

# December Prayer Points

*Those who do not have time to read the stories may get the prayer items and main points in less than five minutes by scanning the highlighted sections.*

Dear Friends,

Greetings again from Nampula. This report is installment two in my attempt to inform praying friends of events in our ministry this past year.

This update will present:

- Our 13<sup>th</sup> nation-wide annual pastors' conference.
- The beginnings of an indigenous Reformed Evangelical movement in Mozambique.

The first part is the annual recap of progress taking place in the literature and conference branches of the Nampula ministry. The second part consists of two stories relating the spiritual odysseys of two Reformed Evangelicals now living in Nampula, both Mozambicans, to whom God has granted a vision for transforming the church in this country. André Kizito's story begins on page seven and is worth reading in its entirety, even if time is limited.

## 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Pastors' Conference:

The 2012 Fiel (faithful) conference took place in Nampula from 16 to 19 July. For the first time in years, attendance was not nation-wide. Only seven of Mozambique's ten provinces were represented, but that is because this year Fiel conferences were held in two locations. One was our city, the hub of northern Mozambique and the second largest city in the nation with over 400,000 people, and the other was Maputo, the capital, over 1000 miles to the south with a population of over one million. Pastors from the southern third of the country attended that conference, hosted by Editora Fiel from Brazil, while pastors from the northern two-thirds came to the conference hosted by Karl Peterson and myself in Nampula.



*Speaker Joel Breeke with translator*

More than 200 church leaders and wives attended the first Maputo Fiel Conference. Even without the participation of those leaders, attendance at the Nampula conference did not diminish. We



*324 church leaders attend the 2012 Nampula conference*

had 324 participants, giving a total attendance for the back-to-back meetings of 525 leaders. We look forward to the day when the third largest city, Beira, midway between Maputo and Nampula, will have its own Fiel conference as well. A representative from African Pastors' Conferences, a Reformed Evangelical ministry in South Africa, attended the Nampula conference

this year with the hope of starting in Beira a third conference for pastors in the central portion of Mozambique, perhaps as soon as next year.



*From left, speakers Jaime Marcelino and Joel Beeke, local host Charles Woodrow, Fiel President Rick Denham, and co-organizer Karl Peterson*

We were privileged to have Joel Beeke and Jaime Marcelino as our speakers. Beeke is President of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, while Marcelino leads a Presbyterian church in

Brazil where he sponsors conferences like ours. The theme of the conference was sanctification, a goal we all should be striving for, but a particularly urgent need in the Mozambican church. In our mission field, sanctification usually means conforming outwardly to many church rules. We wanted to help Mozambicans appreciate the importance of cultivating a close relationship with Christ, a deep understanding of the Scriptures, a lively faith that constrains us to take God at His word, and a conscious dependence upon the Holy Spirit to bear fruit in our lives as the means to gaining true godliness.

The conference is always the high point of the year for our family, in part because of the excitement of many visitors. This year 19 guests stayed in our home. Seven were Brazilians who came with the Editora Fiel team that included their director, Rick Denham, and Kevin Millard, American missionary who oversees Fiel's "Pastors' Library" book distribution program that has blessed hundreds of Mozambican pastors over the past 15 years. Pastors on the project receive one free book every month for 36 months. One of the Brazilian guests was the organizer of Fiel's 2000 strong Brazilian conferences, and she gave valuable pointers on how to execute a well-organized event. If only we had



*The Brazilian team en route to the conference site via the mission's handy troop carrier*



*Pastors checking out excellent literature in the conference bookroom*

someone with her skill and experience in Nampula! Grace was ecstatic to have her dear friend Elsa, daughter of Karl Peterson, on hand for several weeks. And we were thankful to friends at Believers Fellowship of Fort Worth for sending our son Kent home



for the summer. Kent was accompanied by his best friend from college, another M.K. from France, Chris Musser. Having these two young men on hand, zealous for the Lord and with the unflagging energy and enthusiasm of youth, brightened our home and much reduced my workload at conference time. They accomplished important projects that would otherwise have been forever left undone. And Mike and Hilda Stolk, whose construction ministry will be featured in the next installment, faithfully toiled without respite at the hospital worksite.

