



IRTC

INTERNATIONAL
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THEOLOGICAL
COLLEGE

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Pandemic effects on the Body of Christ and the IRTC

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

— 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (ESV)

As we reach the end of another year, we thank God for the IRTC's growth in the past twelve months—it represents new beginnings for many students. We are also thankful for those students who finished their academic journeys with us this year, graduating with their respective degrees. We've chosen two of them to share their experiences in this newsletter, and we plan to share many other such testimonies in the year to come.

In my role as Vice President for Student Affairs, I monitor our students' progress through their classes. In the past year I have seen many of them be discouraged and tempted to give up on their studies. In part, this has happened because of the ever-increasing pressure upon pastors and missionaries to care not only for their own families, but for the families of those to whom they minister, as well. They face ministerial realities that have difficulties that are being exacerbated by the pandemic. Please pray for our staff, our students and our instructors! Ask God to use the IRTC as a source of encouragement, that in the midst of this pandemic sadness we may be able to announce the comfort that can only come from the Holy Spirit of God.

David Portela—Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Graduating: Xavier Tianeque, B.B.S.

The IRTC's theology courses are, in my opinion, incomparable to the other options I had for furthering my studies, because they offer a biblical worldview which integrates every field of knowledge and applies its values to them. Going through this program has helped me understand my role in the Kingdom of God and answer His call to serve in the Mozambican church and in the world at large. The biblical perspective I now have enables me to reach the purpose for which I was created.

As a student, I was required to work hard and overcome many obstacles, in order to reach the end of the program. God was present with me through every step in this journey. It's hard to decide on a favorite class or teacher—each one helped to make me who I am today, praise the Lord. Looking to Him, to whom I present all my studies and service, I hope to start a Christian study center and to foster the habit of reading reformed books within our city, together with many other brothers and sisters who embrace this cause. With the skills we have acquired at the IRTC, we know we will be able to achieve these objectives, helping to foster a healthy church.



For students who want a quality learning experience, I recommend the IRTC, as I always do! To those who are already studying there, I would like to encourage them to persevere. We need more brothers prepared for the field, to serve on the front lines. To those who support the IRTC, let me say you would have a hard time imagining the global effects your help has had on the expansion of God's Kingdom. I thank God because I am one of the results of the efforts and contributions made by these brothers and sisters.

Xavier Tianeque—Nampula, Mozambique

Graduating: Giovan Amaral Casteluber, M.B.S.

The major advantage of studying for my master's degree at the IRTC was the flexibility I had in terms of my schedule. Serving in ministry is an endeavor full of unexpected time commitments. Distance learning allows the teacher (and the student) to interact from home asynchronously, without having to be present at the same location or at the same time. In addition to these benefits, the IRTC has faithful instructors who exemplify Christian living. This gives its courses a value which goes much beyond their academic content—they present a unique opportunity for the development of piety.

As a student I was able to interact with brothers and sisters from all over the world, through our written discussion boards. I probably would not have been as outgoing if we had been together in person! I was also taught by teachers who lived far away, in other continents, such as Rev. Frans Leonard Schalkwijk, a Christian man through and through. This brother taught me much about tolerance towards brothers of other traditions, changing my perspective and fostering love in me for all those who are part of the Kingdom, coming from all peoples, tongues, nations, and Christian denominations.

I wholeheartedly believe in the IRTC's development and growth. As they update their system to include new technologies and to



A rare occasion, especially during the pandemic: IRTC President Ulisses Horta Simões (left), is pleased to personally present the M.B.S. diploma to Rev. Giovan Amaral Casteluber

meet new challenges, I believe the staff will continue to provide the highest quality of support. The people who work at the IRTC do so as a sacrifice of praise, giving their best to the Lord.

If the IRTC can maintain the quality of its instructors and the excellence of its administrative and support staff as it grows, this growth will be exponential. The College has a lot to contribute to the Kingdom! We pray for our Lord to come soon, but until then, we pray that we may see this ministry multiply its fruit, towards our final goal: *Soli Deo Gloria*.

*Giovan Amaral Casteluber
Belo Horizonte, MG, Brasil*

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