



IRTC

INTERNATIONAL
REFORMED
THEOLOGICAL
COLLEGE

JANUARY 2020

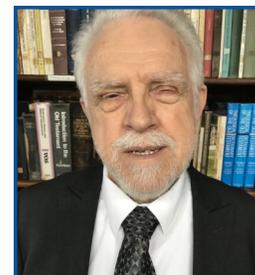
Rejoicing in Christ As We Enter the New Year

The IRTC welcomes all new and returning students to a special year at a special college. This is the 20th year of the first Reformed school of distance higher education in Portuguese. We are most thankful to the Lord for keeping us on his narrow path of truth and we rejoice in the students who long for this kind of God-honoring growth through biblical mentoring.

May you, our students, be led by the words of Ecclesiastes 12:11-14. The words of the Lord, our one Shepherd, spur us on and keep us firmly fixed in a life of obedience. There is no end to tiring study and writing books and papers, especially if done for wrong reasons and bad motives. "Fear God and keep his command-

ments, for this is the whole duty of man." Your instructors only seek to help you understand the Bible. Neither their study nor yours should ever try to improve on the Bible. All we can do is to labor to remove barriers of sin and human shortcomings, so that the Shepherd's words may shine brightly and goad us on to fear God more and keep his commandments.

Warmly,
Ralph Boersema
IRTC President



Equipping Workers for the Harvest

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." — Matthew 9:37-38

In the celebrations surrounding the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, much was said about the need for good theology, reformed, centered on Christ and upholding the Word of God as the only rule of faith and practice. Unfortunately, as time went by, we saw that movement fade. We must diligently resist this tendency. Good Christ-centered, Bible-based theology is always essential.

For nearly 20 years, the International Reformed Theological College has been striving to have this call for faithfulness to God and the Scriptures remain loud in the heart of each believer. It has done so not with empty words, but with deeds that exalt the name of Christ above all. Being faithful to the Scriptures means, among other things, dedication in our Christian walk, in the content of our teaching, in the academic qualifications of our instructors, and in reaching more and more Christians around the world.

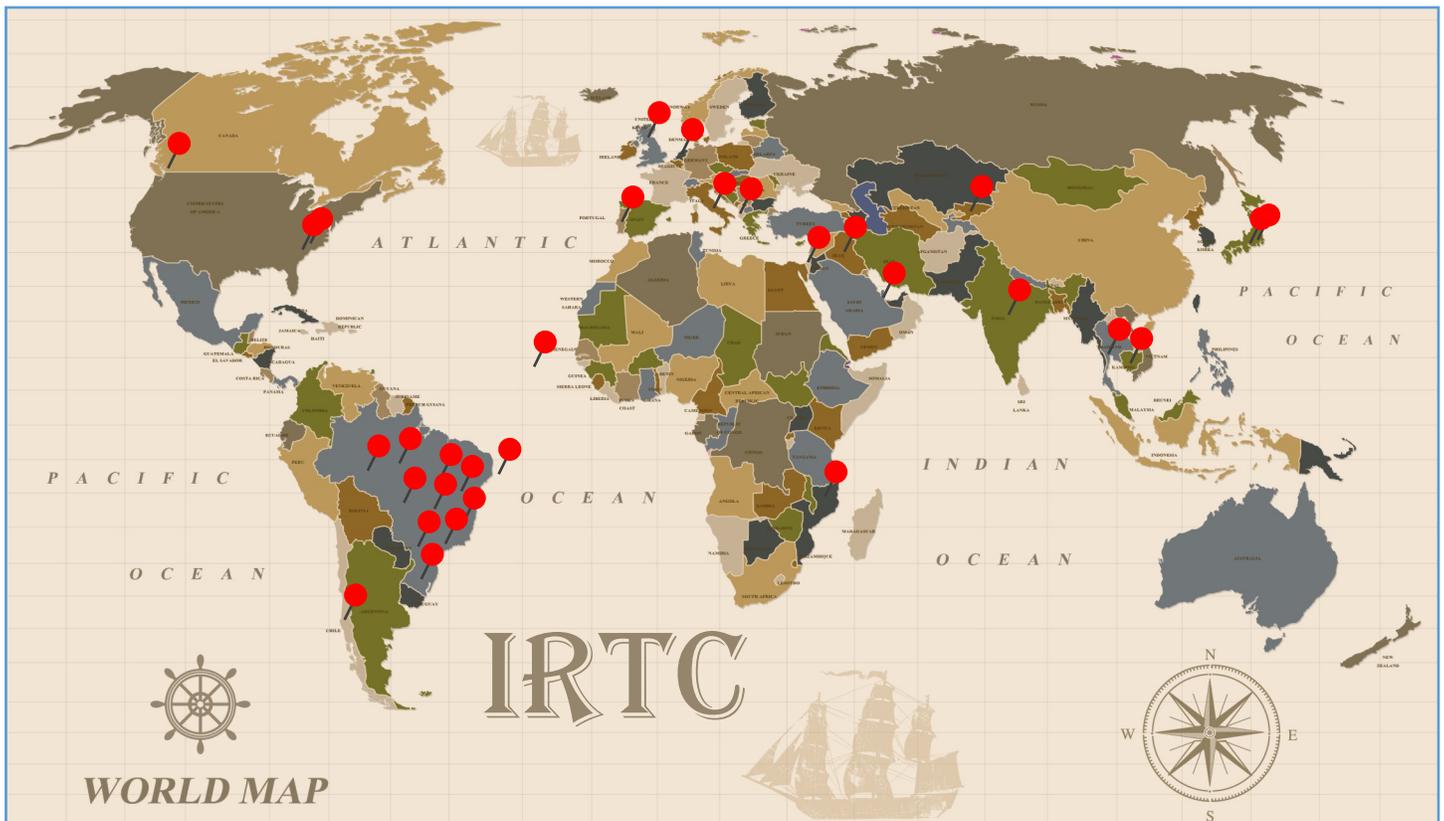
We aim to provide quality, continuing education in Portuguese to pastors, theologians and leaders, who will in turn spread faithful doctrine to the people they minister to. Because we are committed to teaching the whole of the infalli-

