



IRTC

INTERNATIONAL
REFORMED
THEOLOGICAL
COLLEGE

JUNE 2019

NEWS

IRTC — A Global Endeavour

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity! – (Psalm 133:1)*

In the wee hours of a brisk January morning in Calgary, an IRTC board member and his brother scraped ice from the windshield during a quick stop on their way across the mountains to Abbotsford, British Columbia. Daniel and David Portela were on their way to meet with members of the IRTC Society, a Canadian organization whose purpose is to support the IRTC and its ac-

tivities. The lunch meeting presented an opportunity for communication and fellowship which has been unmatched by any digital experience thus far. There is something about writing an e-mail to someone you have seen face-to-face and whose hand you have shaken that can't be replaced by a myriad Skype calls or virtual meetings. Though we are digitally saturated with contact and communications, when opportunities like this come about, it's best to seize them and get as much out of them as you can.



Nathan Boersema, David Portela, Jack Marissen, Kevin van Delden, Daniel Portela, Harold Ludwig (left to right)

IRTC — A Global Endeavour (cont.)

IRTC's supporters are not the only group with members all over the world. Teachers and administrators hail from four out of seven continents, and our students and mentors can be found scattered across the map as well. In March, the IRTC student Pastor Evanilton Santos and his IRTC mentor, Rev. Daniel Charles Gomes, were able to meet in person for the first time in Oizumi, Japan. Both of them are missionaries leading Portuguese-speaking churches in Japan, Daniel at *IPB Cristo é Vida* in Tahara (southwest of Tokyo) and Evanilton at *Igreja Evangélica Luz Para o Caminho* in Oizumi (northwest of Tokyo). Pastor Evanilton's church held a special event whose theme was "Freedom in Submission". Rev. Daniel and IRTC VP David Portela spoke at the event, giving an overview of how the Protestant Reformation and its main doctrinal distinctives brought freedom to those who were in theological bondage in the sixteenth century.

Late April provided an opportunity for more face-to-face contact among our ranks. Saulo Xavier is a brand-new student at the IRTC and is our first to hail from Thailand, where he and his family serve the King as missionaries. They are involved in ministries to the deaf and to women at risk, operating a café that provides jobs and a haven for those who have been marginalized or who are seeking to leave a life of involuntary servitude. The couple and their two daughters have had their share of challenges in the field, so they are always happy to receive visitors who remind them of home (Brazil). Saulo is currently working hard at learning Greek and describes his teacher, Rev. André Aloísio, as "the first person who has ever made Greek a pleasure to learn". Student Affairs VP David



Daniel Charles Gomes and Evanilton Santos

Portela was in Thailand for a few days and the Xaviers eagerly made the time to say hello.

The year isn't over yet and there will certainly be more connections to come. President Ralph Boersema heads to Canada in July, where he will meet again with IRTC Society members and update them on our efforts. During that month he will also be meeting with others who support IRTC in prayer and who share our financial burdens. We pray that our Lord will use all these opportunities for fellowship to strengthen our ties as co-laborers for His Kingdom. *// Article: David Portela*



Saulo and Daniela Xavier, with David Portela (left to right)

Charles Mello de Oliveira

Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. — (Galatians 6:6)

Pastor and professor Charles Mello de Oliveira has been a member of the College's Board of Directors since 2016, and started teaching the IRTC's *Christian Worldview* course (HU 105) in October of 2017. After studying theology at the José Manuel da Conceição Seminary in São Paulo, professor Charles received a master's degree in Systematic Theology from Puritan Reformed Seminary, in Grand Rapids, MI, USA. While he is currently enrolled in doctoral studies at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, in Taylors, SC, and will be teaching HU 105 for the IRTC again in this year's fourth term, professor Charles was kind enough to give IRTC a few moments of his time for an interview.

How is the course you teach relevant to a degree in theology?

My course helps students to read the world around them using the Word of God as a lens. To do that, they learn about the processes by which worldviews come to be and about how different worldviews present themselves. Several worldviews are analyzed side by side. Students also learn to interact with other worldviews, appropriating those elements which pass the test of Scripture. This interaction's purpose is to establish points of contact where evangelism can take place.

Why should someone study Reformed Theology, rather than other systems of doctrine?

Because confessional Reformed Theology presents a very stable and coherent doctrinal system. The hermeneutical principles adopted by the Westminster Standards and the Three Forms of Unity (the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort) guarantee results to those who are searching the Scriptures for revealed truth.

What are the benefits of distance learning for theology students?

