

Tapulumutsidwa!



Pastor Gilbert Mwangomba

Tapulumutsidwa.

I know, I know, it's a mouthful. But even more-so, it's *meaningful*. This one 14 letter ChiChewa word translates into one, four-word English sentence: "*We have been saved!*" It's actually the name of a congregation in the southern region of Malawi. Great name for a church, don't you think?

Gilbert Mwangomba does. He's the LCCA pastor who serves it. He has the privilege of making the awesome announcement again and again to the people, "*Tapulumutsidwa! We have been saved from sin and guilt! We have been saved from eternal death and the grave! We have been saved from the devil and damnation!*" But that's only the half of it! Not only are we saved *from the bad*, we are also saved *for the good*. Saved for serving God and one another!



L-R: Emmanuel, Monica, Peace, Pastor Mwangomba, Innocent (white shirt), Justice (yellow shirt), Chisomo (in front of Innocent)

Pastor Mwangomba has been doing that at Tapulumutsidwa where he was called and ordained in 2014. Despite the “oneness” that pastor and congregation have in Jesus Christ, Mwangomba admits, “*It’s been an adjustment.*” Gilbert, his wife Monica and his five children, are “strangers in a foreign land.”

They are Malawian but they not from the same tribe as most of the people in the congregation. The majority of the people at Tapulumutsidwa are Lomwe and Chewa. The Mwangombas are Ngonde from the northern region of Malawi. That means different background, different language, different ways.

Though he loves his heritage, Mwangomba acknowledges that some of the cultural practices are not in line with God’s Word. Polygamy is rampant. Imagine, some

Ngonde men, Mwangomba shared, have up to 36 wives! Like a thorn in flesh, polygamy is embedded stubbornly deep. It would take a miracle to extract it! But for some, it has. Mwangomba knows some men who have repented of their polygamy and settled down with just one wife. Oh, the power of the gospel! Saved from sin. Saved for serving the Lord!

Tapulumutsidwa!



Tapulumutsidwa is much more than just a name. It's a fabulous truth to live by, even when we are in a den full of problems. Recall Daniel, that Old Testament man who was targeted by his colleagues then tossed to the lions. In a way, Daniel, too, had *Tapulumutsidwa* written all over his life. Saved from the big cats and saved to serve the King. By the way, Daniel's story is one of Pastor Mwangomba's favorites. "I am inspired how Daniel stands up for the truth," remarks Mwangomba.

That's exactly what Martin Luther did! Pastor Mwangomba compares Daniel to the great Reformer, Martin Luther: "They both stood strong on the Word of God."

Mwangomba is excited for the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. So moved by the stories of Daniel and Luther, Pastor Mwangomba has chosen to prepare a Bible Study that he plans to give in late October at the church's Reformation gathering. Not surprising at all, he's entitled his presentation appropriately, "Standing Strong on God's Word."



Pastor Mwangomba and Missionary Holtz

Daniel and Luther stood before kings and yet stood for the truth, a truth that now stands for eternity. Just a hunch, but I think I know two people whom Pastor Mwangomba will seek out once he himself gets to heaven. Who knows, maybe they will greet each other with one word:

Tapulumutsidwa!

Missionary John Holtz, Malawi

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<https://wels.net/serving-others/missions/africa>