

## **Project # MW 96454 - Church Leadership Scholarships**

### **Vision**

By faith we see trained pastors and church leaders equipped to lead the Malawian church. We see the church growing both numerically and, most importantly, into deeper personal relationships with Jesus Christ.

### **Background**

The Africa Evangelical Church (AEC) denomination has approximately 150 congregations with about 50 pastors and evangelists who have had Biblical training. The Malawian church has enormous potential, but in order for this to be realized, godly members must be raised up and trained to lead the local congregations. SIM has 3 missionaries placed as lecturers at the Evangelical Bible College of Malawi (EBCoM).

SIM has teamed up with the AEC to provide future leaders with the necessary firm biblical foundation. The church endorses members from its congregations as potential church leaders. Following an interview process, involving SIM, AEC, and the colleges themselves, SIM provides successful applicants with scholarships to Bible colleges. These scholarships generally cover tuition fees, boarding fees, and transportation to and from college each term.

Without assistance like this, nearly none of the students or churches would be capable of financing a substantial, Christian education. Students are expected to provide their own funds for registration fees, books, and other personal expenses. Upon completion of their studies, students are expected to undergo a 1 year internship program under an experienced pastor in order to gain some practical and firsthand experience of ministry.

### **Progress**

During this period SIM Malawi has been supporting 11 students who were pursuing their Diploma and certificate courses at Evangelical Bible College of Malawi (EBCOM). Four students graduated at the end of June, three regular residential students and one on the non-residential extension program. The students who were on the regular program have been attached as interns in the central and northern region of Malawi to experienced pastors in order to gain more practical ministry experience before being assigned to pastor or plant churches. The student who was on extension program is a serving pastor who was upgrading his qualifications to a diploma level. He has now been assigned to Nkhate local church in the southern part of Malawi which did not have a resident pastor.

### **“New Students”**

We received 6 new applications to be considered for the new school year starting in September, the new school year of 2017/2018. We invited them for the initial interviews with SIM and AEC committee. Out of the 4 who took part in the interviews, 3 were recommended to go for another interview with the Evangelical Bible College of Malawi. They all made it hoping to start their studies with the rest of the continuing students, but only two arrived to start their training. The new students are: Evance

Nikhawo and Philip Matemba who are both going to do a 2 years certificate in Biblical Studies and Christian Ministry.

### **“Mission”**

SIM Malawi and AEC are still fundraising for Rev. Gusty Makhutcha (who was a recent recipient of a scholarship to upgrade his training to a Diploma qualification) and his wife Elina so that they can start their ministry in Mozambique. We are trusting the Lord that many people would support them for the ministry ahead of them and some churches and individuals have started making pledges toward their support.

### **“Testimony”**

Speaking to one of the students, evangelist Alfred Banda (pictured right of the picture) who graduated in June this year and is on internship in Lilongwe, he had this to say, “I thank God and our sponsors for the privilege of going through Bible training. Before going to Bible school the mentality I had was that, this is just academic and the rest of ministry work’s progress



Witness Mbewe (L) & Alfred Banda (R) on graduation from EBCOM

would be dependent on my ability to shepherd the flock.

I must admit that, if it were not for the Bible school training I had, it would have been very difficult for me especially meeting people for the first time and being able to build relationships and ministering to them. Being on internship has also given me an opportunity to see what it means to be in ministry. I am continuing to learn from my senior pastor how to deal with issues when they come, being patient with people, listening to them and encouraging them with the word of God. I strongly believe that the growth and spirituality of our members is dependent on the sound teaching they get from well trained pastors, which EBCoM and other institutions are doing very well”.

### **Outlook**

The new school year for EBCoM starts in September and we look forward to having at least 11 students in total. The need for more resident pastors within the AEC is still huge, it is therefore our prayer that the AEC will continue to use its structures to encourage those who hear their call to serve the Lord on full time basis to come forward and get some counseling sessions with their pastors before they can apply for

consideration in the next coming school year (2018/2019). With increased number of well trained pastors in AEC we see the church grow in their knowledge of the word as well as responding to the great commission. This will lead to a many people having a passion reach out the least reached areas with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.

**Prayer requests**

Pray for the continuing students that the Lord increases their understanding of the word of God and their passion for ministry.

Pray for the interns that the Lord would continue to strengthen them and give them a humble heart learn from the senior pastors.

Pray for more workers for work of the Lord.

Pray for EBCoM as it prepares men & women for ministry ahead of them.