



## New admin staff to serve new students

*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. — Lamentations 3:22-23 (ESV)*

God has continued to bless the IRTC with sustained growth. We enter our third term of 2022 with 282 course registrations by 164 students, an all-time high. The increase in students to serve has also meant an increase in workload, which is why it has been a blessing to welcome several new administration members in 2022.

The first of these is our new President, **Rev. Fernando de Almeida**. After Rev. Ulisses Simões announced his need to step down from the presidency last year, for health reasons, the IRTC Board interviewed several candidates and ultimately elected Rev. Fernando to the position. He was inducted as our new President on January 22.

Rev. Fernando brings with him a wide variety of academic and administrative experience. At Mackenzie Presbyterian University, in São Paulo, Brazil, he served as an instructor, a Chaplain, and the Chancellor's Chief of Staff, from 2007 to 2014. After moving to Newark, New Jersey, he first ministered at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church until 2020, after which he began his current ministry at Ebenezer Presbyterian Church (PCA).

**Rev. Alexandre Lessa** is our new Vice-President for Academic Affairs and also joined our administrative staff in January. He has been busy improving our curriculum's consistency across courses and departments, encouraging our instructors to dig deeper into the tools and methods that can make the distance learning experience more effective and enjoyable, for both the student and the teacher.

Currently serving as a minister in Vitória da Conquista, Bahia, Brazil, Rev. Alexandre also has an overflowing academic resumé, with degrees in theology, philosophy, and



*Left-to-right: Revs. Fernando de Almeida, Alexandre Lessa, and Cláudio Mota joined the IRTC's administration team in 2022*

Christian education, along with specialization courses in blended learning, discourse analysis and foundational aspects of learning, among many others. He is known for his attention to detail, his consistency in following up until things are done and his graciousness in conveying feedback which demands difficult change.

Lastly, in April, **Rev. Cláudio Mota** joined our band of brothers, as Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs. His long experience working for the Banco do Brasil (Bank of Brazil) made him the perfect candidate to help us track our donations, scholarships, course fees and expenses across several countries. He has also taken on the responsibility for interacting with the Instituto de Apoio à FITRef (IAF), the institute that was started in 2020 to support the IRTC in Brazil. He lives in Salvador, Bahia, where he ministers at the Metropolitan Presbyterian Church at Stiep.

These three men, together with Vice President for Student Affairs, David Portela (with us since 2018), make up the IRTC's Executive Committee, whose mandate is to implement the Board's resolutions and to make operational decisions between IRTC Board meetings. Please keep these men in your prayers as they take on the many tasks required to properly run our growing college!

# How are your donations used?

While the growth of our student body has also meant an increase in student fees, most of our budget is still dependent on donations from our gracious supporters. We would therefore be remiss if we didn't properly inform you of how your donations are used to further the cause of Reformed theological training in Portuguese, around the world. And yes, we mean around the world! While most of our students are still in South America, where we started, a full 25% of our student body now hails from almost every other continent.

**Infrastructure** – These students around the world access the Internet at a wide variety of speeds (some very slow), on a wide variety of devices. Some of them don't even have a computer or tablet. Rather, they use their mobile phones to handle all their course work. This means we must have a fast, responsive system on the server side, to ensure all our students can access the content they need without undue delays, even when many users are online at the same time. In the first semester of 2022, we implemented a new version of our learning management system (LMS). Students have been using it since the beginning of our third quarter (July-Oct) and have already provided some great feedback. Before the end of this year, we still plan to purchase and implement server-side software to enable it to deal with even more simultaneous users, at faster loading speeds. This will prepare us for continued growth in 2023 and beyond.

**Staff & Instructors** – In order to handle this growth, God has graciously brought many of His servants together to manage the IRTC's operational areas. At the same time, He has been generous in providing new instructors to replace others who left to attend to family or ministry. These are all individuals firmly committed to a Reformed biblical worldview and highly skilled in their areas of expertise. In every aspect, we can witness the IRTC growing in quality and excellence, for the glory of our Lord. Your generosity helps the IRTC retain and bless these talented brothers and sisters in return for their time and effort.

**Scholarships** – This same generosity has allowed us to provide a limited number of students with scholarships. One donor set up a large scholarship fund for a group of pastors in Angola who are enrolled in our M.Div. program. Others have contributed to scholarships in general. For years we have allowed our students' spouses to study the same number of courses as they do, free of charge. This

has encouraged many pastor's wives to join their husbands in their studies, giving them tools to support one another in ministry and to sharpen each other in God's Word. As we attract more and more students from the developing world, there are always opportunities to assist us in this endeavor.

**Communications** – One final important area to which we direct some of our budget is to reach those who would be interested and most blessed by the courses offered at the IRTC. Primarily, this has involved directed social media advertising to Portuguese-speakers around the world seeking Reformed theological education. Some of our staff sought out formal technical training in this area in 2020, and the results have been seen in 2021 and 2022. We continue to refine our advertisement campaigns at the beginning of every quarter, seeking to be proper stewards by spending better, rather than spending more.

We are currently on track to be just a little under budget this year, which means we have been successful in containing our costs to below what they were projected to be, even during a highly inflationary year. **Nevertheless, we still need to raise approximately \$82,000 by the end of the year if we are to meet our budget.** Please prayerfully consider whether God has already placed resources in your care that could be applied to this purpose. If that is so, you can find instructions for donating below. If you have any questions, please write us at [contact@irtc.online](mailto:contact@irtc.online).

## Support the IRTC

**Donations in Canada** can be made through the IRTC Society's Web site ([http://irtcsociety.ca/?page\\_id=93](http://irtcsociety.ca/?page_id=93)) or by cheque made out to the "International Reformed Theological College Society" and sent to:

*International Reformed Theological College Society  
PO Box 838 Stn A  
Abbotsford, BC V2T 7A2 Canada*

**US & International donations in US\$** can be made by PayPal through our site (<https://irtc.online/donations/>) or by check, made out to the "International Reformed Theological College" and sent to:

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