as the cook, thatching the roof of the new church and mentoring Sikalongo students. A 1941 account mentions Steleki Mudenda as the “Father to the boys.”<sup>106</sup> That he was considered a key member of the staff is proven by the many times he is mentioned in the *Evangelical Visitor*. Until his death, Mudenda lived just north of the Mission Dam.

### *Diligent outstation efforts*

While Anna Eyster and others continued the educational work of the mission station, Roy Mann diligently supervised the outstations. He made regular visits to nearby schools to encourage and monitor the efforts of the teachers. He also visited more distant schools such as Nakeempa. The following account describes a visit to Nakeempa, west of Sikalongo Mission:

During July Bro. Mann visited most of the outschools. Over one week end we all went with him to Nakempa [sic], taking our tent and provisions. This school is about 50 miles from the mission by road, but is much nearer across country. Some times of the year we can take the shorter road.

We were very much encouraged with the work at Nakempa [sic], as the people not only seemed to be awakened educationally but there seemed to be a good response in the church services. In one of the services six remained for prayer and in another service four remained.... We were especially thankful for the chief who we believe has had a real change of heart and no doubt would be a church member today, but he has two wives.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Anna M. Eyster, “April Echoes from Sikalongo Mission,” *Evangelical Visitor*, June 30, 1941, 12-13.

<sup>105</sup> Mrs. Myron Taylor, “Sikalongo,” *Evangelical Visitor*, February 2, 1931, 46.

<sup>106</sup> Esther Mann, “August at Sikalongo,” *Evangelical Visitor*, November 3, 1941, 9.

<sup>107</sup> Esther Mann, “June and July at Sikalongo Mission,” *Evangelical Visitor*, October 7, 1940, 14.

Nakeempa school continues to be under Brethren in Christ supervision in 2017, with a thriving church nearby.

Sinazeze, located in the Zambezi Valley, was the most distant outschool established during the Eyster-Cullen years. Cecil Cullen seemed to have had special affinity for this school, sending teachers to staff it and visiting whenever possible. In 1931, the trip was made easier by the construction of a relief road. However, in the ensuing years, that road had deteriorated to the extent that it was impassable for a vehicle. Despite the demanding conditions, Roy Mann and others continued to travel to the valley in order to encourage and sustain the school. Unfortunately, it became increasingly difficult to staff the school because of its remote location and the cultural differences between Plateau and Valley Tonga. This challenge eventually led Roy Mann to transfer the responsibility for the Sinazeze school to the Methodists, who had mission stations at Kanchindu and Masuku, and churches throughout the Zambezi Valley.<sup>108</sup>

For a period of time, Annie Winger also helped visit Sikalongo outstations. Winger spent her entire adult life in mission work, much of the time doing village visitation. She wrote fondly about one holiday period when she spent three months travelling to villages in the Sikalongo District.

Perhaps you would be interested to know how I spent nearly eleven weeks of vacation between May 26 and August 10. Almost four weeks of it, divided into three different periods, were spent among the people in the villages surrounding Sikalongo Mission.<sup>109</sup>

Winger's detailed descriptions of her trips provide us with a wonderful record of Sikalongo's outstation schools and some of the teachers who were active at the time.

### *Christian Service League*

One of the distinctive educational additions of the 1940s was the introduction of the Christian Service League (CSL). The origins of CSL are not clear. Eight Sikalongo students were involved with CSL in 1940,

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<sup>108</sup> Executive Board minutes in 1942 describe a meeting at Choma Hotel and the transfer of Sinazeze to the Methodists: African Mission Executive Board Minutes, July 8, 1942.

<sup>109</sup> Annie E. Winger, "Village Visiting," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 26, 1938, 11.



*Most of the Sikalongo teachers and some of their wives. Photo from Evangelical Visitor, 1939.*

suggesting that the league began sometime at the end of the 1930s. By 1941 the organization was in full swing with Bible study materials, outings, service projects, and a fully-developed curriculum. It was promoted both for men and women in Brethren in Christ schools in both Northern and Southern Rhodesia. The boys at Sikalongo Boys School loved it.<sup>110</sup> Eyster described a Christian Service League outing:

May 10. The boys of the Christian Service League, having formerly decided to have a day out, packed their cooked sweet potatoes in a basket and they, with Sr. Eyster their leader, set out for the day. Our camp was at the Munzuma River, four miles away, where the boys fished a while. They caught several fish—no crocodiles. After a period of relaxation and lunch we enjoyed a time in devotions.... Crossing the river we came to Matimba's village... and then later met at Chibizwa's, about two miles from the Mission.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> "Sikalongo Mission. March," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 17, 1940, 13.

<sup>111</sup> Eyster, "Sikalongo Breezes - Month of May," *Evangelical Visitor*, August 25, 1941.

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The Christian Service League was obviously modeled after similar organizations in the West such as the American Boy Scouts. The 1939 *Handbook of Missions* mentions a “Young People’s Christian League in California,” but general reports make no mention of the organization.

The creation of CSL in Rhodesia might have been inspired by the Christian Service Brigade. Started in 1937 by a Wheaton College student, its strategies and structure are remarkably similar to those of the CSL. That the Brethren in Christ might have borrowed the basic idea but substituted “league” for “brigade” seems altogether reasonable given the denominational attitudes toward military involvement.

