



INTERNATIONAL REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

TEACHING REFORMED THEOLOGY ONLINE
TO PORTUGUESE SPEAKERS WORLDWIDE

Newsletter

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Bristol, VA – February/2017

"Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty."
(Acts 6.3 ESV)

Requirements For Workers

Pastor Frans Leonard Schalkwijk

The IRTC is a servant of Christ's churches. It assists local churches in forming faithful men, capable of teaching and leading the Lord's people. This equipping of men for service does not, however, automatically result in the ordination of IRTC graduates. The members of the church must still choose their leaders and this, fully in accordance with the Lord's direction.

The Apostles in Jerusalem decided that there needed to be an election in the church, because seven deacons were needed for social assistance. In Acts 6:3 we have the requirements for these servants and, surely, for all the different kinds of helpers in the work of the Lord.

The three requirements are like concentric circles and the choice was made by a process of elimination. Whoever did not pass the *first* test would not qualify for the second, etc. First, they had to have the support of the world, since they needed to have a good reputation. If unbelievers would say, "How is it possible that such a bad man was elected by that church," something would be very wrong.

The *second* circle is, "full of the Spirit." But, how would this be measured, since it's a matter of the heart? If you have an oil-burning heater, you need to check the level of oil in the tank. In the case of a person, we can learn something about the level of the oil of the Spirit in his heart by observing his talk and his walk, his confession and his behavior, fruit of the

Spirit in his life, the consequence of daily sanctification. Nevertheless, only God judges the heart.



The *third* circle is, "full of wisdom", that is, practical wisdom to know how to carry out a specific task. This depends much on individual gifts. There are people who are excellent helpers of the soul, but poor helpers of the purse. They don't know how to help needy persons, for they just give them what is lacking, forgetting that maybe they should not give them a fish, but teach them how to fish. Each person has received his gifts from the Lord. We must choose people according to their specific gifts and the suitability of these gifts for a particular task, that is both beautiful and difficult.

The other instructions for officers in the church, such as those given in the letters to Timothy and Titus, are all further specifications with regard to the threefold requirements of Acts 6. Happy the church that obeys these three basic criteria in the choice of their workers!

Sadly, a church can err in their choice of a candidate (1Sam 16:7). Nevertheless, let us carefully apply the three requirements in obedience to the

Lord. In an election, how about starting by asking, who would get upset if he was not chosen? Next, appoint a small committee, responsible to the church council, to consider possible candidates, and, finally, announce the candidates to the church on two occasions, so that she can prayerfully come to a healthy conclusion about who should be ordained.

Nominations and elections are matters of obedience to God. There is much freedom with regard to practical procedures, but certain things, such as Acts 6:3, are crucial. We must not try to be wiser than the Lord of the Church, but faithfully follow these norms. It is better to leave a post empty than to fill it with someone not approved by the Lord. Many problems in church assemblies arise from elections that lacked the right care and prayer. When motivations of friendship or relationships, or worse, money or church politicking, threaten to corrupt an election, it is better to suspend it. However, if the problem has already been created, it is better to work with it until the next election and not repeat the same error.

In a democratic organization the majority reaps what it sows by its vote. Disobedience brings curse; obedience to divine norms brings blessings. If a church is faithful in her elections of workers, voting according to orientation given by the Holy Spirit, without party-spirit, God will certainly give his *shalom*, so that this church may be a refuge in a turbulent world (Acts 6:7; 9:31)!

Author Description and Testimony

Rev. Frans Leonard Schalkwijk has a doctorate in Church History, and currently resides in Holland, his country of origin, with his wife Mrs. Margarida. He was a missionary in Brazil for many years, having been professor and director of the Northern Presbyterian Seminary in Recife, PE, Brazil, influencing several generations of pastors and workers. He is the author of *Koine: Small Grammar of New Testament Greek*; *Church and State in Dutch Brazil, 1630-1654*; *The Reformed Church in Dutch Brazil, 1630-1654*; *Meditations of a Pilgrim*, among others. In the IRTC, he teaches the courses of the Department of Historical Studies.