We are always amazed and grateful for God's gracious financial provision for the conference. This year we sold nearly 1200 books at 33% of their actual cost. Though I have not yet prepared a financial report, I estimate Grace Missions spent \$25,000 to host the conference, of which \$3,500 was paid to us by the participants themselves. We thank Grace Fellowship Church of Toronto for single-handedly covering the conference costs this year.



*18 leaders took the one week course in systematic theology*

After the conference, I offered my usual week-long seminar in systematic theology. The students were the best group yet, with five of the 18 participants earning certificates of distinction. First place went to a young man named Calton who had the all-time highest score on homework assignments to date from a group of 170 leaders who have participated in the post-con-

ference seminar. Calton was permitted to take the course offered to pastors and church leaders only because he was a member of our church, having begun attending while I was on furlough. He had been evangelized and discipled by Jermias, another young but impressive church member featured in previous newsletters. Jermias has accomplished a fine work teaching and modeling Christ for his young friend. We thank God for granting such a blessing to our congregation!



*Jermias, left, with Christian brother and disciple Calton*

### **Beginnings of an Indigenous Reformed Evangelical Movement in Mozambique**

One of the fondest aspirations for Mozambique nurtured by Karl Peterson and myself has been to one day see church leaders establish of their own initiative an indigenous association of Reform-minded Evangelicals that would transcend denominational lines. We desire this largely because the churches in Mozambique have a strongly works-oriented view of salvation that is no different from that of the Catholic Church. As mentioned in previous newsletters, in a survey asking Evangelical pastors scattered throughout northern Mozambique how one could be saved, only two pastors even mentioned the name of Jesus in their answer, pointing

instead to various good works as the means to salvation. And one of the two who mentioned Christ said it was by following His example, not by trusting His atoning work on the cross. The one pastor who had the proper answer had a useful study Bible and a shelf full of excellent books he highly prized. When asked how he got them, he said he had purchased them while attending our conferences.

So our longing for a movement led by Re-form-minded pastors to sweep across Mozambique arises not from sectarian motives, but from a desire to see the church here discover the true gospel and shake off its bondage to the gospel of works, a gospel that saves no man. Such a movement is something Julie and I for years have daily petitioned the Lord about in prayer. At last it appears to be happening, and things have worked out such



*Reform-minded church leaders Xavier Tianeque, André Kizito, and Timóteo Bila (l. to r.) meet with Joel Beeke, Karl Peterson, and Charles Woodrow (l. to r.)*

that we should get to watch it unfold at close range.

### **Timóteo Bila**

The main impetus is a gifted Mozambican from Maputo named Timóteo Bila, now 32 years old, who discovered the doctrines of grace eleven years ago while reading Internet literature. Timóteo grew up in a Christian home and has gained the advantage of a college education. When he was 15 and beginning to stray into worldly ways through unwholesome friends, God suddenly and graciously brought deep repentance after a family day of prayer. His hardened heart was broken, and he dedicated himself entirely to the Lord's service. His transformation was thoroughgoing and immediately noticeable to his religious friends who, despite his youth and relative inexperience in Christ, soon asked him to be their spiritual leader. Timóteo, who is almost too retiring, shrank from accepting such responsibility. But at the same time his genuine love for God caused him to serve His Savior with alacrity as a youth leader, and from that day to this God has granted him notable influence in the lives of many friends.



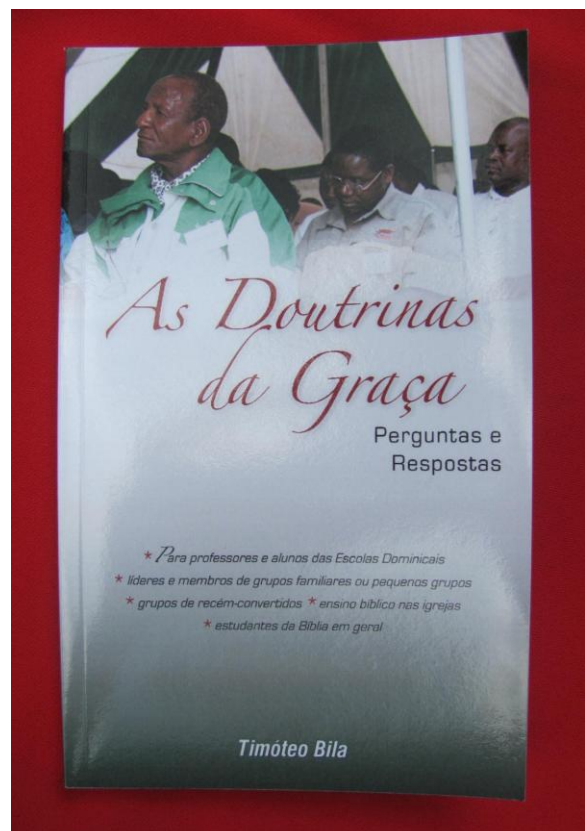
*Timóteo Bila, wife Sara, daughter Khensile*