ble Scripture and we are convinced that the Reformed faith correctly understands the Bible, we also train Christian schoolteachers in this Biblical perspective.

In 2019, we were present in 16 countries around the world: Albania, Brazil, Cape Verde, Canada, Cambodia, Chile, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mozambique, Portugal, Qatar, Kyrgyzstan Thailand, and the United States, providing internationally recognized distance education. We dream of more.

Why does this matter? Take Japan as an example. Of the entire Japanese population (about 128,000,000), only 0.5% say they are Christians. Most Japanese identify themselves as Buddhist and Shinto at the same time. Typically, people are not interested in religious beliefs themselves, but rather in practicing a functional religion. From the Japanese perspective, every religion adds to the mix and is welcome, as long as it is not exclusive.

As one of the least evangelized countries in the world, Japan is home to around 200,000 Brazilians. There are more than 7000 churches in the archipelago, but they are decreasing in number. Church growth is at a rate of -0.4% per year. In 2007, there were an estimated 447 evangelical Portuguese-speaking congregations in Japan, led by about 350 pastors. These evangelical churches are usually started by someone



who, coming to work in a factory, has been converted or could not find a place to congregate. As the cell started at home acquires more followers, the leader is called a pastor. These are people from Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal backgrounds. Of all these Portuguese-speaking Christian churches, few preach the true gospel. There is only one pastor with reformed

theological training working among Brazilians across all of Japan. Our students in the country are working hard to reform their churches, as they progress through their studies. The field is vast, and the workers are few, as our Master has said. The IRTC presents itself as a vital tool for the propagation of the true Christ-centered gospel in this corner of the world.

Donor Update

We enter 2020 with some reserves left, but it is important to avoid another shortfall this year, so that we can keep those reserves for the future if they are needed. **We seek your help to meet a budget of USD\$155,000.** Please pray with us that churches and individuals will donate to the IRTC's mission year-round, allowing us to continue to provide our students with biblical theological training that transforms hearts, families, churches and societies.

Support IRTC

Donations in Canada can be made using credit cards or PayPal through the IRTC Society Web site (http://irtcsociety.ca/?page_id=93) 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

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

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