Rev. Schalkwijk: "Cooperating with the IRTC for so many years has been a great privilege for me in three ways:

1) To serve the Lord actively sitting behind my desk, although almost entering my nineties;

2) To assist the pastors Ralph and Pieter, colleagues and friends so dear that worked so long faithfully in the northeastern coast and in the Presbyterian Seminary in Recife, Brazil;

3) To help students in their efforts to better serve the King of kings. Thank you very much, Lord!"

1st Term of 2017



The first 10-week academic term of the year started on February 6th and are scheduled to finish on April 14th.

We begin our school year with great expectation of what the Lord will do

May the Lord bless you in 2017

Ralph Boersema, President

"But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments."

(Psalm 103.17-18)

The International Reformed Theological College community is praying to the Lord that He may graciously bless each one of you in 2017. May you experience a strong working of the Spirit in your heart and life, each according to the special calling God has assigned to you!

We share with you that in 2016 we had a total of, at least, USD\$81,000 in receipts from all sources. Although we did not attain our budgeted goal of USD\$95,000, we were blessed with the highest amount received in any year of the IRTC's 16 years of existence, by the grace of God. We are thankful and encouraged. I would therefore urge you all to pray that the Lord of the Kingdom may grant a full measure to meet our needs and this through many hands, including ones that are as yet unfamiliar with this important educational and missionary ministry to future church leaders, living where our online Biblical training is the only available instrument of teaching of this kind.

in and through us, for the glory of His glorious Name! It is a tremendous privilege to be part of the development of the work of His Kingdom in our own generation, knowing that its repercussion is eternal.

We from the IRTC ask our readers to renew or commit themselves to join us in the sublime task of training workers for the Harvest, in view of what 2 Timothy 2:1-2 says, *"You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."*

The courses offered in this 1st Term along with their teachers are:

- 1) World Religions – Prof. Sérgio Paulo de Lima
- 2) Covenant Theology I – Prof. Ricardo César Toniolo
- 3) Ancient Church History – Dr. Francisco Leonardo Schalkwijk
- 4) Apologetics – Prof. Gaspar de Souza
- 5) Church Governance – Prof. Julius Marnix VanSpronsen

Financial Status - January/February 2017 Update

Daniel Portela, Executive Vice-President

We are thankful to the Lord for all the brothers and sisters who contributed financially to the IRTC in 2016. Even though we did not reach our target of \$95,000, through your generosity we received over **\$81,000!**

The IRTC strives to offer accessible and competitive prices. In order to reach that objective, and as a not-for-profit organization, we require additional gifts to supplement the college's income.

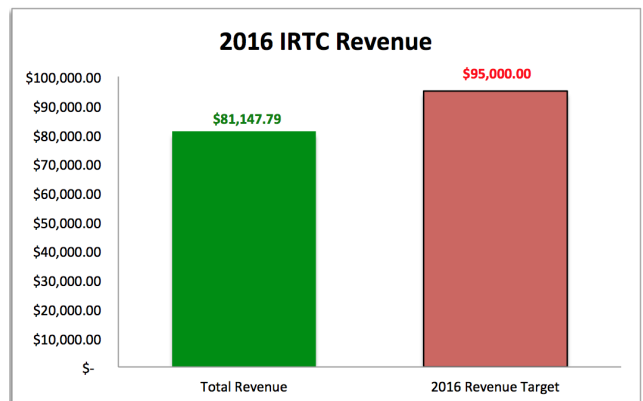
In 2017, we are setting the same income target of **\$95,000**, and we continue to trust that the Lord will raise up brothers and sisters to support this ministry.

Please visit the "Donations" page on our website (www.pro-rege.net/ds14.htm), and there you will find all the information necessary for making your contribution in the USA. Canadian donors, please make your donations at www.irtcsociety.ca.

In addition, here are other ways you can support the IRTC:

1. Pray for the IRTC, its teachers, leadership, students, and financial situation
2. Refer prospective students to the IRTC
3. Share this newsletter to disseminate the work and the needs of the IRTC

In Him who provides for us all.



Clovis Alexandre Oliveira
clovisalexandre@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor