

# October Prayer Points

*Those who do not have time to read the stories may get the prayer items and main points in less than three minutes by scanning the portions in bold italics.*

Dear Friends:

Our last newsletter was written in June and covered the first four months of furlough. ***This report will cover the next three months during which two news-worthy events have taken place for which we are especially thankful. They are:***

***1. The successful 12th annual Fiel Conference in Nampula, held 19-22 July, and . . .***

***2. The receipt of a substantial, unexpected, and unsolicited contribution that should enable us to complete the hospital, equip it, and make it operational! When it has been spent, the total funds applied to developing the hospital compound from the inception of this project in 1997 will have exceeded \$900,000.***

The second event is extraordinary not only for its size but also in its timing. While I was still mired down in the planning phase of a visitation campaign for the second half of furlough that I hoped would recruit funding and personnel for the hospital, the Lord provided in one stroke all the financing needed, and without any work on my part! When great needs are met in this way, God disdaining as it were to make use of our feeble arm of flesh, one finds himself all the more thankful. It is a reminder that God is guiding and providing, that the mission depends on Him, not men, and therefore the undertaking will indeed reach fruition.

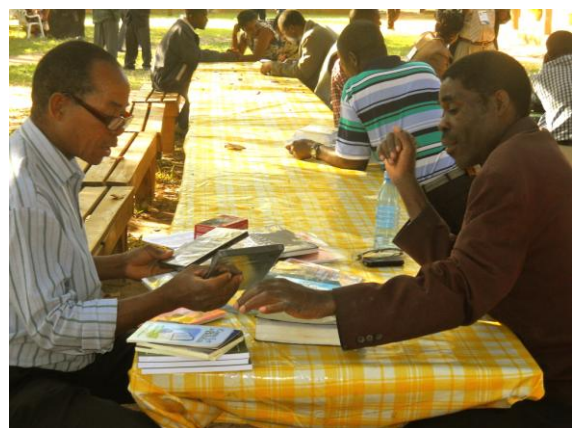
The story behind this contribution begins on page 6. But first, ***the Fiel Conference report:***

This was our 12<sup>th</sup> annual Fiel Conference, so named because of its close association with Editora Fiel (Faithful Publishers), a Brazilian Reformed Evangelical publishing house that Karl Peterson and I began teaming with in 1997 to bring to Mozambique quality Christian literature from the Reformers, the Puritans, and other authors writing in the same tradition.

***The conferences are four-day meetings comprised of 16 teaching sessions. The theme for this year was "Developing a Christian Worldview," and we had two of our favorite speakers bringing 11 of the messages.***



*315 church leaders at the 2012 conference*



*Pastors checking out their book purchases*

Our speaker from Brazil, Adauto Lourenço, is a nuclear physicist and a popular creationist spokesman. He gave five presentations dramatically countering the reductionist, atheistic philosophy permeating the science courses all students must take in Mozambique. According to this philosophy, God has no hand in the world around us and supposedly has been shown by science not to exist at all.

At the other end of the spectrum, our Zambian speaker, Ronald Kalafungwa, pastor of the Reformed Baptist Church of Lusaka, gave six messages dealing with differences between the traditional African worldview and the Biblical worldview. In the African worldview, for example, spirits rather than natural laws of cause and effect are responsible for everything that takes place. The African worldview, which extends far beyond mere animism and superstition, permeates the African church in a multitude of ways, just as American culture tends to permeate the American church. Ronald was specific in illustrating the major areas where African thinking deviates from Biblical thinking and must therefore be abandoned or radically altered as the Christian is renewed in his mind.



*Zambian Pastor Ronald Kalafungwa*

While Ronald was severing the taproot of dependence upon African traditions and thought forms, Adauto was effectively destroying the faulty conclusions of spontaneous creation, spontaneous regeneration (life arising from non-life), and evolution advanced by our Western educational system in order to uphold the atheistic reductionist religion that denies God's existence. Adauto's presentations showing the many ways true science and the world around us convincingly reveal



*Creation scientist Adauto Lourenço*

the Creator to men were warmly received by the pastors. There is no creationist voice in Mozambique, so Christians here do not know there are answers to the brazen assertions emanating from humanist scientists and educators, answers that actually turn the tables on those who claim that science has shown there is no God. When African Christians hear for the first time from a trained scientist the resounding Christian response to such claims, it overwhelms them and transforms their frustration into shouts of victory! This was dramatically

illustrated by the impassioned plea of one participant for Christians in Mozambique to rise up and get the school textbooks re-written with the proper facts. He of course has not yet made the realization that humanism is a religion of extraordinary "faith" that does not give way under the weight of mere scientific evidence.

