



INTERNATIONAL REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

TEACHING REFORMED THEOLOGY ONLINE
TO PORTUGUESE SPEAKERS WORLDWIDE

Newsletter

www.pro-rege.net

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“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 (ESV)

The Christian and Illness

Cesar Miranda dos Santos



Cesar is an elder at the Presbyterian Church of Pampulha in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. He is a doctor and lecturer in the area of bioethics with a Reformed biblical approach and the author of *Disease in the Light of the Bible*. At the IRTC, he is pursuing a Masters in Biblical Studies.

We live in days where there is tremendous confusion and misunderstanding when it comes to discerning the meaning of illness in the Christian life. The enemy insistently tries to discourage and confuse us. In this aspect of the Christian life, the success the devil has achieved is undeniable. The positive confession movement, prosperity gospel theology and other evangelical currents that tend to mysticism have caused great sadness, dejection, disagreement and even shaken people's faith. Often what would be a minor medical condition is

aggravated to the extent that there are terrible complications due to an absolutely wrong approach by “Christian” leaders who tell their sheep to show their faith by abandoning the prescribed medical treatment.

In the light of Scripture, we must understand the consequences the fall had on the current reality of our ontological material *imago Dei*, namely the body. Understanding disease from a biblical perspective will help us to act soberly and wisely, avoiding further suffering for all who are involved.

Man does not accept illness easily. Nor does he readily place full confidence in the wisdom and sovereignty of God. Both in the Pentecostal context and in Reformed churches this matter lacks depth of study so that diseases are adequately addressed.

We as believers undoubtedly enjoy the blessings that result from our conversion. If we obey the Father's precepts, we experience a life of holiness that protects us and keeps us

away from various practices and habits that are harmful to our bodies. However, we are still subject to disease. When illness occurs, we must reflect on the situation with self-examination and try to understand why the Lord would allow this disease. There are many possible applications that can be made when we have a disease in our lives, such as discipline, the remembrance of death, the glorification of the name of the Lord or even to get rid of pride (sanctification). We should always pray and not just in the moment of desperation because of a lack of human resources. We must keep in mind that we know not how to pray as we ought. We often ask the Father for things which are not the best for our lives at the time, and the answer for that prayer may be negative. Finally, we should treat the disease properly by making use of all the knowledge, technology and therapeutic resources that are at our disposal to promote the greatest possible comfort and expect healing if it is within the sovereign will of the Father.

IMPORTANT: Support for the IRTC

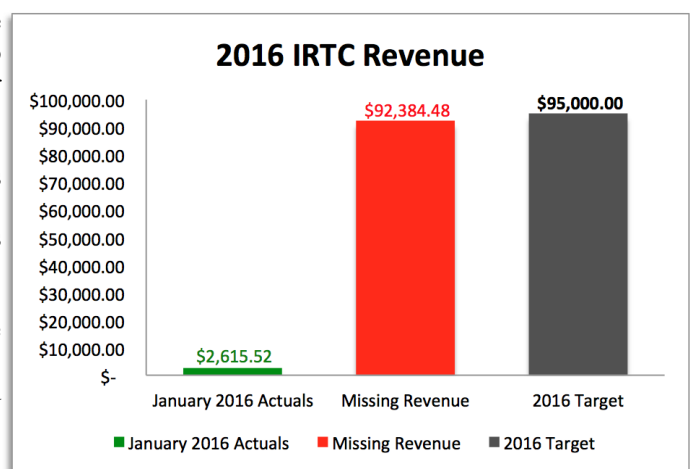
We invite you to join us in enabling workers for the harvest. For this year, we aim to raise USD\$95,000.00 to sustain the IRTC. This amount will be used for teacher gratuities and to cover costs of the educational platform, administration and other special projects.

Fortunately, we serve a great God that awakens His people to sustain the work of the Kingdom!

There are several ways in which brothers and sisters can help:

1. Contribute financially to the IRTC
2. Call the attention of potential students to the advantages of studying at the IRTC
3. Share this newsletter to disseminate the work and the needs of the IRTC
4. Pray for the IRTC, its teachers, leadership, students and financial situation

If the Lord moves you to contribute in some way, please visit the “Donations” page on our website (www.pro-rege.net/ds14.htm). 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.