A 1949 account in the *Evangelical Visitor* includes the CSL camp song, and a note that students “competed in various activities: translating choruses, composing Christian words to African tunes, identifying trees and



*Third year CSL group enroute to preach the gospel. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

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<sup>111</sup> Eyster, “Sikalongo Breezes - Month of May,” *Evangelical Visitor*, August 25, 1941.



shrubs...”<sup>112</sup> The CSL had badges, an emblem, and a distinctive hand sign.<sup>113</sup> Fond memories of the Christian Service League were so strong for Stephen Muleya in 2010 that he could still vividly remember and sing the CSL theme song more than 50 years after the fact.<sup>114</sup>

A later 1951 account by Edna Lehman describes the activities of the Sikalongo CSL to nearby Siamvula village:

The lunch is packed, breakfast and morning worship is over, the whistle blows and we are on our way. The group is made up of thirteen school boys, teachers Muleya and Munkombwe, Sister Graybill and the writer. We had no more than started down the path until once again my ears caught the sound of some of the boys humming the tune “Lead Me to Some Soul Today.” None of these boys were present in the kitchen that morning so it became all the more impressive to me. Teacher Muleya also heard the boys humming as they walked along and soon said, “Boys, let us sing.” He led them in various songs along the way but invariably when not being led in song the boys would go back to the one they started out with.<sup>115</sup>

That only 13 students participated in this outing suggests that membership in the CSL was limited. What criteria determined their inclusion is unclear, but Stephen Muleya’s recollections testify to the organization’s long term impact. By independence, the league seems to have lost popularity in the Brethren in Christ church, but for at least 20 years, it was an important feature of the educational ministry of denominational missions in the Rhodesias.

*Elijah Mudenda: From brilliant Sikalongo student to Zambian Prime Minister*<sup>116</sup>

Elijah Mudenda was probably one of the student members of Sikalongo’s Christian Service League. Born June 7, 1927, at Macha, he was one of Chief Macha’s sons. Elijah probably came to Sikalongo Boys School in 1936 or 1937.

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<sup>112</sup> Elizabeth Engle, “Come to Camp,” *Evangelical Visitor*, January 24, 1949, 10.

<sup>113</sup> References to CSL appear throughout the minutes of the 1940s and 1950s. See, for example: African Mission Minutes, April 3, 1945; African Mission Minutes, December 10, 1957; African Mission Minutes, August 30, 1964;

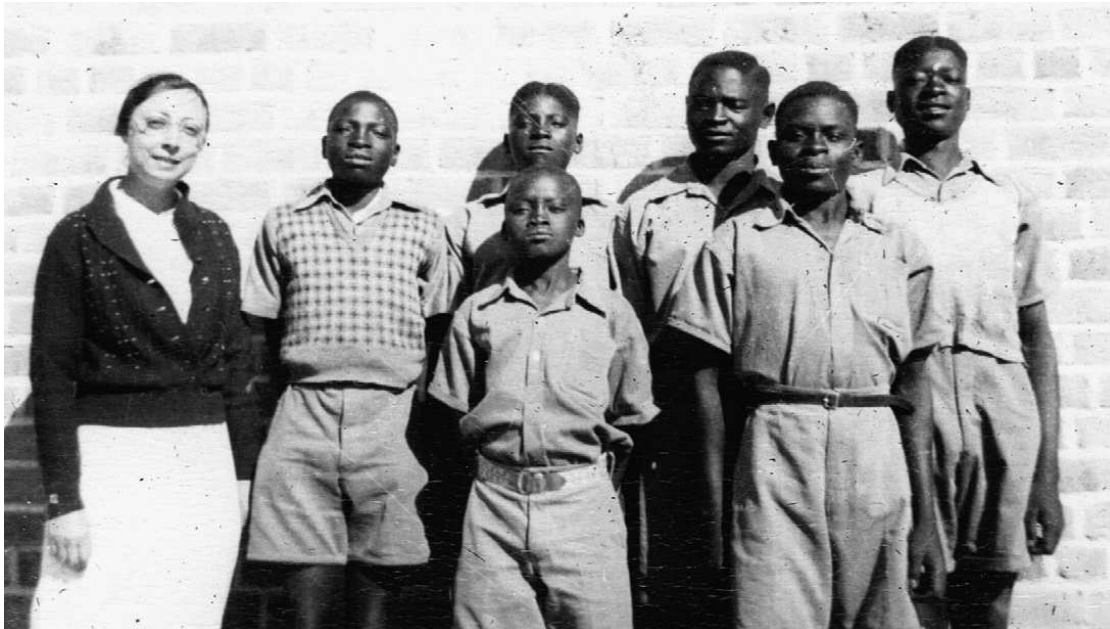
<sup>114</sup> Stephen Muleya, interview with the author, February 11, 2010, Sikalongo Mission, Zambia.

<sup>115</sup> Edna E. Lehman, “Lord Lead Me to Some Soul Today,” *Evangelical Visitor*, April 2, 1951, 11.

<sup>116</sup> Elijah Mudenda Sources: Elijah Mudenda and Sapes Trust, *A Generation of Struggle* (Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe: SAPES Books, 1999).