***So we trust that many pastors and church leaders at this year's conference were convincingly persuaded of the need to reject on the one hand the traditional African world view absorbed from local culture and on the other hand the Western humanist mindset instilled through the schools, in order to let the Bible, carefully and objectively applied, form the worldview God intends for us to have.*** If the church in Mozambique could learn that lesson, or we

Western Christians for that matter, a tremendous transformation would take place in our communities through the salt residing in their midst.

Last year the conference suffered a decline in participation for the first time ever, and it was a precipitous drop from 315 to 230 persons. **However, this year we rebounded to equal the attendance of two years ago with 315 pastors, church leaders, and wives present. With an additional 55 people serving as staff, volunteers, and hired workers, the kitchen had to feed 370 people each meal, an all time record.** If everyone who paid in advance had been able to come, we would have far exceeded our highest attendance ever with 390 church leaders present from all of Mozambique's ten provinces. We are thankful for the increasing influence these conferences are having on the church in Mozambique.



*Pastor purchasing books in the conference bookstore*

The conference participants paid \$6,700 for the meetings, or \$21 per person, a significant sum for Mozambican pastors. Grace Missions contributed an additional \$22,800. The church leaders bought 1,250 books worth \$10,500 for which they paid \$4,200 with Grace Missions making up the difference. **Total cost for Grace Missions of the conference and book subsidy came to \$29,100, or \$92 per participant. It is a significant financial investment, but one we will gladly continue to make as long as the money is there, because we believe these conferences are changing the lives and ministries of many church leaders.**

**In that respect, we were pleased for a grass roots movement that got underway at this year's conference when several pastors representing every region of this large country joined forces to form an informal, trans-denominational group calling itself "The Reformers." The pastors from the south brought to the conference a solid Reformed Evangelical doctrinal catechism prepared by and for Mozambicans, and the group is now adapting a manifesto detailing Biblical principles the Mozambique church should stand for and the changes that are needed to come up to those standards.** These documents and the pastors involved are the fruit of the literature distribution and conference ministry that has been going on for close to 15 years now.



One of those pastors was Tiago Bernardo, a young man who journeyed from the capital city 1200 miles away to attend the conference two years ago and then stayed on for the seminar. Tiago had been well educated in the Catholic Church and groomed for leadership by the padres before coming to salvation through friends in the Nazarene church. Eventually he made his way to a moderate Pentecostal church where he was serving when he ran into Karl Peterson (our colleague in the

FIEL ministries) who maintains an office in the capital. Karl put him on the mailing list of Editora Fiel. It was through devouring their quarterly journals for pastors that his eyes were first opened to the doctrines of grace. He wanted to see these truths heralded throughout his denomination and soon found a speaker in the States committed to Reformation truths who he invited to lead a seminar on Romans in the head church in the capital city. That seminar sent tremors he had not counted on through the denomination and nearly got him expelled.

Tiago is a voracious reader and at his first conference eagerly bought up close to a thousand dollars worth of books at the book store (on sale for 20% of their recommended retail price). Like the owner of a casino when someone starts making huge sums at the roulette wheel, I was summoned to the book room to consider this intimidating order, as Grace Missions pays 67% of all conference book purchases and this order alone was going to cost us \$400. Karl had tipped me off about Tiago, so when I saw the name on the order I told the workers to sell him everything he wanted, knowing that the money was being well used. After getting to know Tiago at the seminar, I could readily believe that he might read all of those books. He already knew everything I could teach, and for him the main delight of the course was simply lending his help to other pastors who were coming to grips with the material for the first time.



*Tiago receiving his certificate for outstanding performance during the post-conference seminar two years ago*

I was further impressed and relieved to discover that Tiago was outward looking and not a mere ivory tower academic. One of the homework questions for the students was to list among 14 means of grace the three means God had most used in promoting their own spiritual development. Besides the Scriptures, Tiago listed evangelism and serving others as the channels through which God had most furthered his growth in grace.

Tiago's desire to bless others had already resulted in his leading a number of Maputo pastors to firm convictions on the doctrines of grace, and these men were ready to form their own association of churches if they were asked to leave their denomination because of their views on the gospel. I thought when first getting to know Tiago that it would be a boon to Mozambique to have a denomination of indigenous, doctrinally sound Evangelical churches steadfastly committed to rightly dividing the word of truth. Tiago seemed well prepared by God to lead such an association.