When Timóteo was 21, he began searching the Internet for good Christian literature in Portuguese and stumbled across the teaching of predestination on a Reformed website. He was shocked, but at the same time constrained to search the Scriptures to see if such teaching could be true. He consulted with his friends as well, all of whom shared his same initial dismay. However, as he carefully studied the Scriptures, he came not only to accept the truth of the doctrine, but in the process was overwhelmed at God's kindness as he began to understand the



hopelessness of man's condition apart from God's gracious election of sinners to salvation. One of the friends who accompanied Timóteo on his spiritual journey was Tiago Bernardo, who I have featured a couple of times in these letters. By God's grace, Tiago and our Maputo colleague, Karl Peterson, came to know each other, and through Karl, Tiago learned of the excellent literature available from Brazil to Reformed-minded Christians in Mozambique. From that point, growth in Bible comprehension within this band of brothers was dramatic. They brought in special speakers from the States to present to their denomination the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone, apart from preceding meritorious works or virtues. They eventually founded a small-scale Bible institute devoted to teaching the full counsel of God. Their efforts won them notoriety, followers, persecution, and a lovely wife for Timóteo from amongst the students, but in the main they were disappointed at the malaise and disinterest of the southern Mozambican churches in mining the scriptures for truth. Then, three years ago, Tiago came to a Fiel Conference in Nampula and was impressed with the warm reception our ministry was enjoying on such a large scale in the north. Last year Tiago returned to the conference bringing Timóteo and three other choice leaders from their band.

During that visit, Timóteo and I became friends. Timóteo later sent me an 84-page manuscript he had written as a catechism for the Mozambican church on the doctrines of grace. Every aspect of the book impressed me, from the doctrine to the prose to the layout that was already prepared for printing. I was overjoyed to find a Mozambican who could write in such a literary and sublime fashion and who had the computer skill necessary to make his words publishable. Over the years, as Julie and I have prayed for an association of Reform-minded church leaders, we have wondered who could possibly lead it, since before meeting Tiago and Timóteo we knew of no one with the necessary qualifications. However, in Timóteo, Tiago, and their cadre of friends, we discovered that such men do exist right here in Mozambique, albeit a thousand miles away. How we wished Mozambique were not such a long country!



*Timóteo's catechism on the doctrines of grace*

After perusing Timóteo's opus, I offered to have 500 copies published through an on-line printing company, and we distributed his catechism to all the participants at this year's Fiel Conference. My hope was to impress Mozambicans that understanding the gospel of salvation by grace through faith was not something restricted to foreign Christians, but that Mozambican brethren also could understand and herald these truths just as clearly. I also hoped that like-minded pastors would look upon Timóteo as an agent for reform that could help them in their own struggles with unsympathetic congregations or associates.

While Timóteo and I were corresponding on this project, Timóteo lost his job. For years he had been earning good wages working for foreign aid organizations in

Maputo. However, when funding for his last project ran out, he found himself unable to find suitable employment in the highly competitive job market in the capital. Since people of his caliber are rare in the north, he reasoned that he could likely get a job more easily far from Maputo. Remembering as well the impact our conference and literature ministries were having already on many church leaders, and the relative eagerness of northern pastors to receive Bible instruction, he decided to seek work in the north. Upon learning of his plan, I contacted a local Christian businessman who employs hundreds of workers, and he was immediately interested in Timóteo. After paying his way to Nampula and conducting an interview he offered him a well-paying job as personnel manager, with one task being to disciple his employees in Christian ethics and business practices, proclaiming Christ to them in the process. And thus Timóteo and his family came to live in Nampula in a home just minutes away from our congregation.