It was common at the time for Brethren in Christ boys to spend their early grades at a school near their village and, if they could afford it, transfer to Sikalongo Boys School for Standard I (grade 3). If they did well, they could remain up to Standard VI (grade 8) at Sikalongo. A 1941 photograph shows Elijah Mudenda as a Standard IV student, leading to the conclusion that he probably began at Sikalongo about 1937.<sup>117</sup>

That he was an outstanding student is clear from the results of a Standard VI review examination he and 13 other students took in 1943.<sup>118</sup> The extremely difficult examination appears in the July issue of *Evangelical Visitor*, and Mudenda, the youngest of the group to take it, scored 100 percent. The next highest score was 80 percent. Some of this group of 14 can be seen in a 1941 photograph from Anna Eyster's album.



*Anna Eyster's Standard IV class, 1941. Elijah Mudenda is in the middle of the front row. Courtesy of Anna Eyster Photography Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

Names on historic photographs always lead me to ask, “Who were these people? Are their relatives still alive?” More work could be done to identify the other young men in this photograph, but we know a few things about

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<sup>117</sup> Elijah Mudenda's testimony can be found in Elijah Mudenda, “The Work I Wish to Do When I Leave School,” *Evangelical Visitor*, August 25, 1941, 10.

<sup>118</sup> Anna M. Eyster, *Evangelical Visitor*, January 4, 1943, 15.

some of them. For example, David (Muleya) was the son of Peter Munsaka, one of Sikalongo's loyal workers for over five decades. David eventually taught in the Sikalongo Boys School and elsewhere in the Brethren in Christ system. Amon (Mweetwa) became a staunch member in the denomination and an important educator and leader within the church. Frank (Muleya) became a teacher in the Brethren in Christ school system.

After leaving Sikalongo Boys School, Mudenda continued his education at Munali Secondary School, Makerere University in Uganda, and the University



*Elijah Mudenda. Photo from souvenir program for Zambian independence, October 24, 1964.*

of Fort Hare in South Africa. He later attended the University of Cambridge. Although not as visible in the independence movement as some others, Elijah Mudenda was chosen as one of the first ministers in Kenneth Kaunda's cabinet immediately after independence.

Mudenda continued to serve in the Zambian government as Minister of Finance, Foreign Minister, and eventually as Prime Minister for two years (from 1975-1977). Throughout his life, he remained a staunch member of the Brethren in Christ Church and was a regular attender at the Chilenje Church in Lusaka.

### *Community relationships*

Despite the initial disapproval of Chief Singani to establish a mission at Sikalongo, the missionaries attempted to maintain positive relationships with each of the chiefs and headmen. Interactions with local chiefs and headman were a necessary part of ministry work. However, missionaries clearly did not fully understand the inner workings of local customs or the nature of traditional power alignments. Many of their comments betray a dismissive attitude that would have kept them from learning the nuances of local governance. Nevertheless, Brethren in Christ missionaries tried to remain on good terms with traditional leaders.

Descriptions of contact between the missionaries and Chief Singani appeared periodically in the *Evangelical Visitor*. In 1935, Singani asked Cecil Cullen to come visit because he was seriously ill, suspecting he had been poisoned by an enemy.<sup>119</sup> The 1938 meeting between the Manns and Chief Singani signaled the missionaries' desire to maintain good relationships. When that same chief died in 1942, Sikalongo missionaries went to his village to pay their respects. Their account of the wailing demonstrates the cultural misunderstandings Brethren in Christ missionaries had regarding local traditions.

Sikalongo missionaries encountered mourners covered with white clay, wailing and shouting, and exotic music when they arrived at Singani's village. The *Evangelical Visitor* account describes a group of 70 who came from a village south of Sikalongo:

These people were from Siabunkulu's district or from down in the hills. As they approached they looked very barbarous as many of the men were carrying a spear or two and a shield; their half-naked bodies were smeared with white clay and ashes, while others wore a special headgear. The women in appearance were quite natural to that of wailing. The group came dancing into the village, keeping in step to the beating of their several drums and the blowing of their whistles, and above all of this was their gruesome wailing—truly a picture of raw heathendom.

These people carried on with their performances at intervals during the rest of the day.

All of the time the little clay pot was carried back and forth among the mourners; the smoke descending and hovering over the people—to keep peace among them.<sup>120</sup>

Accounts like this highlight the gap between Brethren in Christ missionary understandings and local culture. The “several drums and the blowing of their whistles” mentioned in the account are recognizable musical features of traditional Tonga funeral practices. The drums pictured in the photograph

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<sup>119</sup> “Superstition in Africa,” *Evangelical Visitor*, June 24, 1935, 11-12.

<sup>120</sup> “A Little Clay Pot,” *Evangelical Visitor*, December 21, 1942, 11.

<sup>128</sup> Helen Dohner, interview, April 12, 1994. Plenty of fiction and non-fiction writers touch on this fascinating subject, e.g., Weller, *Yesterday's People*, 123-27 and Jesse Stuart, *Beyond Dark Hills*, 83.

below are immediately identifiable as Budima drums and the “whistles” were unquestionably Nyele. Both musical instruments were commonly used at Tonga funerals. Ethnomusicological analyses have shown that the musical structures involved were extremely complex, both rhythmically and melodically.<sup>121</sup>

In spite of insufficient cultural awareness, the missionaries did what they could to create bridges between themselves and traditional authorities like Chief Singani. One expression of this desire was the offer of Sikalongo Mission carpenters to craft the coffin for Chief Singani’s burial as a gesture of good will.



*Funeral for Chief Singani. Photo courtesy of Roy and Esther Mann Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

### *Enhancing Sikalongo medical ministry*

Medical work was part of Sikalongo ministry from the beginning. Taylors, Steckleys, Cullens, Halls, and Anna Eyster all did what they could to

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<sup>121</sup> For an introduction to traditional Zambian music, see Arthur Morris Jones, *African Music in Northern Rhodesia and Some Other Places*, Rev. ed., *The Occasional Papers of the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum; New Ser., No. 4; Variation: Rhodes-Livingstone Museum; Occasional Papers; New Ser., No. 4* ([Livingstone], Northern Rhodesia: Rhodes-Livingstone Museum, 1958); Hugh Tracey, *Rhodesia (Northern) Sound Recording; Valley Tonga* (Roodepoort, Transvaal, Union of South Africa: International Library of African Music, 1957), 1 sound disc (34 min.); and Hugh Tracey, *Rhodesia (Southern) Sound Recording; Tonga* (Roodepoort, Transvaal, Union of South Africa: International Library of African Music, 1958), 1 sound disc (42 min.).

administer basic medical assistance to people in the Sikalongo area. Both Adda and Myron Taylor apparently had some knowledge of medicine, Cecil Cullen is known to have pulled teeth, and a mid-1930s account mentions a “medical assistant” name Sinzala.<sup>122</sup> Moreover, prior to coming to Africa, Anna Eyster had received “practical nurses training,” which she used throughout her time at Sikalongo.

Despite earlier efforts, medical work gained prominence during the Eyster-Mann years. Esther Mann came to Sikalongo with more medical training than previous missionaries; consequently, she was able to upgrade the quality and quantity of medical treatments. Roy Mann’s regular references to medical treatments in the annual *Handbook of Missions* reflect an increased emphasis on clinical work during the Eyster-Mann years. Roy even lent a hand from time to time. One photograph from the Mann Family Collection pictures him pulling the decayed tooth of a suffering patient.



Roy Mann pulling a tooth. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

The 1940 *Handbook of Missions* highlighted the increase in medical services at Sikalongo:

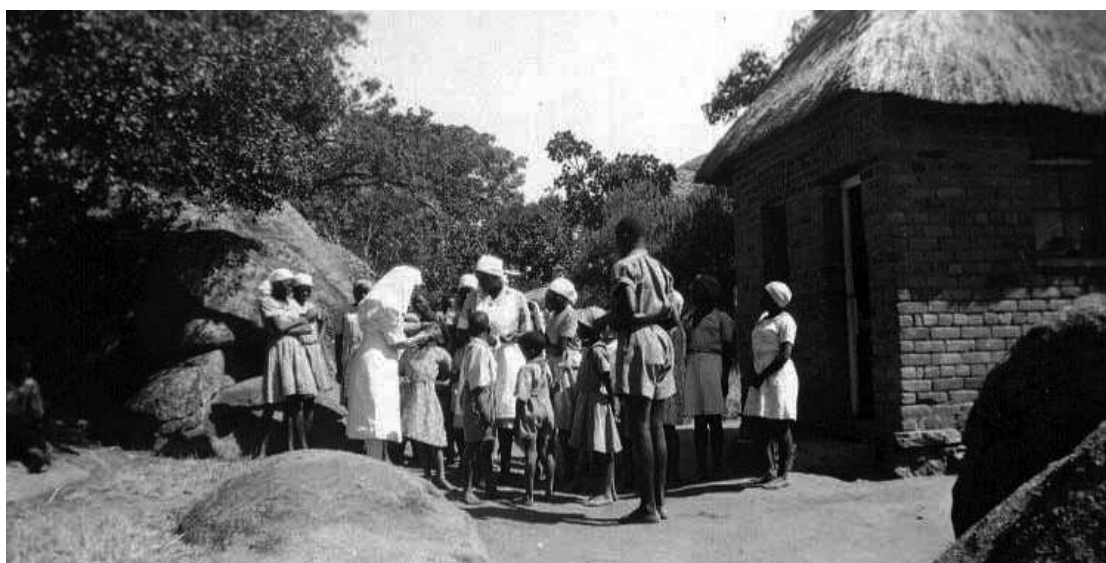
Quite a few people have come for medical treatment at the dispensary during the year. Many came who had very bad sores and tropical ulcers. A few remained for treatment; others came daily. Most of the people left with healed legs. Will you help pray for these patients as many of them are heathen and do not come to church<sup>123</sup>

Other reports noted that many Valley Tonga had moved up to the Plateau because of famine and some of them came to the mission for treatment.

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<sup>129</sup> Anna M. Eyster, “News from Sikalongo, June-July,” *Evangelical Visitor*, September 30, 1935, 12-13.

<sup>123</sup> Mann, *I Remember: My Life of Missionary Service*, 46-47.



*Esther Mann treating a patient. Photo courtesy of Roy and Esther Mann Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

Esther Mann's increased attention to the medical needs of the community set the stage for even more improvement during the Eyster-Hershey years.