*Graduates of the FIEL Seminar*

During the past two years, Tiago has in fact left his former Pentecostal denomination and has established a Bible school in the capital, Maputo, with several other fine men, one of whom is responsible for the doctrinal catechism that was brought to the conference this year. ***Tiago has become the nucleus of a group of pastors in Maputo who recognize that the doctrinal truths of the Bible must be expressed and applied practically in the Mozambican church, and his participation at the conference this year gave him the opportunity to extend this influence to other pastors from around the nation.*** Karl gave him and two other pastors from the band of “Reformers” opportunities on three consecutive days to address the participants on the topic “Reflections on the Church in Mozambique.” The men used this opportunity to encourage the pastors present to lead their denominations in conforming their practice to the doctrines of the Bible, and now a movement is underway that we hope will gain further momentum in successive conferences.



*Tiago addressing the men at this year's conference*

***Karl and I are much encouraged to see Mozambican men emerging from this ministry who are regenerate, educated Bible scholars with a passion to see Biblical Christianity characterize their churches.*** This makes the conference and literature work even more appealing to us, and we look forward to seeing more and more men catch on to what we believe God is doing to strengthen His church in Mozambique.

- 1) Praise God for a successful and encouraging 12<sup>th</sup> annual pastors' conference, and***
- 2) Pray that the remarkable theological growth evident in Tiago Bernardo would be repeated over and over again among Mozambique pastors, and***
- 3) Pray that “The Reformers” may be an influence for good in their various denominations and that their numbers may increase.***



***Karl Peterson, right, co-founder of the Fiel Conferences in Mozambique, and daughter Elsa, left, with two Brazilian team members***

Every furlough I must return to Mozambique to organize and host the Fiel Conference, but this year Julie returned as well in order to host 25 expatriate visitors coming as volunteers and staff workers for the conference, including a team of 16 Brazilians brought over by Editora Fiel. The Brazilian team was a pleasure to have on hand and was especially helpful managing the conference bookshop. The house was filled to capacity, but thanks to Julie's efforts, a good time was had by all. An additional blessing was having my son Kent present. When Kent left Mozambique for college he assumed, to his dismay, that he might never return to

the land of his childhood. We had no plans to bring him to the conference, but **Believers Fellowship of Fort Worth** knew even better than I how much his help



*Part of the Brazilian team leading a worship song during our church service*

was needed and offered to pay his airfare to Mozambique. Kent saved me 120 hours of labor in the three weeks of preparations, and still the team of helpers barely had everything ready

by starting time! I shudder to think what would have happened without Kent's help, but am glad that next year we will not have to add three round trip tickets to Africa to the cost of hosting the conference.

***A young married couple on the Brazilian team ended up being a source of extraordinary and completely unexpected blessing to us.*** They were headed to the mission field themselves and soon after the conference were to go to a mission training school in Norway. The husband wanted to talk with me about something important, but as much as I wanted to oblige, I just did not have time to stop in my preparations. Thankfully, he was persistent, and late one evening just before the conference began, I asked him to accompany me to the storage containers so we could visit while I looked for supplies he needed in preparing the hospital to receive the 60 conference participants who would soon be using it as a dormitory. During that late night conversation under the stars, he asked about our position on raising funds for missionary ministries, how I knew God had called me to missions, and how I knew God had called me to Mozambique.

I assumed that as a prospective missionary he was working through these issues for himself and tried to be encouraging while letting him know our philosophy and how the Lord seemed to have blessed it in our case. I was surprised to find myself spending so much time talking about our experiences over the years while I was still so far behind in preparing for the conference. In retrospect, however, it is clear that God was superintending the whole encounter.

The brother listened with genuine interest and at the end of our conversation asked how much we needed to finish the hospital and make it operational. I told him we expected to require \$200,000. I remember him saying, "God is going to give it to you." I said I agreed, but did not know when it would happen – it might take another five to seven years. He was sure it would be much sooner. I appreciated his enthusiasm for the ministry, His obvious love for the Lord, and his earnestness in seeking to encourage and lift up weary hands, but attached no other significance to the remark.

