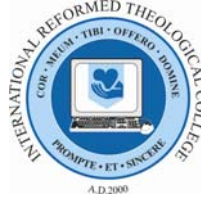


INTERNATIONAL REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE



An online college that teaches in Portuguese (www.pro-rege.net)

We are looking for supporters for this ministry which provides Reformed theological education to students in Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique, and worldwide, students who do not live near a seminary and cannot move away to go to a traditional college.

February, 2012 Newsletter

“Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. (1 Cor 3:7)

Important Steps Forward

Through the years, the growth of our College has been very gradual. Nevertheless, it has been real and now we can write about some important advances. Since our beginning, part of our project has been to encourage local churches to set up study centers, where a group of students of the IRTC regularly meet under the leadership of a mentor. We have often made mention of the benefits of such a local study center as a way to both alleviate the lack of face-to-face contact that characterizes distance education and to more actively involve the church in the leadership training with which the IRTC seeks to assist the churches. This is important, since it is the church’s responsibility to provide for and oversee the training of their members. Churches, however, have been slow to catch this vision. For some years there has been an active group of students that support each other in Mozambique, but this group has not yet wanted to be recognized as a local study center. With joy in the Lord, we can now report that in the last quarter of 2011 our first recognized study center was formed in a Presbyterian church in Ceilândia, near Brasilia. In addition to this important development, we mention that the mentor for this group is a former IRTC student. A first-generation student has now given birth to a group of second-generation students. IRTC instructors and a local church are laboring together as planters and waterers and God is giving the increase. May many more churches soon be persuaded of this divine providence for leadership development!



Rev. Dilsilei Martins Monteiro was a practicing lawyer when he first enrolled in the IRTC in 2005. After completing a number of courses with the IRTC, he transferred to a residential Presbyterian Seminary to complete his degree in a full-time program of studies. He was since ordained as the pastor of the Presbyterian Church of some 250 members in Ceilândia. In addition to his pastoral ministry, he is following post-graduate studies at the Andrew Jumper Presbyterian Center for Post-Graduate Studies in São Paulo and teaches some courses at the seminary where he studied in Brasilia.

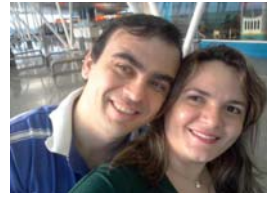
While many of our students enroll with us because they live in isolated locations, Ceilândia is different. It belongs to the metropolitan area built up around Brazil’s capital city. Part of the attraction in this case is the ability to study theology while engaged in another profession. The council of elders of this Presbyterian church has taken a particular interest in promoting solid Reformed training for members of the church. It was with this commitment in mind that a study center was established in the church, one that partners with the IRTC and has the pastor as the mentor for the group. The church has a classroom with 30 computers in a network with broadband Internet access. There is also a multi-media projector with a 120” screen and a good sound system. The church further provides a good library of Reformed books.

Last October 6 Ceilândia students applied for admission to the IRTC and then enrolled in a course in covenant theology taught by Prof. Paulo Henrique Brasil e Souza, who lives in Recife, Brazil and is following doctoral studies in Old Testament at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Greenville, SC, USA. In addition to having regular meetings with the mentor to share thoughts and have some questions answered, this group started a discussion group on

Facebook, to which others have also been invited. Further, the church organized a “Breakfast with Theology.” Some 28 people came out. During the breakfast, the IRTC and the study center were promoted. The students talked with enthusiasm about their experience of studying at the IRTC. Afterwards, those who were present divided into two groups. The six IRTC students had their regular discussions about the subject matter of the course. The others, mostly young people, discussed a book they had previously read. Clearly, this church is actively promoting theological training among their members and among Christians of other churches in the community.

Let me introduce the six students. Antônio Paulo Castro Correa comes from an Assembly of God background and is now a member of a Baptist church. Cléber Soares de Moura is an elder in the Presbyterian Church and a captain in the local fire department. His work schedule makes it hard to study, but he is disciplined and is making good progress in becoming acquainted with theological terminology—a challenge for several in the group. João Sérgio Soares Cardoso is a civil engineer and also an elder of the church. His wife, Potira Lima Mendes, has joined him in these studies. Timóteo Carneiro Ferreira is a lawyer and a university professor. He is also an elder of the church. Elder Willian Hazor Ferreira da Silva’s profession is in the area of information technology. Rev. Dilsilei, the mentor of the group reports:

With the exception of Brother Paulo and Sister Potira, all are Presbyterians from the cradle, but are only now developing better knowledge of the Reformed faith. This provides even more evidence of the importance of this study center for the confessional fidelity of us Presbyterians here in Brasilia, as well as a way for other brothers and sisters of other denominations to grow to maturity in the Reformed theology, which has been attracting ever more brothers and sisters, especially among Pentecostals.



The Lord has also granted the IRTC other blessings for which we praise him. The number of students enrolled last year was 45. This is not yet very high, since comparisons with other distance education schools lead us to believe that we could potentially have as many as 1000. We are encouraged, however, because in the last year there has been much more buzz about our college in the social media and we have been very well received at five major Evangelical leadership conferences in Brazil. These are good steps forward. In 2010 the board for theological education of the Presbyterian Church in Brazil approved the IRTC as providing suitable training that may be used by the students of the church for preparing for the ministry. Since then, interest and confidence in the IRTC has been growing among some in that denomination. This year (2012) we have received eleven new students from various churches, also several from southern Brazilian states, where we did not yet have students.

In the area of receipts, we are very grateful for a large increase in donations. Our total receipts in 2011 were USD\$46,200.00 (compared to USD\$18,300.00 in 2010). We did not attain last year’s budgeted amount of USD\$72,000.00, but were much closer than in previous years. For 2012 we have set our budget goal at USD\$80,500.00. Please pray with us that he who owns the cattle on a thousand hills may bless the IRTC with his bounty in this year. May we also count on you to be a prayer supporter and a promoter of the IRTC among your contacts? Feel free to forward this newsletter to others, to recommend joining our email distribution list and to print out this newsletter and distribute it. We also invite you to visit our website to learn about our updates, our budget and our English-language catalog.

May the Lord keep you in his grace,

Ralph F. Boersema, president

For contact information, please visit our website (www.pro-rege.net)