*Capital improvements: The mission dam and the primary school*

Cecil Cullen had repaired or replaced most of the primary buildings at the Mission before the Mann's arrival. Roy Mann observed the shortage of adequate water and the difficulty of bringing it to the mission, and he did several things to solve the problem. First, he modified an existing ox cart to hold three 50-gallon drums of water in order to increase the amount of water brought in a single trip. More importantly, in 1943 he decided to build the Sikalongo Mission Dam. In his memoirs, he stated:

We had a problem of water at the mission station during the dry season. We had to go quite a long distance in order to get water. So in consultation with the government man in the district we decided to build a dam on the sprout (small river) just as we leave Sikalongo towards Choma.<sup>124</sup>

The project faced several setbacks. The year after completing the dam, the rains were so strong that they washed part of the dam away. Roy made the

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<sup>124</sup> Mann, *I Remember: My Life of Missionary Service*, 46-47.

necessary modifications and refined the design over the next several years. By 1945, the dam was stable and the road across it was wide enough to accommodate vehicles.

A metal scoop has sat in front of the main house at Sikalongo for years. I thought it might have been used to build the dam. Roy Mann's memoir confirmed my suspicions about the scoop, stating that it was "a cubic yard of the ground and you hold the scoop, lift it up to dig into the ground and then when it gets filled you lay it down and it drags on the ground and then you just dump it."<sup>125</sup> Apparently, Roy hitched two oxen to the scoop and used it to excavate the dam. Mann also added a pump near the dam with pipes leading up the hill to the Mission.<sup>126</sup>

The Manns made other capital improvements during their tenure. Executive Board minutes from 1943 stated that "permission be given to build a school house for day pupils near the gravel pits along the road to Choma."<sup>127</sup>



*Sikalongo Mission lorry. Photo courtesy of Roy and Esther Mann Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> African Mission Executive Board Minutes, December 26, 1941.

<sup>127</sup> African Mission Executive Board Minutes, August 2, 1943.



The location described is no doubt where Sikalongo Primary School is currently situated north of the mission station. They also purchased a lorry to ease the transport challenges posed by the cattle quarantine.<sup>128</sup>

### *Concluding observations*

Sikalongo Mission benefitted from the contributions of Esther and Roy Mann, but it is also easy to understand their feeling that these were “hard years.” Nearly every annual report included some note of struggle. Their 1942 report began:

In looking back over another year’s service, “we thank God and take courage,” and rejoice in what has been accomplished for His glory. We have experienced times of joy and sorrow, as well as times of testing, but He himself has been our “refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”<sup>129</sup>

A variety of factors contributed to the times of sorrow: Manns struggled to keep Sinazeze going; frequent staff changes undermined stability; dismissals of several key workers discouraged them; and the relative isolation of the location and the cultural aspects of the Sikalongo Tonga bothered them. At the same time, they and Anna Eyster worked to upgrade the quality of the schools, they strengthened and enhanced many of the existing outstations, they accomplished some capital improvements (notably the dam), and they laid the groundwork for expanded medical work.

When they left in August 1945, they had succeeded in maintaining and consolidating the previous gains. Esther and Roy Mann returned to the United States for their long overdue furlough. They came back to Africa in 1947 and served another term in Southern Rhodesia at Mtshabezi, Wanezi and Matopo. And, although Roy and Esther “retired” for a decade in 1955, the Manns returned to Africa for yet another 10-year stint in 1966.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., Item 5a.

<sup>129</sup> Roy H. Mann, “Sikalongo Mission Annual Report: 1942,” *Handbook of Missions*, 1943, 26-27.

<sup>130</sup> Mann, *I Remember: My Life of Missionary Service*.

## Consolidating an Established Ministry: Anna Eyster and the Hersheys (1945-47)

### *Anna Eyster and the Hersheys (1945-47): The 1945 context*

Esther and Roy Mann finally got their furlough in 1945. Roy had been on the field for 13 years without a furlough and both he and Esther were eager for a break. J. Elwood and Dorothy Hershey came as a replacement for the Manns in May. They came to Sikalongo as experienced missionaries, having served for seven years in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>131</sup> The Hersheys found a well-developed mission station with a mature school for boys, a lower primary school, a healthy mission church, and nearly 10 outstation schools. After a brief three-month furlough, Anna Eyster returned to Sikalongo and remained the rest of Hershey's short, two-year stay. Elwood Hershey reflected on the state of affairs upon their arrival:

The conditions among the Batonga tribe are different than among the Amandebele, partly from tribal customs and partly because the work has not had the advantages of the same number of years. However, we found the work well organized and the foundations well-laid. We have thus endeavoured to continue building in the same steady manner by preaching, teaching, admonishing and guiding according to the precepts of our Lord.<sup>132</sup>

Hershey's comment that "conditions ... are different" infers his recognition of what was perceived as the cultural backwardness of the people at Sikalongo. He reiterated a similar sentiment in his next annual report:

The old men still carry their spears when even on a short journey to the Mission. Daily is seen the tribal customs of loin dress, ivory bracelets, copper leg bangles and anklets, copper ear rings and ornaments, hair dyed in red ochre, crowns of white shells braided into the hair or other hair ringlets, and sometimes a nose stick about six inches in length through the tip of the nose. These are in contrast to the more civilized and Christian modes of dress. Recently more than one hundred men brought their Government Identification

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> J. Elwood Hershey, "Sikalongo Mission Annual Report, 1945," *Handbook of Missions*, 1946, 103-105.

