



IRTC

INTERNATIONAL REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Promoting Reformed Theology in Angola

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved,
a worker who has no need to be ashamed,
rightly handling the word of truth..*

– 2 Timothy 2:15

The International Reformed Theological College (IRTC) has the potential to make a significant difference in the Angolan theological education landscape. According to Rev. Mateus Pimpão, from the Angolan Presbyterian Church (IPA), reformed theology is present in the country, yet many young people influenced by reformed pastors from Brazil and the United States lack a systematic understanding of it. "They've only experienced sermons or the occasional reformed text, so they don't really know reformed theology as it was taught by the reformers," he explains. This gap often results in unnecessary debates on social media and a lack of proper understanding of reformed theology. Few young individuals combine knowledge with piety.

"It's challenging to talk about reformed denominations, as many have 'reformed' in their title, but they certainly are not in practice. Most of them are 'reformed' only in name and bylaws. In practice, all need deep reform, including our Presbyterian church. Consequently, there are no reformed missions. The IPA plans to create one at the next general assembly," Rev. Pimpão elaborates.

Opportunities to obtain theological education from a reformed perspective within the country are scarce. Many young people travel to other countries in search of such training. Some resort to online courses, but the poor quality of the internet in Angola makes it hard to follow video lessons. Presently, as far we know, the only faithfully reformed institute in Angola is the IPA's, but it caters to high school education. The establishment of a seminary is a future goal, but it depends on human and financial resources, as teachers do not receive salaries and often need to work in other fields for their livelihood.

People face various challenges in accessing these educational opportunities. For instance, to study at the institute, a student needs financial support from a church for tuition and travel expenses. However, not all



Pastors and elders in the Angolan Presbyterian Church participate in the ordination of new elders and deacons

churches can provide such assistance. Moreover, many people do not fully appreciate the value of theological studies.

Although the IRTC offers online classes, it may struggle to address these specific difficulties in Angola. Limited access to the internet and technology, along with daily survival demands, prevent many Angolans from dedicating time and resources to their studies.

Despite these challenges, the College has been making strides in the country. Angola currently accounts for 7% of the students active in this term. There is hope that the accessibility, speed, and cost of internet access will improve in the coming years, with the country's connection to the new submarine cable, 2Africa, expected to be completed by 2024.

With the goal of helping the IRTC reach more students in Angola and offer a better experience, Rev. Mateus provided some suggestions: "Angolans, and Africans in general, are people who like to feel the warmth of others, look into each other's eyes and talk personally. If a teacher could be dispatched a few times to deliver a course in-person or just talk with the students, many

more may commit. If a small space was built where students could go to obtain information, study, or receive tutoring, this would also draw more attention. These things are significant to Angolans."

The Angola Scholarship Fund, maintained by the IRTC, was created by a significant donation for this purpose, received two years ago. This fund played a pivotal role by providing financial support to a group of Angolan pastors, including Rev. Mateus, who is currently halfway through his studies. Regrettably, it is about to run out. We are now seeking generous and dedicated collaborators who are willing to contribute towards replenishing this scholarship fund. With the help of these donors, we can ensure that these pastors have the opportunity to complete their courses and become

theologically competent leaders in their communities. If you are interested in supporting this cause and contributing to the development of theological education in Angola, join us and make a difference in the lives of these pastors and the future of the Angolan church.

The IRTC aims to be a tool in the hands of the Master, used to promote a transformation of theological education in Angola. By overcoming the challenges we've reported above and implementing strategies adapted to the local reality, we desire to continue to develop capable leaders with a solid theological foundation who can proclaim the Kingdom of God throughout the country. We count on your prayers, and your support!

The Bairro Deolinda Rodrigues Presbyterian Church, a congregation pastored by Rev. Mateus Pimpão



\$208,890
2023 Budget

40%

\$83,523
Raised



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