We trust this is a match made in heaven and that God has more reason for moving Timóteo to Nampula than merely his job, as important as that is. Since Timóteo had to wait a month before starting work, he lived in our home, giving us an excellent opportunity to know one another well. Everything I learned about Timóteo was encouraging, as a brother in Christ, as a loving husband and father, and above all as a devoted servant of the Lord and student of Scripture. His desk was always piled high with open books surrounding his open Bible.

While Timóteo was living with us, I learned that he was in the process of registering a Reformed Faith Mission called Mission Ekklesia. The purpose of his mission is to promote the doctrines of grace in Mozambique, and membership is open to leaders from all branches of the Mozambican church provided they are committed to the five Solas of the Reformation. He hopes to establish a Christian training center here in Nampula and wants to publish a monthly magazine to strengthen pastors and introduce them to the gospel of salvation by grace through faith and the rich world of Reformation literature. His fellow officers in the mission include medical doctors, writers, and graphic design artists now living in the capital. Several of the officers are keen to move to Nampula to join their leader and carry on the mission's ministry from here. In Nampula, Timóteo would like to start reading clubs where church leaders receive a free book each month as long as they participate in biweekly discussion groups where the book is studied.

Coincidental with these developments, our home church elders, knowing nothing about Timóteo or our discussions, sent an email suggesting that I invest \$400 each month in a program that would more effectively impact specific leaders with sound Christian literature than does our bookstore, which is open to everyone but does not specifically target anyone. Timóteo's proposed projects would fulfill quite well their suggestion for a more focused ministry and so I am attempting to devote \$400 monthly to promoting his work.

Timóteo is grateful for the favorable spiritual climate in Nampula, thanks to the conference and literature ministries we have been carrying out here since 1998 in conjunction with Karl Peterson and Editora Fiel. For my part, I am hoping that in Timóteo, his mission, and his friends, God is raising up the future Mozambican leadership for just the kind of indigenous, trans-denominational association of Reform-minded pastors we have been praying for these many years. Though both Timóteo and I are only dreaming of what could happen over time, we are each encouraged that God appears to be moving important pieces of a future team into close proximity where we may be able to help one another.

## André Kizito

Because Nampula has been the hub of a conspicuous Reformed literature and conference ministry for 15 years now, there are many local leaders capable of joining Timóteo and Mission Ekklesia in their outreach. One of those leaders is André Kizito who has been featured before in these reports and who continues to carry on a faithful ministry as a dynamic and influential pastor.



*Kizito and wife Olqa*

Kizito was saved in 1991 at the age of 23. Those were the days of communism and Kizito was in the military, stationed in the capital, Maputo. Even before his salvation, Kizito was a motivated, aggressive man and a natural leader. He was the commander of a large company in the coast guard; relished the role he played as a tough guy, drinking, cursing, and bullying; and enjoyed the epithet appended to his name, “André the Horrible.”

One of Kizito’s subordinates was a pastor who evangelized everyone. He even went after “André the Horrible,” telling him of God’s love for sinners and how God could change his heart. Despite Kizito’s tough exterior, the evangelist’s words burned within him and would not be forgotten. A short time later Kizito was walking through town when he heard beautiful music coming from inside a building. People at the door beckoned him in, so he thought he would find out what was happening. To his surprise, the building housed a church and an evangelistic meeting was taking place. At the end of the message an invitation was given for sinners to come to the front. Kizito’s pride would not allow him to go forward, but neither would God’s spirit turn him loose. He returned to the barracks but soon fled to a private place where no one could see him as he wept for hours, crying out to God to deliver him from the wretchedness that characterized his life.

Soon after this, Kizito got hold of a Bible. At the time, Kizito’s regular duties involved serving 12-hour shifts operating a one-man signal tower for ships approaching the Maputo harbor. Kizito now loved the solitude of that signal tower where for long stretches of time he could be alone with his thoughts. He spent every shift reading his Bible, and weeping, and reading, and weeping. He still did not know the Lord apart from the convicting power of the Holy Spirit as he read the word, but soon he began crying out to God saying that if He was there and was going to help him leave his life of sin, He needed to get him out of the military and out of the barracks where he was living, and provide a job by which he could support himself.