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Certificates and taxes asking to have them forwarded to the District Commissioner, for they could neither read nor write.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, Hershey's statement that they found a well-organized mission station accurately reflected the circumstances at the time.

### *Biographical sketches of Dorothy Lexow Hershey and J. Elwood Hershey*

Dorothy and J. Elwood Hershey came to Sikalongo with particularly useful skills. Both had strong academic backgrounds. Elwood studied at Messiah College, Taylor College, and Eastern Baptist Seminary. Dorothy studied at Beulah College, Messiah College, and Deaconess Hospital in Bethel, Kansas, where she received her nursing credentials. The Hersheys married in Southern Rhodesia in 1938, and served at Matopo and Mtshabezi before their transfer to Sikalongo in 1945.<sup>134</sup>



*Elwood and Dorothy Hershey with Lenora and Alvera, circa 1945. Photo courtesy of Anna Eyster Photograph Collection, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.*

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<sup>133</sup> J. Elwood Hershey, "Sikalongo Mission Annual Report, 1946," *Handbook of Missions*, 1947, 47-49.

<sup>134</sup> Alvera Hershey Stern, interview with the author, January 28, 2017.

In his first report after their arrival in May 1945, Elwood Hershey specifically mentioned the faithful service of African staff:

We wish to record that the faithfulness of our three African leaders has been greatly appreciated, namely, Deacon Peter Munsaka, Head-teacher Sampson Mwanga [sic], and Evangelist Samuel Munda. We trust their service shall ever be steadfast in the building of the African Church.<sup>135</sup>

In his outstation report, he noted that nine schools and two “preaching places” existed. The two new places had apparently been opened by Tonga believers who had done teacher training in Southern Rhodesia. Additionally, Hershey acknowledged Roy Mann’s capital improvements, stating that “Four new buildings were erected and one extensively repaired with a complete new roof.”<sup>136</sup>

Although their stay at Sikalongo was not even two years, Dorothy and Elwood Hershey were more than mere caretakers. They continued to consolidate and strengthen existing work, and they expanded the work by adding outstations and upgrading the clinic. As was true for the Manns, they were assisted by the diligent efforts of Anna Eyster, Peter Munsaka, and Arthur Kutwayo, along with other African workers.

### *The mission church and schools*

Sikalongo Mission continued as before. In his reports, Hershey noted that things continued to move ahead with two evangelistic campaigns each year, baptisms, Sunday schools, and communion services. The report for 1946 noted that Peter Munsaka was reappointed as the deacon for the Sikalongo Church.<sup>137</sup>

Sikalongo Mission schools were on solid ground during the Hershey tenure with six African teachers and two European teachers. Enrollment for 1945 was 106 students and 120 students in 1946. Eyster and Elwood Hershey worked together to teach the students. Hershey wrote:

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<sup>135</sup> Hershey, “Sikalongo Mission Annual Report, 1945,” *Handbook of Missions*, 1946.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Hershey, “Sikalongo Mission Annual Report, 1946,” *Handbook of Missions*, 1947.

Two Industrial teachers and one Instructor, assisted in the Carpentry, Building and Agriculture divisions. Twelve in Standard Six and thirty-four in Standard Four, sat for the Government Examinations with very satisfactory results and passes. The Government African Education Officer, for the Southern Province, called all Missions to one center, where we worked together for three days correcting and grading the examination papers and computing the results. A meeting followed for general discussion on African Education and for announcements on the future Educational Policy of the colony.<sup>138</sup>

*The outschools*

Roy Mann had visited all the outschools before their departure in July 1945. Elwood Hershey revisited the same schools after Manns left. Two new schools were added during 1946, bringing the total to 13 outschools. African teachers taught at all the outschools and also served as the local church pastor. Hershey continued regular visits to the outschools and noted the importance of maintaining contact in order to encourage steady improvement:

The enrollments and service attendances are not large in numbers as the full light has not yet dawned upon these semi-backward people. And yet each center has a nucleus and is building slowly but effectively a group of witnessing Christians... They need doctrinal teaching, devotional teaching, and guidance in fervent Christian experience. They need not only a comparison of civilization and uncivilization in general terms but a keen consciousness and conscientious discrimination in Christian conduct and complete devotion to Christ and the Church in comparison to various shades of abstinence from lifelong customs and practices.<sup>139</sup>

A noticeable paternalistic tone emerges from this report, which was common at the time. Although Africans were steadily being groomed for leadership, the American missionary was ultimately in charge during this period in Northern Rhodesia.

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

*The clinic*

The Hersheys' most enduring contribution to the mission was their medical work. As I indicated above, Sikalongo medical services saw a steady increase from the time of the Taylors to Dorothy Hershey's coming. Anna Eyster and the Cullens administered medicines and treated what they could, including pulling teeth. But they did not have the level of specialized training that Esther Mann did. Consequently, Esther elevated Sikalongo's clinical services during their tenure.