Six weeks later, I received a two-page e-mail from the same brother eloquently encouraging me from a variety of scriptures to persevere in the work. In his concluding words, I was amazed to read that he was part of a Brazilian foundation established to hearten servants of the Lord and that sought "to do its work silently and simply, always through the grace of God." ***He must be an important member of the organization, because based on his mere recommendation, with no forms, applications, investigations, or any other input from me or Grace Missions, the foundation had determined to encourage us by supplying the \$200,000 needed to bring the hospital to completion!*** One month later, the

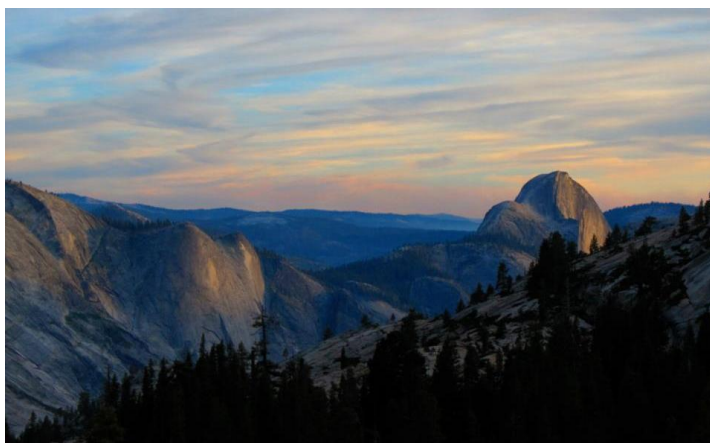
money was in our accounts, with no contracts, stipulations, forms, or any other requirements laid upon us.

His e-mail finished citing Ps. 115:1, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth’s sake.” Those words are certainly appropriate here. As much as we appreciate the human agents through whom this blessing has come, we recognize it would never have happened apart from the Lord actively working to bring the multitude of details together that finally led to this wonderful provision.

Because the foundation desires to do its work silently and simply and has asked that we receive the gift not as from them but as from the Lord, I am not mentioning specific names, but we happened during the conference to have taken a photo of the brother involved and his wife, and it appears in this newsletter.

***4) Please thank God with us for the marvelous provision of \$200,000, enough, we think, to complete the first phase of the hospital and get it functioning.***

In family news, Kent, Julie, and I returned to the States in August. While Julie and Sarah spent a relaxing week with Julie’s parents, the rest of the family enjoyed a six-day backpacking expedition through the beautiful Yosemite high country.



*A typically stunning vista in the Yosemite high country*



*The kids on the “diving board” of Half Dome, a favorite hiking destination in Yosemite*

Toward the end of August, Sarah headed off to begin her freshman year at Covenant College located at the top of Lookout Mountain on the Georgia-Tennessee state line. Kent, who will be a sophomore, followed her a week later.

We spent the month of September back with our home church in California where I have been preparing brochures, displays, missions presentations, and messages for use when we begin the visitation/recruitment phase of furlough. For the promotional materials, we have benefitted immeasurably from the professional services of **Michael Saruwatari**, a graphics design specialist in our home church who has donated his abilities to this endeavor.

To my dismay, I am six weeks behind schedule in starting church visitation, which was to have begun in September. Despite my inability to get underway with recruiting, God has been at work. **Dr. Larry Stack**, introduced in our last newsletter, returned to Nampula during the Fiel Conference and again this month for meetings with the med school there and continues to encounter open doors as he pursues a future working in Nampula.



*Dr. Larry Stack with Adauto Lourenço at the Fiel Conference*

**Also, this summer Dr. Jason Hiles, a general surgeon in Los Angeles training in surgical oncology at the Cedar Sinai hospital, contacted me expressing interest in Grace Evangelical Hospital.** He and wife Karla attend John MacArthur's church and they had learned about us through a Reformed Baptist Church in North Carolina we had visited last furlough and which they had subsequently joined before moving to Los Angeles. Our families have met twice and the Woodrows think they are choice servants of Christ. **Their desire to join the team in Nampula sometime in the future greatly pleases us, as does Jason's decision to serve with the States-side board of the hospital in the intervening years.** It would be misleading to say they know for certain God's plan for their future, but we are thankful they are pointing themselves toward Nampula and serving even now with the Grace Evangelical Hospital board as they seek continued guidance from the Lord.



*Jason and Karla Hiles, with children Lauren and Trevor (minus baby Emma)*

**5) Thank God with us for the interest of this general surgeon and his family in serving with Grace Evangelical Hospital.**

**6) Please pray that God would help us prepare promotional materials that present the work in a way that brings honor to Him, and**

**7) Continue asking God to lead us during visitation to those individuals He is calling to serve with us in Mozambique.**

**Soon we will begin contacting pastors requesting opportunities to visit their churches and present our work. If you or your church is interested in a visit from us while we are on furlough, please contact us at [cjwoodrow@gmail.com](mailto:cjwoodrow@gmail.com) or at 615-815-7125.**

By His grace,  
Charles and Julie Woodrow