To Kizito’s amazement, a few days later fellow officers who knew of his desire to leave military life ran to the signal tower in mid-shift telling him that he with five other men had been mustered out of the coast guard. This was a stunningly unexpected event to Kizito. Before his conversion he had asked to be discharged from the military through the proper channels. He had been drafted, had responded, had completed his obligation, and now he wanted out. The government had no right to keep him. But this was the era of communism when in fact no one but the State had rights, and the superior officer who received his complaint literally laughed in his face as he refused. Kizito pulled out his weapon, loaded a bullet in the chamber, held the weapon in front of his superior’s face, and said, “The military taught me how to use this, and now they are tempting me to use it.” He left enraged, and his superior immediately called the military police. Before he reached the barracks, he was detained by MP’s and had a lot of work to do keeping himself out of prison. Now,

suddenly, without even requesting a discharge, he was set free from the military altogether. His discharge was immediate and he did not even have to finish his shift!

Kizito was from Nampula and had only one family friend in Maputo which was 1200 miles from home. The following Sunday after church he went to visit her to tell her of his great fortune. He had no other purpose for the visit, but the friend mentioned they needed a warehouse supervisor at the business where she worked. Kizito was immediately interested, so she gave him the name of the man he should talk to, promising to set up an appointment for him the next morning.

The next day it was raining and in that era the only way to get places, even in the capital, was to walk. Kizito initially thought he would just show up a day later when the weather was better. There were few phones during the communist era so nothing could be worked out in advance, and something inside Kizito told him he had better show up that morning, rain or no rain. So he went. When he entered the office dripping wet he was told the manager he needed to see had just left, but if he hurried, he might catch up with him on the street outside the building.

As God arranged it, the man was just outside the door of the building. Kizito caught up with him, the manager returned to his office to interview him, hired him on the spot, and later that same day Kizito was working at his new job of warehouse supervisor! Kizito was beginning to discover that there was indeed a God in heaven, that He knew everything about André Kizito yet loved him nevertheless, and that the way to approach this divine being was clearly through Christ and the Bible.

Some weeks after this, for lack of another home, Kizito was still living in the spiritual cesspool of the military barracks despite being a civilian. A kind-hearted widow in the church he began attending heard of his plight and offered him the use of a small servant's quarters behind her apartment. She apologized for the poor condition of the room, but Kizito said after living as a Christian in the ambience of the barracks, the little servant's quarters seemed like a five star hotel.

With no help from Kizito, God had answered the threefold supplication thrown up by this budding Christian, and the young believer was profoundly impressed and grateful. Kizito pledged to serve the Lord full time and during the next four years he studied continuously in a Bible school run by his church.

When the need arose for male leadership in a sister church in Nampula, the people in his Bible school offered to send him back to his hometown and provide him some subsistence if he would devote himself to helping that work. Once Kizito got to Nampula, however, financial assistance never materialized, but problems in the church soon did. Kizito withdrew from that work, joined another church as a lay member, and found employment with an aid organization. But he never forgot his pledge to serve the Lord full time.

Over the next ten years Kizito met and married his wife. Both worked their way through college, a major accomplishment in Mozambique, while also working their way up the hierarchy of their respective aid organizations. Then in 2008, funding for his project ran out and Kizito became unemployed. Remembering his pledge to serve the Lord full time, Kizito used his severance pay to purchase land for a church building and with the blessing of his leaders began a daughter church in his Nampula neighborhood.

In 2010 a missionary couple paid his registration to attend our pastors' conference. Kizito did not show up until the third day, and came then only to avoid offending the friends who purchased his registration. But God was moving in his heart, and at



once Kizito was enthralled with the truths heralded from the pulpit, things he had never heard in all his years as a Christian. That evening an announcement was made about the post-conference seminar, and not wanting the bliss to end in just 24 hours, Kizito re-shuffled all his engagements for the next week so he could sign up for the course in systematic theology.

