



IRTC

INTERNATIONAL REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Mentors enable students to learn while they serve in local ministry

Distance learning has become an increasingly popular option among students seeking theological education. Institutions like the IRTC are offering distance learning programs to enable their students to enhance their knowledge and ministry skills **while staying in their fields of labor**. In this learning process, the role of **local mentor** becomes essential. We spoke with two recent graduates and one of their mentors to gain a better understanding of this academic and spiritual partnership.

João Luciano de Medeiros (B.B.S.) highlighted the advantage of taking courses at the IRTC while continuing to serve his local church and leadership: "...I was able to reconcile theory and practice...sharing what I was learning in my field of work and having the full support of my ecclesiastical mentor." His pastor and mentor, Rev. Welinton Kaiser, provided him with support and guidance to understand complex concepts and apply them in his ministry. Regular interactions with his mentor also allowed João Luciano to ask questions and receive feedback on his work: "...my mentor helped me develop skills and knowledge that I could not have achieved alone."

Rev. Kaiser shares the view that the mentor's role is to facilitate the student's learning, but points out that the student is not the only one who benefits in this relationship: "...accompanying candidate João Luciano de Medeiros as an ecclesiastical mentor on his academic journey was a unique experience. I was able to witness his growth in all aspects: general culture, communication, and especially theological depth. We met weekly to discuss the course, clarify doubts, and analyze how the content he had learned could be practically applied in pastoral life. I confess that my dear brother Luciano was not the only person who grew through this experience!"

Another recent graduate, Raphael Rocha Quintão (B.B.S.), also emphasized the fundamental role that mentors played in his learning process. He shared that the guidance and support offered by mentors helped him overcome academic obstacles and grow in his ministry. "Mentors help us apply theological concepts in practical situations and make informed decisions in our ministries," Raphael explained. "My first mentor, Rev. Ben-Hur, played a crucial role in directing and supporting



João Luciano de Medeiros (right) with his mentor, Rev. Welinton Kaiser (left)

me in my studies when I still didn't understand practically anything. He was always very helpful, answering all of my questions, and indicating further reading in order to gain a better understanding, always with great patience, since I was still inexperienced in the Reformed faith. Rev. Ben-Hur left when he changed churches, and in his place came Rev. Marcelo Germano. His main contribution was the trust he showed in me. He gave me space to teach Sunday School classes and to preach during the service. He gave me a vote of confidence to lead the church's deacons. He pastored me and we both shared our sufferings. Both my mentors had very special qualities, and I thank God for their lives."

Raphael also emphasized the importance of distance learning so that he could continue leading various ministries in his local church: "The main and most valuable virtue of learning theology online is that time for church relationships remains. The place where Christianity is lived is in the world, but the place to cultivate it is in the church. It is in the church that I am



Raphael Rocha Quintão (center left) with officers from his local church

fed, share my problems, pastor and am pastored. It is where I exercise my leadership and am led. It is in the church that we have this experience. My mentors, because they came from cities in the interior of Brazil, had to leave their churches in order to attend seminary. It is common for seminary students who attend classes in person to have to abstain from having an active church life due to the rush of their studies. This has been a great joy for me: to learn things in my IRTC classes and to apply those lessons in church life.”

This collaboration between mentors and students is crucial for the success of distance learning programs. The active involvement of mentors in the students' learning process helps students feel confident and motivated in their educational and ministerial journey. Through their support and guidance, tutors empower students to face the challenges of ministry and apply the knowledge acquired in their ministry activities. The experiences narrated above illustrate how this partnership can be beneficial for students' development and growth. For these reasons, the IRTC requires every one of our students to be accompanied by a mentor in their academic and spiritual journey through their studies.

The IRTC visits Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

From March 7th to 9th, 2023, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (GPTS) held its traditional spring theological conference with the theme "Infinite Splendor: God's Attributes for All of Life." The IRTC was present at the event with a booth to promote the institution, led by its President (Rev. Fernando de Almeida) and the Chairman of the Board of Directors (Rev. Charles Oliveira). The IRTC's Honorary President, Rev. Ralph Boersema, and his wife Lucille visited the event on the last day.

All 500 conference participants received an IRTC promotional brochure in their welcome kit, showcasing the importance and breadth of our work while inviting them to become our supporters. Moreover, several attendees approached the booth to learn more about our school and obtain further information through other promotional materials.

The IRTC and GPTS have at least two points of contact: the first being Rev. Charles Oliveira, who is a member of the Board of Directors for both institutions and serves

as our Chairman. The second is Rev. Breno Macedo, who teaches three preaching courses for the IRTC and is an adjunct professor of applied theology at GPTS. We pray for God's richest blessings upon this seminary and anticipate many partnership opportunities in the future.



Revs. Charles Oliveira, Ralph Boersema and Fernando Almeida represented the IRTC at the conference

\$208,890
2023 Budget

27%

\$57,534
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