



MALAWI MISSION PARTNER COMMUNIQUE

By Missionary John Holtz

October 2017

Reformation Rain

It doesn't rain in October in Malawi.

It just doesn't.

October is an oven preheated to broil.

The sun is intense.
The heat blisters.
The ground hardens.
Rivers dry and the lakes recede.

It never rains in October in Malawi.

It just doesn't.

It just *did*.

To everyone's surprise, showers fell on the 29th of October. People are still talking about it. "*Hey, did you hear...?*" That was the very day that most churches¹ in the Lutheran Church of Central Africa Malawi Synod (LCCA-MS) were celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

A Mother Nature mistake?
A global warming mix-up?
Climate change chaos?
Or...the gift of God?



I prefer the later.

After all, if God controls ALL things, then doesn't He also have command of the weather?

The Scriptures state so and Christians believe so! One time God asked a question just to

highlight *Himself* as the answer:

*"Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens when the dust becomes hard...?"*²

He can. And He does.

Interestingly, as the rains pounded the roof and streaked the windows during the worship service at Our Good Shepherd in Mzimba, the liturgist Pastor Milton Nyirenda was reading the Scripture lesson:

*"As the rain and snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread from the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth. It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."*³

It was then that the title of this article was born:

Reformation Rain.



The preacher's hands in front of a rain-streaked window

Like lightening, it struck me: it was raining more on the *inside* of the church than on the *outside*! Not because there was a hole in the roof, but because the LORD was showering His people with His grace!

A raining of the life-giving gospel message.
An unending downpour of good news in Jesus.
A surprising cloudburst of love and forgiveness.

This rain had already started to fall in the Garden of Eden⁴ and has continued to this day.

500 years ago Martin Luther got soaked.

On the 29th of October 2017, so did we.

On that day in Mzimba, and throughout Malawi, God's grace in Jesus was proclaimed, preached, taught, received, shown, sung and danced!

Even *drawn* and *colored*!

The picture on the first page shows some of the northern region ladies coloring Luther's Seal or Coat of Arms. We studied the meaning and Scripture truths behind each of the five components that make up the Seal:

- The black cross
- The red heart
- The white rose
- The blue sky
- The gold ring



Luther's "logo" proclaims his faith and theology!

And ours as well.

Isn't the cross, not only the central message of Scripture but central to our lives? Aren't our hearts alive in Christ and beating with His love? Aren't we, saints dressed in the white robes of salvation, placed delicately in a joyous white rose of Hope? With a firm resolution, hasn't Jesus promised His second coming? And don't we, with eager expectation and with our spiritual eyes to the skies, look forward to it? Isn't God's love more precious than gold and as unending as a circle?

A resounding *YES* to each one! With Jesus being the Answer to each question, every one of them falls upon us like rain.

Cool.
Refreshing.
Invigorating.
Motivating.

No wonder the Lord included verse 10 in Ephesians chapter 2:



“We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Apparently God must have been quite busy prior to the 29th of October because on that day His people

were actively doing the good works He prepared for them:

- Structures were erected.
- Tarps were hung.
- Food was prepared.
- Guests served.
- Dishes washed.
- Hospitality was extended.
- Offerings were given.
- Shut-ins were visited.
- Songs were sung.
- Gifts were shared.
- Children were taken care of.
- Cups of cold water were given to thirsty people.

But there was not a greater work done that day than what God was doing for us:

Raining down His Grace in Word and Sacrament.

Vicar Frank Mukhweya preached his sermon using the theme that was previously chosen and used by ALL the other LCCA-MS Called Workers who stood in the pulpit that day:

“We are Saved by Grace to Serve God.”

The Scripture text?



The same one that is imprinted on the special Reformation chitenje that the LCCA-MS had designed and made for this significant occasion:

Ephesians 2:1-10.

The text was preached, the Lord’s Supper was received and God tipped the water jars. His people were doused.

Which, by the way, serves as a good reminder. If you ever wonder what the weather will be like the next time you go to church, just open up your Bible to Ephesians 2:1-10.

No matter the day or the month, there you will see a saturated cloud bursting with the showers of God’s good Grace in Jesus Christ.

Count on rain.

Reformation Rain.



Pastors and Vicars at Our Good Shepherd, Mzimba 29 October 2017

Soaked by God’s Grace,

Pastor John Holtz, Malawi Mission Partner

1. Some LCCA congregations worshipped on Saturday, the 28th of October due to conflicting schedules with a Lomwe cultural event on Sunday.
2. Job 38:37,38
3. Isaiah 55:10,11
4. Genesis 3:15, the first Gospel Promise