

# TREASURE IN JARS OF CLAY

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MPONELA REFORMED CHURCH



## REFORMATION CONFERENCE 2020

WRITTEN BY JJ MATANDIKA

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October 30-31 we had our first Reformation Conference at Mponela Reformed Church. I was reminded of conferences I was involved in the past working with Joy to the World Ministries. My goal for this conference was simple: to establish a platform whereby confessional reformed presbyterian churches in Malawi can at brainstorm ways of working together. We have all the reasons to let go of our ego and face this issue headon-how are we going to relate to one another even while we cherish our different traditions? My conviction has been to hold traditions with a soft hand. I believe that traditions should not stand in the way of unity with fellow reformed presbyterian brethren.

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# REFORMATION CONFERENCE

## PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

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I was inspired by Rev. Hyde's speech on "The Problem and Possibility of Reformed Church Unity" (<https://danielrhyme.com/the-problem-and-possibility-of-reformed-church-unity/>) who led me to another speech by Dr. Godfrey on "A Reformed Dream" (link taken down). Dr. Godfrey points out that "The failure to manifest unity greatly weakens the credibility of the Reformed cause. Our opponents too easily can claim that conservative Reformed Christianity is hopelessly divisive and expends its energy on theological warfare rather than on making Christ known." For the past two years ARPC has been involved in discussions with the RPC to consider the possibility of reformed church unity. Thank God there has been much progress.

The aim of the conference was to give an opportunity to other leaders in our churches on what is at stake when we think and talk about reformed church unity. I pray that the Lord will humble us as we talk about the possibility of merging.

Church leaders were gathered from Nkhata Bay, NKhotakota, Ntcheu, Lilongwe, Dowa, Mangochi, Ntchisi and Kasungu to attend the event. The speakers presented their sessions very well and challenged us on what happened during the time of the protestant reformation.

As liberalism and the charismatic movement takes center stage, we need to unite in our pursuit of the purity of the church and increase our witness in Malawi.



# OUTREACH AND EVANGELISM

ONLY JESUS SAVES PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS

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Acts 1:8 Jesus said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Jesus Christ sent out His disciples to carry the message far and wide from Jerusalem. The Lord also calls us who have heard and believe the message of the gospel to do the same.

It is with this conviction that we have set aside Friday to go out and proclaim the gospel to villages around Mponela. In the morning we talk to individuals one-on-one in a chosen area. In the evening we will bring our projector and show a Christian film in the same area. The picture above shows one of the areas last week.

In our one-on-one evangelism we usually distribute gospel tracts to people we meet for further reading. Getting sound gospel tracts in the local language is one of the difficulties we encounter and would appreciate any help towards this.

In the evening we will start with a children's story from the Bible considering that children are the first ones to come. Then we will put an apologetic video clip preaching Jesus from the Quran. There is a growing number of Muslims at Mponela and this is one way of penetrating in their midst. And at the end we will put a film about walking with Jesus which shows the Christian life. We pray that unbelievers around Mponela can see the gospel light.



# PASTORS TRAINING PROGRAM

**ENTRUST THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TO FAITHFUL MEN**

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For the past couple months I have been teaching three men 10 subjects selected from the MINTS (Miami International Theological Seminary) website. My prayer is that these three men can plant other reformed churches. They are now remaining with 30 subjects.

The first 10 subjects included: Introduction to Scripture, Practical Hermeneutics, Church History of Malawi, Biblical Foundation for Missions, Reformed Worship, Homiletics, Introduction to Marriage & Family, Covenant Theology, Apologetics and Reformation History and Theology. After a long wait, final exams have been administered.

The next 10 subjects will begin in January, Lord willing and will include the following: Synoptic Gospels, Prophets, Acts & Pauline Epistles, The Pentateuch, Introduction to Theology, Church Membership, Pastoral Counseling, Issues for African Church Leaders, Pauline Theology 1 & 2.

Teaching these areas of theology and ministry has been very refreshing as well as challenging even for myself. We continue seeking for books and other resources which could be helpful for us in our training program. My prayer is that this will grow into a confessional reformed presbyterian seminary training pastors and church leaders at Mponela.



# KAMSONGA-NTCHISI PREACHING STATION OPENED

**RPC AND ARPC JOINT EFFORT TO BRING THE  
REFORMED FAITH IN NTCHISI DISTRICT**

During the reformation conference last month, three leaders from a fellowship group in Kamsonga attended as well. They had been invited by pastor-friend from the RPC, pastor Dani. After the conference, one of the leaders of the fellowship group came to visit me at home for some in-depth discussions. He told me that for a long time they have been looking for a church to belong to since they wanted to start gathering on Sundays. Many churches visited them but after what he heard being taught at the conference, he concluded that a reformed church would greatly help establish their group in the biblical faith. But he also wanted members of the fellowship to hear from us.

Last Sunday November 15, 2020 pastor Dani and myself traveled to meet the group at Kamsonga. The picture above shows part of the gathering. Pastor Dani taught from the Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A 102: the second petition of the Lord's Prayer. I preached from John 6:60-71 on lack of belief of the crowd and the belief of the remaining disciples.

At the end of the service I explained what it means to be a reformed church and then we had time for questions. After we left those who were interested met on Tuesday to start constructing a shelter for church services. This story will continue in my next update as events unfold.



# PRAISE AND PRAYER ITEMS

**PRAY THAT THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL WILL BE PROCLAIMED BOLDLY**

1. Praise the Lord that the reformation conference went well. Pray that the Lord will bless His Word to those who heard it.
  2. Praise the Lord for the opportunity to preach the gospel and reach out to the surrounding villages. Pray for courage and boldness as we share the gospel with unbelievers.
  3. Praise the Lord for a successful completion of the first phase training program for pastors. Pray for the second phase coming in January that the Lord will be honored. Pray that we can find the necessary resources.
  4. Praise the Lord for Kamsonga group interested in having a reformed church plant in their community. Pray that the Lord will give us wisdom as we figure out the best way to serve this group.
  5. Praise the Lord for His provision in many ways. Pray that the Lord will help us raise the needed financial support as we carry on this work.
- "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).



# DONATE

PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING US

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I am always thankful for people behind me with their financial support. Without you I would not be able to do all these activities. Our ministry depends on financial giving and support from well-wishers who feel called to partner with us.

Please consider supporting us on a monthly basis or one-time. If you would like specific details on how you can support us, please email me. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

In Malawi support can be sent through Mponela Reformed Church account at Standard Bank of Malawi. Account number: 9100003767334. Mponela Branch.

In USA, support can be sent through Grace Church Laguna Niguel. Please ask for details. Elsewhere please contact me at [jjmatandika@gmail.com](mailto:jjmatandika@gmail.com).