1st IRTC Module of 2016



The first 10-week module of studies started on February 1st and is scheduled to end on April 8th.

We are pleased to bring the news that 19 new students have been admitted to the IRTC. The number of students enrolled in courses in the current module is 44. We believe that the courses offered will be of great value for biblical and theological preparation for these new brothers and sisters coming in as well as for those who previously joined the IRTC family. The IRTC's educational system is offered 100% online for speakers of the Portuguese language offering flexible study hours that can meet the needs of each student, according to his or her situation. All those who want a better biblical preparation to serve the Lord can take advantage of our educational system. In it, students virtually meet with experienced and qualified teachers who facilitate the learning process in order to help educate ministry leaders in local churches around the world. The courses of this module are: Introduction to the Bible I, Greek I, History of the Reformation Church, History of Philosophy, Pastoral Practice, Biblical Counseling and Christian Ethics.

New Administrative Assistance

It is with great joy that we inform you about some decisions that were taken by the Board of Directors with respect to a new type of administrative assistance format for our beloved IRTC. Adding to the already existing functions of Vice President for Student Affairs and of Vice President for Academic Affairs, now we have a new position, the Executive Vice President. To take up this new office, which will take care of administrative and financial affairs, brother Daniel Zekveld Portela, a member of the Board was appointed. He will be working from 10 to 20 hours weekly. This new position hopes to improve the performance of the administrative affairs of the IRTC, relieving the demands on the president.

Below is a photo and the description of brother Daniel Portela, which will help us to know him better and to see his experience in administrative and financial areas:



Daniel Portela Zekveld holds a B.B.A. in Business Administration from Mackenzie University (São Paulo, SP, Brazil). He lives in Calgary, AB, Canada. While in Brazil, he was an elder for seven years in the Presbyterian Church of Santo Amaro, in São Paulo, Brazil, and is currently an elder at the Calgary Church of the Cross ("Christian Brazilians in Calgary"), located in the same Canadian city in which he lives. He has worked professionally in the areas of Procurement, Purchasing and Marketing for twelve years in large companies both in Brazil and in Canada. He has additional academic training from "The Master's Bible Institute" at Master's College in Santa Clarita, CA, USA. He has experience as a Sunday school teacher and as a church treasurer since 2001. He participated in church budget committees for five years, served as advisor to several ministries, lead small groups, and taught Bible studies.

For many years the IRTC was without someone to occupy the office of Vice President for Academic Affairs. Now, the Board has appointed one of the IRTC teachers, Dr. Leandro Antonio de Lima, to assume this position. His service to the IRTC will consist of up to 20 hours a week, helping the president in solving many issues that are pending. Below is a picture and a personal, academic and professional description of him:



Leandro Antonio de Lima is a Presbyterian pastor, graduated in Theology from JMC Presbyterian Seminary, in São Paulo, Brazil. He has a Master of Theology and History degree from the Andrew Jumper Presbyterian Center for Graduate Studies ("CPAJ"), and a Master of Religious Sciences diploma from Mackenzie University. He has a Doctorate in Literature also from Mackenzie University. He is currently a resident professor of New Testament at "CPAJ", and teacher and systematic theology coordinator at the JMC Theological Seminary. He is assistant pastor at the Presbyterian Church of Santo Amaro, in São Paulo and is the author of several books, including a systematic theology in accessible language called Reason for hope - Theology for today from the Cultura Cristã Publishing House which has also published two other of his books (one on Calvinism and the other on the present challenges for the Christian). He is also the author of a series of studies for Sunday school called The Great Doctrines of Grace which currently consist of 12 volumes. He is married to Vivian and father of Vicktor Daniel. He has been dedicating time especially to the study of the book of Revelation.

The IRTC Community prays that the Lord may pour out His abundant blessings on the lives of these two beloved brothers, their families and their ministerial activities in order to advance the Kingdom and to glorify the King to whom all glory is due! In the words of the hymn "Conquering Now and Still to Conquer":

*"Not to the strong is the battle,
Not to the swift is the race,
Yet to the true and the faithful
Vict'ry is promised through grace."*

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