



INTERNATIONAL REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

TEACHING REFORMED THEOLOGY ONLINE
TO PORTUGUESE SPEAKERS WORLDWIDE

Newsletter

www.pro-rege.net

Bristol, VA – September/2016

*"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'?
Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest."
(John 4:35 ESV)*

Sound Theology Produces Glorifying Missions

Pastor Sérgio Lima

Many cross-cultural missionaries embark on foreign ministries with very little theological training. After a few years, it is not uncommon for some to recognize a need for theological studies. Of these, several have turned to the IRTC to feed them with deeper and broader understanding because its teaching is accessible to them on the field and because it is Reformed. In fact, Reformed theology is especially relevant for missions.



Its point of departure is the pursuit of the glory of the Most High and this pursuit opens to sinners a life of meaning that goes far beyond decisions for Christ as a Savior from personal distress.

Total depravity, irresistible grace, unconditional election, limited atonement and perseverance of the saints are at the foundation of this pursuit, for they show sinners their own inability and God's all-encompassing sovereignty. When a missionary explains these theological and biblical concepts in language and contexts understandable by his hearers, God is honored.

Next, in Reformed theology we see the Reformation "solus," such as to give all glory to God alone, to recognize

Scripture as the only rule of faith and practice, to understand that forgiveness is only by faith, worked by God's grace alone, and that there is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ. IRTC students are taught to search the Scriptures in the original languages and their hearts are filled with rich comprehension when these truths are read in them.

Then, we come to the covenant. No human relationship can compare with the one expressed in the communion of God's covenant of grace, a doctrine frequently highlighted in the Bible and in Reformed theology. Mission has the task of explaining to man that God establishes a covenant with his chosen ones.

The term "covenant" has its root in an ancient Ugaritic word meaning "to cut or to split". Covenant-making ceremonies could involve cutting animal sacrifices in half, so that both parties to a covenant could pass between the two parts. In this way, each swore an oath to be faithful unto death, that is, the penalty of unfaithfulness would be death. When such an oath is sworn there are necessarily two possible outcomes for a covenant. Either, it is faithfully kept and the promised blessings are received or it is broken and punishments or curses result, even to the extent of eternal death.

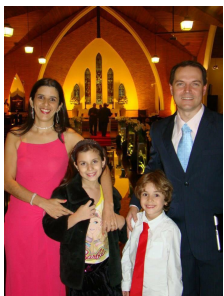
God created man in his own image and likeness to have fellowship with Him, which was to be experienced in a life-giving covenant. In that covenant, the Lord blessed man and gave him the mandate to be fruitful and fill the earth. He

also commanded him to subdue and rule over creation as he cultivated and kept it to the glory of God. Although he was warned in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man disobeyed the Lord and broke this excellent covenant. He died on that day, but also received a renewed promise of life through Eve's descendant, who would crush Satan (Genesis 1-3).

God made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12) to fulfill what He had promised at the time of the fall (Genesis 3:15). In this covenant, the Lord committed himself forever to Abraham and his descendants, when he symbolically passed between animals that had been cut in two in Genesis 15. Abraham's response was to believe God, who reckoned this faith to him as righteousness. In this, Abraham became a representative for all who believe and are saved.

The response of humanity to God's initiative to them must be given through the fulfillment of the covenantal mandates of Genesis 1 and 2. For this purpose, in the fullness of time, God sent Jesus Christ as the Redeemer to set souls free from sin and misery through His death to satisfy the covenant oath and to establish a new covenant in his blood. Further, He also accomplishes complete fulfillment of these mandates and all who are united to Christ by faith share in the fruit of His accomplishments. In this way good theology leads to a covenantal understanding that must be expressed in the propagation of the gospel until the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Bio and Testimony of Pastor Sérgio Lima



"I'm Sérgio Lima, 45 years old, pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil since 2002. Since my conversion, by grace, I have been serving the church in areas related to pastoral theology. I am grateful to God for the privilege of participating in church planting projects in our country and in some other places. I live with my family in São Paulo - Brazil, and as pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Santo Amaro, I try to work hard for God to be glorified through a God-centered service and sound teaching in Sunday school. Our day to day work is regularly in the areas of evangelism, discipleship and missions. As IRTC instructor, I have the great joy to get to know students who live elsewhere and make this 'virtual classroom' their teaching home. With great satisfaction, I see the students progress on issues related to practical theology. And herewith, I express my gratitude to Prof. Ralph Boersema and all the leaders of this institution, who selflessly persevere, living in dependence on God's plans."

New Teachers

The IRTC is pleased to officially introduce two of its new teachers who have come to further enrich the faculty of our school. We welcome our dear brothers.



