



# IRTC

INTERNATIONAL  
REFORMED  
THEOLOGICAL  
COLLEGE  
JUNE-JULY 2021

## The IRTC Expands Its Missionary Outreach

*I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. — Matthew 8:11 ESV*

We rejoice in a new step for the IRTC, as it seeks to fulfill its mandate and to be an agent in the expansion of the Kingdom of God. We have long had students and staff around the world in as cross-cultural missionaries, while others in our community have been busy making God's glory shine much nearer to home. Now the College has taken an academic step towards expanding the Kingdom: our new master's degree in missiology (M.Ms.). The many new courses being introduced joined our existing Christian apologetics and missiology courses to form the Department of Apologetics and Missiology.

According to Dr. Daniel Charles Gomes, an IRTC professor and the new department's coordinator:

*Missiology and Apologetics are not just aspects or details of the Great Commission: both are a necessary task to educate and prepare ministers for evangelical service in the 21st century. The IRTC's Department of Apologetics and Missiology will further equip pastors and leaders to properly handle the word of God, train other pastors and leaders to engage in culture, and teach the local church the truth of God's Word as it pertains to contemporary issues of ethics, history, culture, and especially the debate and issues of religion and faith in the public environment. The study of Christian mission has been conducted from various perspectives and increasingly involves disciplines that have long avoided the topic. At the same time, some missionaries, administrators, and mission teachers also feel estranged from academic missiology. The IRTC has brought together scholars and practitioners, missiologists and academics who consider the Christian mission – in practice or theory, past or present – from their specific academic homes or cross-cultural environments. Reformed academics with similar disciplinary guidelines and mission studies.*

Rev. Ulisses Horta Simões, president of the IRTC, was involved in planning the new degree (and forming the new department) from its earliest stages. He is thus uniquely able to give us some background info about this enterprise, along with answers which may be helpful towards understanding the program's intended target audience, scope and purpose:

### **Why an Apologetics and Missiology department?**

First, let us remember that the department of Christian Apologetics already existed; now, the missiological is added to it. In my opinion, any theology school needs to devote part of its teaching efforts to preparing its students for the fulfillment of the "Great Commission" (Matthew 28:18-20); this investment, in my view, is ingrained into the pastoral task. As an illustration, consider the episode involving Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) and William Carey (1761-1834), called the "Father of Modern Missions": Fuller compared the Asian missionary enterprise, which marked the advent of modern missions, to exploration from a deep gold mine; Carey said, "*I'll go down to the mine while you hold the rope!*" All pastors and other local church leaders must necessarily be missionaries, of two types: those who hold the rope at the first end (I call them "P1 missionaries") and those who go down to the mine (I call them "P2" missionaries). Pastors and leaders who are not either P1 or P2 are mere spectators on the margins of the divine project. Furthermore, the newly-expanded department takes on a direction which clearly targets one of the IRTC's foundational goals.

### **Considering the frequent accusation that Reformed Christians don't do missions, is there or can there be a Reformed missiology?**

I prefer to say that there is—and there must be—a genuinely biblical missiology, and that the authentic Reformed worldview is a model that seeks—and must perseveringly seek—to follow it as closely as possible! The accusation is not suitable to Reformed Christians, in the strict sense of the word; however, it is up

to those who, being Reformed, prioritize certain duties of the Christian faith over the evangelistic duty. William Carey and Andrew Fuller were Reformed; João Ferreira de Almeida (1628-1691), a Portuguese missionary in Indonesia, was Reformed; David Brainerd (1718-1747), Adoniram Judson (1788-1850), and David Livingstone (1813-1873) were Reformed; Robert Reid Kalley (1809-1888) and Ashbel Green Simonton (1833-1867), pioneers in Brazil, were Reformed. Several founders of the IRTC were also Reformed missionaries.

**Which programs will be within the department?**

The standard degree most directly linked to this department will be the Master of Missiology (M.Ms.); however, the student may opt for partial fulfillment, that is, the first third of the Master's Program, earning a "Specialist in Missiology" diploma.

**What differential will the IRTC offer its students in the academic field of missions?**

First, as a Reformed institution, it will base the content taught on the propositions of the symbols of faith that our organization adopts: the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Symbols. This means that the so-called "doctrines of grace" will be non-negotiable in teaching practice and in the topics shared with students. Second, the model idealized in our pedagogical training plan intends to strengthen our students' Christian worldview.

**What is the expected profile of the students who attend these courses?**

We want students who love Christ, who are convinced that they are infinitely indebted to the One who paid the eternal redemption price, who consider the "Great Commission" an order (and not a mere option), and who feel compelled to become radically involved in real missionary endeavors, in the broadest sense, in either of the "points", but especially in 'P2': evangelization and church planting in any ethnic and sociocultural context.

**When are the courses scheduled to start?**

In this year's third term, at the end of July!

**Which areas are most sensitive in preparing future missionaries?**

I'm not a missiologist; I'm a "P1 missionary" apprentice. Therefore, taking a chance on the answer, I would say that they include the perception of everything I mentioned above, following the premise of II Timothy 2.2 ("And what I have heard through many witnesses, this is conveyed to faithful and also reputable men to instruct others"). Books can give us the biographies of missionaries who lived before us; show their qualifications and the challenges they faced; and teach us what can be learned from them and what must be avoided. However, we want more: we want living, experienced missionaries, effectively sharing their experiences with beginners.

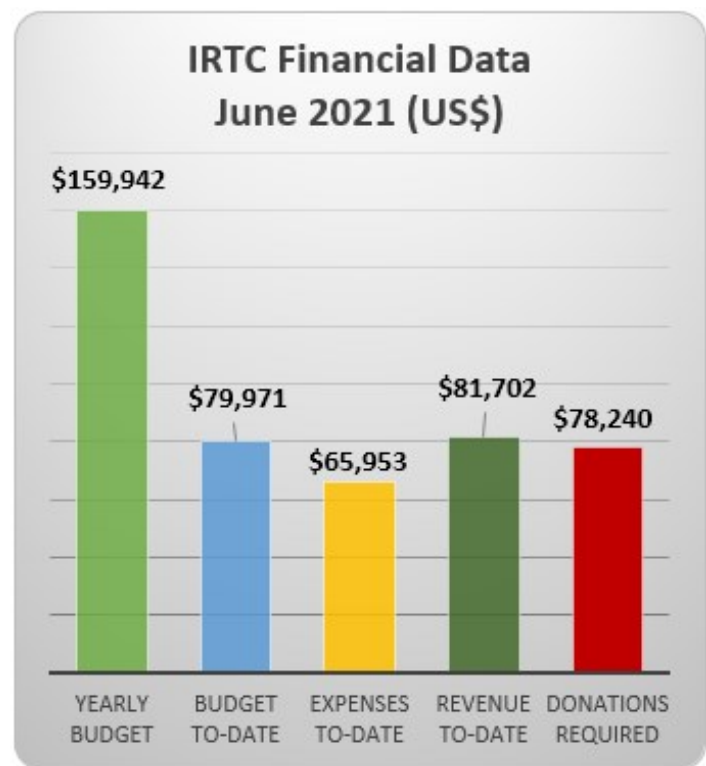
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