



# IRTC

INTERNATIONAL  
REFORMED  
THEOLOGICAL  
COLLEGE  
APRIL-MAY 2021

## Study Center in Luanda, Angola

*Sing to the LORD, all the earth!  
Tell of his salvation from day to day.  
Declare his glory among the nations,  
his marvelous works among all the peoples!  
For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,  
and he is to be feared above all gods.  
— 1 Chronicles 16:23-25 ESV*

Several editions ago, we had the joy of announcing the return of local IRTC study centers, operating at full speed. These centers, formed by the initiative of students living in the same region, have the objective of encouraging one another and providing mutual support to complete assignments. In 2020, the students in Japan formed two groups in two different provinces. Each of these groups has a leader—normally the students’ mentor—who facilitates access to books and other study materials.

A new study center has formed in Angola, on the southwest coast of Africa, between Namibia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The group’s mentor, Pastor Mateus Pedro Pimpão Antônio, tells us a little about his country:

*The capital of Angola, Luanda, has about 5 million inhabitants, most of which depend on commerce for their livelihoods, supporting their families with the sales of each day. Angolans live in extreme poverty, prevalent since the country’s independence (1975) and accentuated by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Although we are governed by a party of Communist origin, which from time to time threatens to penalize churches, the religious climate includes a plurality of beliefs, with a large Catholic movement and a considerable percentage of Evangelicals. African religions are spread throughout the country, some of which are very influential, such as Tokoism and Kimbanguism. However, currently, it is Prophetism that has invaded our country. Various men rise up and call themselves “prophets of God”. It is sad that many persons allow themselves to be deluded by these false prophets. It is in this context that God is blessing us with a course that will change our lives and those of many people.*

The group of Angolan students did not arise all of a sudden. It was the fruit of many conversations and prayers among godly men, who give themselves to proclaiming biblical truth in remote places with little exposure to the true gospel and, as was pointed out, in the midst of extreme poverty.

*The organization of the study center started with conversations between Rev. Ulisses Horta Simões and myself in February, 2020, when I still lived in Brazil, but was already planning to return to Angola. Our conversations had in mind the drawing up of a curriculum for Bible institutes in Luanda and Ondjiva. Sadly, this project did not progress in the way that was desired.*

*I then asked Rev. Ulisses to help me understand how to construct a curriculum for a Bachelor of Theology program, since Pastor André had commented with me about plans to start such a course in a few years, in the buildings of the Neves Mussaqui Presbyterian Seminary.*



*From left to right: Cláudio Manuel Martinho (Farol Presbyterian Church elder), André Pedro Pimpão Antônio (Farol PC pastor), Mateus Pedro Pimpão Antônio (Farol PC pastor), Antônio Isaac Pedro Mendes (Farol PC elder), Baptista Panda (Vitória PC pastor) e Nguinamau Mabuidy (Nazaré PC pastor).*

*I perceived a desire and readiness to help us with this enterprise, and the focus of our conversations was expanded. It was in this way, perhaps as early as mid-2020, that we started to talk about the possibility of opening a study center in Angola, that would be connected with the International Reformed Theological College, with me as the mentor. Day by day the idea grew towards maturity. We kept talking, mainly by WhatsApp. We gathered information about students who would possibly participate in the project. I accessed the IRTC website to learn about the institution and its procedures. We spoke about the possibilities for scholarships.*

*We thought about the viability of this learning, given the difficulties with the Internet in Angola. We planned the purchase of equipment needed to help us with the lessons. In this way the project gained shape, giving us the hope of well-qualified instructors for a bachelor's degree program. All this while, we had the collaboration of Pastor André Pimpão in Angola, who provided us with the necessary information about the situation of the country, the church, and the students. He also checked prices for the equipment we needed. Today, by the grace of God, and with the help of many brothers, headed up by Rev. Ulisses, we have all the equipment we need in order for the group to advance in their studies. We have a 43" TV, an Internet modem, a notebook, and a fraternal environment for learning.*

*The study center in Angola consists of four pastors and two elders, all of the Presbyterian Church of Angola. The group meets every two weeks in the main facility or in the home of one of the brothers, when neces-*

*sary. Besides the pastoral ministry, all have a secular job. Most are teachers. In order to have sufficient income in Angola, it is necessary to work in more than one or two schools. Some work in three different places, in order to have sufficient bread for their families, and this makes it difficult to keep up with their studies.*

*The desire to learn, in order to teach and move forward the expansion of the gospel, makes us face these difficulties with faith, seeking strength from the Lord. Despite facing these troubles, all of us exert ourselves to glorify the Lord in our studies, seeking to redeem the time and complete our assignments. As we move along in our studies, we have not been abandoned. The IRTC team has always been ready to help us in all of our needs. The instructors have always been compassionate, attentive, and very godly in dealing with us. Our experience with the institution has been surprisingly very positive. Something that we have often said in our meetings is that we already knew that the IRTC would be a serious institution (because I have known the current director for a number of years and I know his zeal in the things he does), but we had not thought that it would be so serious at every level. The commitment of the brothers in the Administration and of the instructors has been a thankful blessing for our group.*

We pray that our brothers may be blessed and encouraged in everything, the way Joshua was, as the Scriptures teach us through Moses, "Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you." Deuteronomy 31:6 (ESV)

## Support the IRTC

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