Filipe Costa Fontes is a graduate in Theology of Rev. José Manoel da Conceição Presbyterian Theological Seminary (2004) and Mackenzie Presbyterian University (2006), as well as in Philosophy at the University Center Assunção (2009). He also has a Masters degree in Theology with a concentration in Philosophy from the Andrew Jumper Presbyterian Center for Graduate Studies (2009) and Masters degree in Education, Art and History of Culture from Mackenzie Presbyterian University (2012). He is an assistant professor in the Department of Philosophical Theology at CPAJ (Andrew Jumper Presbyterian Center for Graduate Studies) and teaches courses in the area of General Culture at the Rev. José Manoel da Conceição Presbyterian Theological Seminary (JMC). He is a theological and philosophical consultant for Mackenzie Teaching System and editor of articles for the *Fides Reformata* Magazine. In the IRTC, Professor Filipe works as coordinator and instructor in the Department of Education.



Ricardo C. Toniolo is a graduate in Theology of Rev. José Manoel da Conceição Presbyterian Theological Seminary (1998) and Mackenzie Presbyterian University (2010). He also has a Masters degree in Theology with a concentration in Exegesis of the Old Testament from the Andrew Jumper Presbyterian Center for Graduate Studies (2008) and a Masters degree in Languages from Mackenzie Presbyterian University. He works as senior pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Botucatu, SP, Brazil, and as a teacher of the Rev. George Anderson Landes Presbyterian Bible Institute in courses such as Biblical Theology of OT and Exegesis. He is also a visiting professor of Distance Education at CPAJ (Andrew Jumper Presbyterian Center for Graduate Studies), in the courses of Poetic Books and Wisdom Literature and Studies in Historical and Prophetic Books. He is a commentator on the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and 1 and 2 Chronicles in the Contemporary Bible Commentary. Professor Ricardo also teaches the courses of Covenant Theology for the IRTC.



Ministerial Activities of the Faculty

In this article, we bring a short report of the ministerial activities of one of our instructors, **Pastor Luiz Fernando dos Santos**. In the IRTC since 2012, he works as the instructor of the courses **Introduction to Philosophy and Scientific Research Methodology**.

Professor Luiz Fernando participated as a lecturer in the course *Perspectives Brazil*, in Campinas, SP, addressing the theme “The Messiah to the World: The Gospel of the Kingdom” and in São José dos Campos, SP, with the theme “History of the Missionary Movement: 30 AD to 1600 AD.” These lectures took place on the 8th and on the 12th of September, respectively.

Last semester, he served as teacher of the course *History of Denominations, Sects and Heresies*, and currently teaches a course in *Strategic Management and Ecclesiastical Planning*, both in the Southern Presbyterian Seminary in Campinas, SP.

In the church where he pastors – Presbyterian Church of Itapira – he has developed an essential supportive care project with homeless people (creation and direction of the Samaritan Institute for Social Protection), and a welcoming project that works with Syrian refugees who arrived in Itapira, offering social assistance and spiritual support.

Among his ministerial activities, we can also highlight articles that he has written for the site of the *Ultimato* Journal.

The IRTC thanks God for Professor Luiz and the ministries he has been doing in His name. We ask you brothers and sisters to persevere in prayer for the ministries of the IRTC faculty.

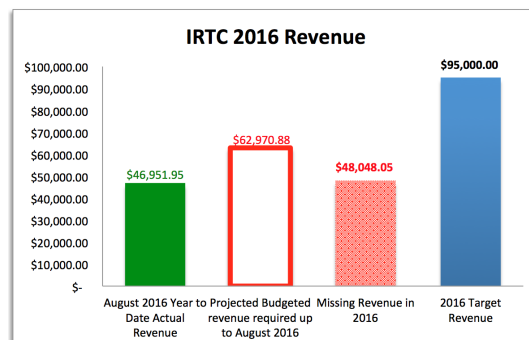
Volunteer Needed

The IRTC is looking for a volunteer in the United States who could help in promoting our ministry in the USA, especially with regard to fund-raising. For more information, please contact Prof. Ralph Boersema at ralph@refmail.net. Thank you for considering and praying about this need.

Financial Position - Update September 2016

Daniel Portela, Executive Vice President

We thank all the brothers and sisters who have supported the IRTC this year. By the end of the month of August 2016, we raised almost **\$47,000** of the **\$95,000** budgeted for the year (**49.5%**). We still have a few months to reach the goal, so we pray to God to raise up more supporters for our ministry. We have invested strategically in a new distance education system, a new website and provided the gratuities for our teachers.



If you brothers and sisters do not yet collaborate with the IRTC, here are some ways to do that:

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

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.

May the grace and peace of our Lord be with you all.

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