Dorothy Hershey brought yet another degree of experience and energy to situation. She had played a significant role at Mtshabezi Hospital in Southern Rhodesia before they came to Sikalongo, and she brought that expertise to bear at Sikalongo. Elwood managed the renovation of several buildings and supervised a building program to add outpatient wards. Dorothy wrote about the need and the opportunity in 1946:

There is great opportunity to sow the Seed in the medical phase of the work. This past year over 4000 cases have been contacted. One class of people who journey four to seven days on foot come here to receive medical aid. They come from the Zambezi Valley. Before their treatments they are given a short service. Frequently there are those who request prayer. God alone knows the blessings received from these services.

Among the Zambezi people there is no medical work. Thus they come here traveling many weary miles with their sores and sick bodies. The government has been greatly impressed by their people coming here for help. And they are encouraging the work for them to go forth.<sup>140</sup>

In order to improve the medical services, more and better buildings were necessary. Soon after their arrival, the Hersheys submitted a plan for a new building.<sup>141</sup> Foundations for a clinic were dug and the building began in 1946. Workers renovated and repaired the old dispensary to make it more functional. Dorothy Hershey concluded: "The medical work is growing considerably and the day is here for a full time nurse to take charge of this field too."<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Mrs. J. Elwood Hershey, "Medical Work at Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, December 16, 1946, 9.

<sup>141</sup> African Mission Minutes, April 3, 1945.

<sup>142</sup> Hershey, "Medical Work at Sikalongo Mission," *Evangelical Visitor*, December 16, 1946.



*Sikalongo Mission dispensary. Photo from There is No Difference: God Works in Africa and India.*

*Jonathan Muleya: From humble beginnings to skilled Brethren in Christ educator*

Jonathan Muleya was one of Sikalongo Boys School's outstanding graduates and an important addition to the Sikalongo staff during the period of consolidation. Muleya was born and grew up not far from Sikalongo Mission in the village of Mudukula. He, along with some of his siblings, attended Sikalongo Boys School. In 1939, his testimony appeared in the *Evangelical Visitor* along with that of Sampson Mudenda, an indication that these two students were considered promising both academically and spiritually. It is also noteworthy that these would have been written soon after the Sikalongo boys strike of 1938. Mudenda was a "Macha boy" and Muleya was a "Sikalongo boy," and one wonders to what degree they were entangled in the conflict between the two regions.

After graduating from Sikalongo Boys School, Muleya studied at Matopo Teacher Training School, finishing in 1945.<sup>143</sup> He taught eight years (1946-54) at Sikalongo Boys School following his teacher training.<sup>144</sup> He attended Chalimbana Teachers College in Lusaka, gaining the highest teaching

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<sup>143</sup> Esther Mann, *Evangelical Visitor*, March 12, 1945, 13.

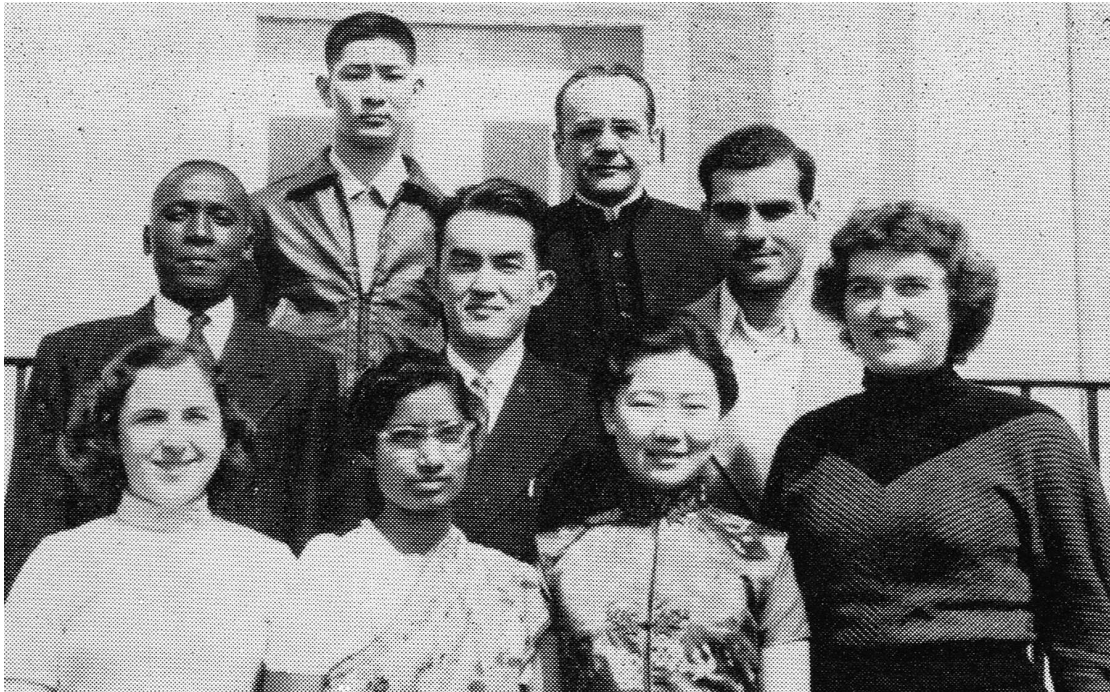
<sup>144</sup> Jonathan Muleya, "International Students among Us Make a Contribution to World Missions Outlook," *Evangelical Visitor Supplement*, June 18, 1956, 2.

