

ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH {ARPC} IN MALAWI

Hello Dr. Samuel Logan,

Receive greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Please find below a report on Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church-Malawi {Dzuwa and Kapangalika Congregations}

A. DZUWA CONGREGATION

Dzuwa Congregation is the ARPC's first Church plant in Malawi. The church planting work started in 2014 with 17 members. Today, by God's own grace, Dzuwa Congregation has 250 registered members.

Currently, the congregation do not have a church structure. It is temporarily using the premises of Dzuwa Classical Christian Academy Private Secondary School. As a result, in its recent congregation meetings, the issue of building a house for worship has been discussed at length. The congregation has come up with a strategic plan on how to raise resources for the construction of the church. Monthly financial contributions, pledges and offertories are some of the short term means of fund raising. Poultry farming, goat farming and crop farming are among the short-listed long-term means of raising funds towards the construction of the Church.

The congregation also discussed ways and means of promoting some of the ministries in the church. These include: Men's Guild, Women's Guild, Youth Guild, Catechumen Class, Adult Class, and Sunday school. As more people from different church back grounds and African Traditional Religions are joining the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, there is need to establish them in the Reformed Faith. The said ministries are some of the set structures to help new members to acquaint themselves with the Reformed Biblical Teaching. Therefore, the congregation has requested the leadership of the Church to ensure that all ministry leaders are aware of the Reformed Theological stance. The congregation believes that this act will help new members to deal away with the evil of syncretism which is rife among Christians in this area.

In addition to serving as structures to help new members into the Reformed family, these Church ministries also promote spiritual growth and development of Christ-driven and God-glorifying Christian relationships among both the old and the new members. Each ministry meets once or more in a month for either prayers or Bible study.

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In spite of a high number of registered members, average attendance rate on Sundays is not quite impressive. Commenting to this observation, members cited laziness among other things as the main contributing factor towards absenteeism. However, a closer look at the matter reveals that the problem is spiritual and that laziness is just symptomatic. Among other things, the congregation urged the leadership to intensify visitation programs. It was pointed out that all members of the church need spiritual encouragement time and again. It was also noted that members of the Church have to be established in the Faith. This calls for doctrinal teachings not for a specific wing of the church, but for the entire congregation.

Please continue praying and advising the leadership of the church wherever necessary. We believe that God who called us is forever faithful and trustworthy.

KAPANGALIKA CONGREGATION

Kapangalika Congregation is the second church plant of Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. The church planting work started last year {2015} in April. It began with the help of some few members who were commuting to Church in Dzuwa for worship from this area.

Community leaders gladly welcomed the idea to plant an ARPC congregation in their community. To prove their joy, they freely provided a piece of land {2 acres} where our temporally grass shelter is standing.

As a new church in the area, it encountered intense criticism from the community. However, on the other hand, some community members proved their friends wrong and they joined the church. Within few months, the membership of the church grew to over twenty people. The entire church leadership became happy; praised and glorified God because of the development. Nevertheless, that is, by God's own design, this period was short-lived. People started quitting their membership with ARPC. During visitation, it was learned that most members had personal material expectations. They were not primarily interested in the teaching/doctrine of the Church. Therefore, the Church's failure to fulfil their personal expectations was reason enough for them to quit the Church.

Though painful, we received this development as a blessing in disguise. We believed that people were misinformed about the identity of the Church. Many people came for personal

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benefits and not for the Gospel. In His sovereignty, and for His own glory, God decided to lay down the true foundation for the Church who is Jesus Christ and nothing less.

We are very grateful to God, the owner of the Church for being patient with us and holding us so tight that we could hardly wonder away from His love; let alone His will. Of late, by His grace, the Church has started growing numerically again. As of today, the congregation has 24 members. The leadership of the Church is happy with this development. Furthermore, from personal testimonies, it has been noted that the new members are founded on Christ and not on material benefits as was the case in the first instance.

During the recent congregational meeting, members have agreed to build a church structure. As noted earlier, currently we are using a temporally shelter constructed from grass for worship. Once it is built, it is going to serve as a house for worship and as a nursery school for the community. This is one of the needs in this area. There are so many young children who haven't reached the recommended primary school going age of 6 years, hence the need of this kind of training.

There are also plans to build a junior primary school in the near future, that is, Lord willing. The community do not have a primary school. All primary schools are located far away from the area making it difficult for junior learners {standard 1-4} to attend classes. The situation becomes unbearable during rainy season. To ensure ownership of the school, the community is going to provide all the bricks needed for the construction of the classrooms.

To ensure spiritual growth, the leadership of the Church, thus in consultation with the congregation has introduced some activities namely Bible Study and Doctrinal teachings. As regards to doctrine, members are learning about Creation, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Salvation, Christian Ethics, the Great Commission, etc...

It is our prayer that God should grant us as leaders a persevering, patient and obedient heart; a heart that always seeks to do the will of God for His own glory.