By their nature, theological studies greatly depend on self-directed reading and research, requiring the student to put in considerable effort. A distance learning environment dovetails nicely with this reality, since it also relies on the student's self-discipline and level of interest. Through distance learning, students from different parts of Brazil and around the world can learn from highly skilled teachers without having to travel to where they live. These courses cost less to maintain while offering many unique methods for students to quickly assimilate



the content they need to learn. Distance learning also allows students to determine the rhythm of their learning experience according to their needs and availability.

How can students maximize what they get out of the classes they attend under this distance learning model?

The first thing that comes to mind is that students should invest in a device or computer that will allow them to quickly and efficiently navigate the systems they need to use. They should organize their schedule ahead of time to ensure that they meet all their course deadlines. They should spend time getting to know the learning management system. Students can use devices such as Kindles and tablets to purchase and read electronic books, which have optimized our access to many sources for study and research. There are also now several online databases with theological periodicals from reformed seminaries around the world. In addition to all of this, students should do their best to learn English, since that is the language in which most of the world's research publications are published.

How has your experience teaching at the IRTC been?

I have been impressed by many students' learning skills. Several of them have masterfully accomplished their tasks. Distance learning engenders an intense level of contact between teacher and student, even if it is digitally mediated. I feel like I still have a lot to learn about how to teach classes over the Internet, but the experience I have had so far has been gratifying.

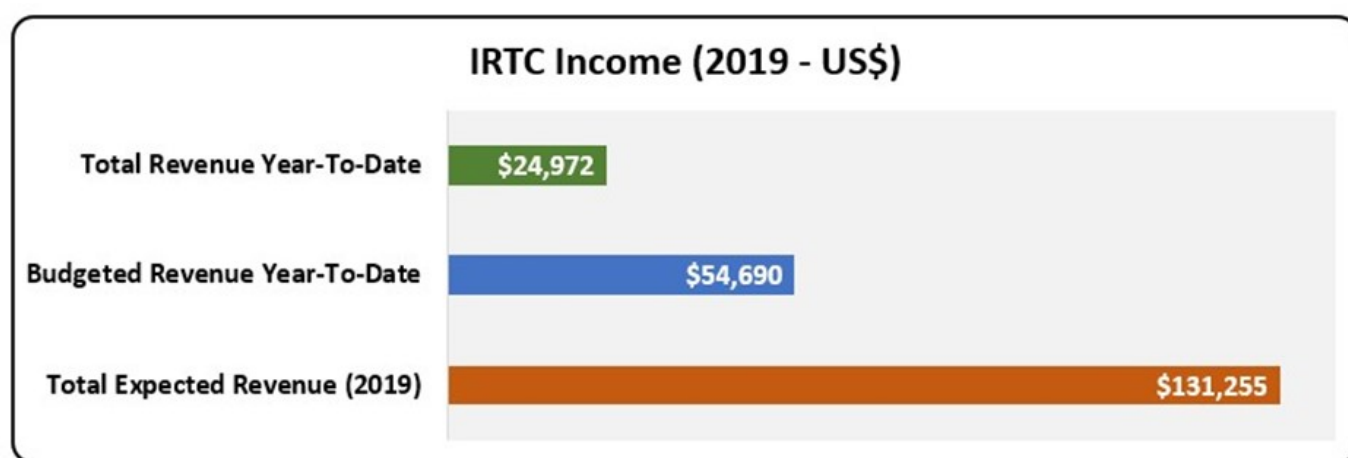
// Interview: Suenia Almeida

Stepping out in Faith

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. – (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Our budget for 2019 has increased substantially from last year's, primarily due to our investment in the personnel needed to align various aspects of the IRTC and to bring it

into its next phase of growth. As of May we find ourselves with revenue about half of what we need to stay on budget (see graph below). Even as we are keenly aware of this gap, we rejoice in the benefits and blessings in the lives of our students, many of whom would not have access to training in Reformed theology, were the IRTC not to exist. Please pray that the Lord will raise the right supporters to assist us in this calling, and that we would remain faithful stewards of the resources He sends our way.



How to Donate

Donations in Canada can be made [through the IRTC Society Web site](#) or by cheque. Cheques should be made out to the “International Reformed Theological College Society” and sent to:

International Reformed Theological College Society
221-2626 Countess Street
Abbotsford, BC V2T 5P3
Canada

US & International donations in US\$ can be made [through our Web site](#) or by check. Checks should be made out to the full name of the College, and mailed to the following address:

International Reformed Theological College
70 Pace Dr.
Bristol, VA 24201
USA

If you have any questions or would like to use a different method, please [contact us by e-mail](#).

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IRTC is a regular publication of the International Reformed Theological College, a ministry offering Portuguese speakers around the world the opportunity to study biblical, Reformed theology through the Internet. You can learn more about our ministry and how to partner with us in prayer and deed at our Web site: <http://irtc.online>.

Please send all feedback and ideas regarding this newsletter to newsletter@irtc.online.

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