credentials available in Northern Rhodesia at the time. Muleya joined the Sikalongo teaching staff in 1946, and by 1954, he had been appointed Headmaster.<sup>145</sup>

In 1956, the Brethren in Christ sent Muleya and his family to Messiah College to study. Regarding his Messiah studies, he said:

I came to Messiah to get a balanced education in order that I may academically and religiously be fitted to serve my people efficiently. I hold the idea that academic education without Christian education is detrimental to the individual or literally groundless. My desires are to become an effective teacher and to become a true follower of Jesus Christ and be able to share with my people the healing Word of Jesus Christ the crucified, who set my people free from their treacherous tribal customs. This is the same Christ I want to instill into their spiritual minds. "Our prayer to God is, 'Use us in the way you wish.'<sup>146</sup>

Muleya remained at Messiah for three years. By all accounts, he did well and the family endeared themselves to the North American church.



*Messiah College international students, 1956. Jonathan Muleya is on the left in the second row. Photo from Evangelical Visitor, 1956.*

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<sup>145</sup> David E. Climenhaga, "Feed My Lambs," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 15, 1954, 8.

<sup>146</sup> Muleya, "International Students," *Evangelical Visitor Supplement*, June 18, 1956.



After his return to Northern Rhodesia in 1959, Muleya and Fannie Longenecker were posted at the newly-established David Livingstone Teacher Training College, as it was then known.<sup>147</sup> Ordained in 1960, he became the lead pastor of the Maramba Brethren in Christ church in Livingstone, a recently-planted effort of the denomination. Tragically, Muleya's wife, Addie, died unexpectedly in May 1963. Jonathan was heart-stricken and asked to be transferred to Choma in order to be closer to friends and relatives who could help him with his children. The church agreed and asked him to serve as the headmaster for Choma Secondary School, a coeducational boarding high school, a cooperative effort between the Brethren in Christ and the Pilgrim Wesleyan Church in Zambia.<sup>148</sup> Muleya's leadership helped to put Choma Secondary School on solid ground, establishing a high standard of academic excellence that remains to the present.

### *Concluding observations*

The Hersheys contributed to the consolidation of Sikalongo Mission by maintaining the status quo, adding two outschools, and elevating the place of medical services. A team of skilled and loyal people surrounded and supported them: Sampson Mwaanga, Peter Musaka, Arthur Kutywayo, Jonathan Muleya, Steleki Mudenda, and others. David and Dorcas Climenhaga arrived at Sikalongo Mission in January of 1947, releasing the Hersheys for their furlough. They left Africa in March.

Throughout both the Mann and Hershey years, Anna Eyster's constant presence provided a needed stability at Sikalongo. She, along with Peter Munsaka and Arthur Kutywayo, knew the story of Sikalongo Mission from the time of Taylor's death to the middle of the twentieth century. They knew the people, their problems, and their potential. Eyster poured the best years of her life into the work at Sikalongo and its students had become her children. Her eventual departure must have been difficult indeed.

With the end of World War II, many things changed. Travel became easier, which led to a bevy of new recruits for the mission field. Economic conditions improved, easing the flow of goods, thus making commodities more available

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<sup>147</sup> "Muleya Family Returning to Homeland," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 7, 1959, 8.

<sup>148</sup> "BICWM News," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 16, 1963, 9.

and bringing costs down. International relations improved, resulting in fewer distractions for the British and making communication easier. At the same time, many scholars have also noted that one of the unintended results of World War II was the spawning of independence movements around the globe. People of all ethnic backgrounds fought to preserve freedom, and returning black soldiers believed they should enjoy the same privileges as their white comrades. From this point onward, it became increasingly difficult to presume white superiority and untenable to maintain white administrative control. The handover from Hersheys to Climenhagas marked the beginning of the end for the colonial era.

## Called to be a Homemaker

By Harriet Bohem Bert\*

### Foreword

My mother, Harriet Catherine Bohem Bert, would be amazed and probably a little embarrassed to find her memories being read by such a large audience! I seriously believe that she wrote this record for herself more than for others. It was her way of processing her life. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, she and my dad seemed to go through a period of “putting things in order.” This led to things like Dad’s copious inventory of the items they had acquired on their later-in-life travels, the self-publishing of his own life story, *Walk Memory’s Lane*, and this, Mom’s modest journal which was tucked away in a green three-ring binder. Unlike the little volume, which we in the family referred to as “Dad’s Book” and which he happily passed out to anyone who showed the slightest interest, I don’t remember Mom ever suggesting that anyone beyond the immediate family read her three-ring binder.

I had not read this journal in its entirety for probably 20 years. But in Mom’s last years at Messiah Village when topics of conversation became increasingly difficult, I would sometimes pick up the green binder and read a paragraph from her childhood pages just to spark her memory. We’d laugh about how much she hated canning fruit and vegetables, and how she still hated the very thought of oatmeal—she had eaten enough oatmeal in her childhood to last a lifetime! And we’d talk about the realities of life during the depression of the 1930s and World War II.

I am thankful to have been given this reason to re-read Mom’s humble record and to realize anew how the experiences in her early life affected

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\* Harriet Bohem Bert lived at Messiah Lifeways at Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg (PA) for 33 years. She was a member of the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church. She died in December 2015, at the age of 98, having been pre-deceased by her husband Eldon, and all her siblings.