By the second or third day of the course, he had completed the usually difficult transition involved in seeing the Bible and salvation through different lenses, and was reveling in the beauty of what he was discovering from Scripture. Like other students I have had, the Reformed doctrines expressed in the handouts were those he had experienced in his own life and which he had seen for himself in Scripture. However, since no one before had talked about them or applied them in practical areas like evangelism, sanctification, worship, and church polity, he thought they must belong to a realm of Christianity that was purely theoretical.



*A memorable 2010 post conference seminar!*

From that day forward, Kizito has been an enthusiastic proponent of the doctrines of grace. He says as long as there is breath in his body he will never miss a Fiel Conference. He has introduced other pastors in his church to the literature and the conferences and says their reaction has been like his. Once they participate in a conference, they became passionate about grace, and they marvel that they have never heard these foundational doctrines taught before. He has taught the post conference seminar to his whole church and to the churches his congregation assists. Last year he enrolled in the Portuguese-language Internet College of Reformed Theology based out of the U.S. but taught by Brazilian professors and is now in his second year of courses. Through his enthusiastic influence, three fellow pastors and their wives have each enrolled this year.

Karl and I learned of the Internet College of Reformed Theology when Karl asked one of their faculty members from Brazil to be a speaker at our pastors' conference. The first Mozambican student to register in their school three years ago was a member from our congregation, Xavier Tianeque, pictured on page 4 of this report.

Today there are 12 church leaders in Nampula enrolled in FITRef, seven of whom are the fruit of Kizito's enthusiastic promotion of that ministry. He says more of his friends want to participate but need to work out time, financing, and access to a computer. Each course



*Kizito (second from left) with other leaders he has enrolled in FITRef*

consists of 30 lessons taken during ten weeks and costs approximately \$40. A full time student could take four courses, but most take only one or at most two.

To help church leaders take advantage of this opportunity, we have set up at our bookshop an Internet Café free to pastors and church workers who want to use Internet resources to fortify their ministries. We purchased a special server computer and set up four other computers for the participants, providing free printing services for the hand-outs and stocking our book-store with all the reference works the students may need. We would like to see many more Nampula pastors benefitting from these courses.



*Kizito and friend Nuno setting up Internet services at the bookstore*

One of Kizito's dreams in promoting the Internet College of Reformed Theology amongst his friends is to train an entire faculty of Mozambican instructors to staff an indigenous, grace-oriented Bible college right here in Nampula. He has enlisted the interest of other pastors who have joined him in enrolling at FITRef, and together they have already secured an attractive 16 acre plot of land inside the city limits



*Kizito and Pastor Alfinal reviewing architect's layout of future campus*

expecting to begin their first building later this year. The men whom God is burdening for this work are not routine Mozambicans. They are influential, top-drawer men with important jobs and college educations. Some of them trained in Europe and hold multiple degrees. Their passion is to displace the widespread ignorance within the Mozambican church, together with all the enervating problems arising from such darkness, with the light of Reformation truth.

### **Conclusion:**

These efforts by Timóteo, Kizito, and their associates would be excellent indigenous ministries to adopt and effective ways of transforming churches steeped in works-salvation. Please consider encouraging these men financially and helping them realize their dreams for reforming the church in Mozambique.

You can contribute to these ministries through gifts to Grace Missions designated for:

#### **Timóteo Bila**

- Mission Ekklesia
- Pastors' reading clubs
- Indigenous grace-oriented publications
- A second printing of his catechism on the doctrines of grace

### André Kizito

- Local church planting
- Grace-based Bible college

### FITRef (Internet College of Reformed Theology)

- Bursaries for Mozambican pastors needing help with fees – \$40 per course

Of course, we also need continued help to support the various ministries that have borne fruit in the lives of each man featured in this report: the book store, the resource center and free Internet Café for church leaders, the annual pastors' conference, and the post-conference training seminars.

But we need contributions that go well beyond mere finances. Of the 12 people registered in the theological college, I am supposed to be the "tutor" for most of them, but I am not seminary trained. Some of them are studying Greek, church history, and other courses for which I am unprepared to help. What a made-to-order opportunity this is for a trained, experienced church-planting missionary to influence the ministries of sincere men of God! Pray that God would raise up the right man to come encourage these pastors and leaders as they seek to bring reformation to the churches in Mozambique!

By His grace,  
Charles and Julie Woodrow