



# IRTC

INTERNATIONAL  
REFORMED  
THEOLOGICAL  
COLLEGE

APRIL 2020

## God is Doing New Things!

*Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

—Ephesians 4:15-16 (ESV)

With great joy we have previously announced new developments in our institution in 2020. What God has done throughout the years, and more recently, certainly is an answer to continuous prayers.

The significant increase in the number of new students, as well as the growth in course registrations has happened at the same time as an increase in the number of courses offered. In the second term we again have a record number of students and registrations! However, historically speaking, the presidential succession is new in a special way. It has never happened before and raises a variety of expectations.

In our last edition we expressed our deep gratitude to Rev. Ralph Boersema for the twenty years dedicated to the creation, development and growth of the IRTC around the world. In his new position as honorary President of the College, Rev. Boersema will continue teaching courses and advising the President and the Board of Directors. Now, we would like to introduce our new president, Rev. Ulisses Simões more closely, sharing a bit about his ministerial career and his vision for the next steps of our college.

### Rev. Ulisses, tell us a bit about your ministerial life:

My first theological preparation was at the Seminário Presbiteriano do Norte (Northern Presbyterian Seminary), in Recife, during the last 4 years under the direction of Rev. Frans Leonard Schalkwijk. At this time, I was already married and working as an engineer. Besides him, I had the privilege to sit under Rev. Ralph Boersema, Rev. Pieter Meijer and Rev. Elias Medeiros, among others who were particularly important to my academic training. I pastored



*Rev. Ulisses & family, in photo taken at his mother's 90th birthday in 2018. Back row: Marcela (daughter in law), Israel (son), Rev. Ulisses, Ulisses Filho (son). Seated: Maiza (wife), Suzana (daughter), Cecy (mother), Thiago (son in law). Grandchildren Matheus and Giovana on laps.*

the Presbyterian Church of Bahia, in Salvador as associate pastor, and then as senior pastor for a short time. While there, I lectured and even directed the then Presbyterian Institute of Bahia. In 1988, due to medical issues with my son, I transferred to Belo Horizonte; that same year I began teaching at the Presbyterian Seminary "Rev. Denoel Nicodemos Eller" (alongside of my pastorate). I served there as instructor, department coordinator, academic coordinator and lastly director. I stepped down last December 31st.

### How did you become involved with the IRTC?

Back in 1985, on the porch at Prof. Ralph Boersema's house, while he was still a missionary in northeastern Brazil, we had a conversation about a certain model of distance theological education. In 1999, he honored me with the invitation to become part of the founding group of the association that created the IRTC, in 2000. Later I took part in the Board of Directors, of which I was moderator for several years. The IRTC ministerial project is one that I carry fondly in my heart and mind.

## How do you view the potential of the IRTC, currently and for the next 20 years?

If this question had been put to me prior to the coronavirus pandemic, the answer would have been less clear cut; the pandemic has sharpened perceptions in this area. The IRTC has a history of being somewhat of a pioneer in its field in the Portuguese language. There are three pillars: online distance education in theology, emphasis on co-participation of the local church, and a confessionally-Reformed framework. The coronavirus scenario ends up greatly strengthening the use of the internet in education. This is not different for theological education. The IRTC now has a much greater field of action to occupy.

## Is there any part of the world the IRTC has not yet reached and could therefore bless through its work?

Certainly! The Portuguese language is one of the ten languages most spoken in the world, with approximately 250 million speakers. Among the Portuguese-speaking nations, I believe we have the challenge to establish ourselves in Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, all in Africa and in East Timor in Asia. We could strengthen our presence in Europe as well. I believe we could help prepare workers for the evangelism of India from the province of Goa, which is a former Portuguese colony overseas; the same could happen with China, through Macau. I think the IRTC can carry out a similar relevant role in all continents, not only with Portuguese speaking countries as springboards, but also through Portuguese speaking Christians all over the world. The period in which we are living calls for this!

## 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. Cheques should be made out to the "International Reformed Theological College Society" and sent to:

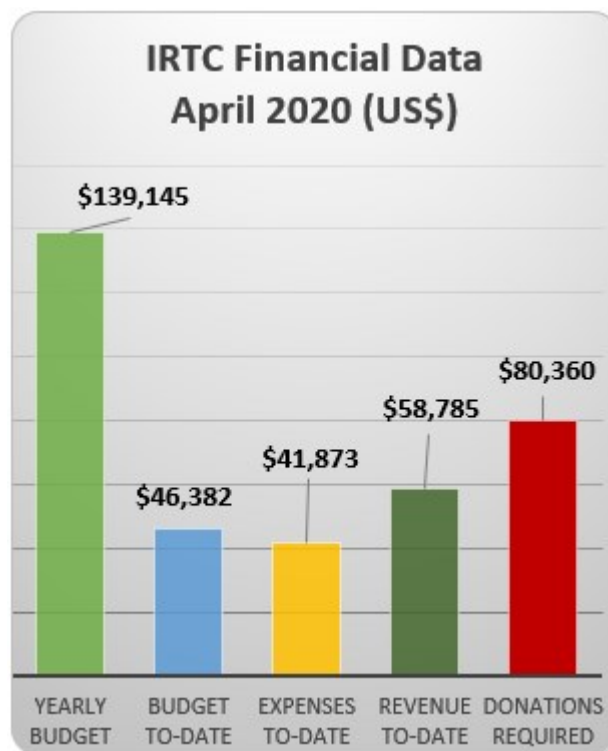
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## Donor Update

By God's grace we were able to begin our second term on the 20th of April, again with a record number of students and course registrations. We are also thankful that the pandemic did not affect our instructors or courses offered. The IRTC remains strong, growing and reaching more and more students with the reformed theology that covers all areas of life, placing Christ in the center of everything. This month we were able to save a little more, in relation to our budget. We are thankful for the donations received from individuals and churches that are embracing this mission! We trust the Lord will continue to bring those that He himself is preparing to meet our ministerial needs: **we still need to raise USD\$ 80,360 by the end of the year, if we are not to drain our reserves.** We are grateful for your prayers and your support and invite those who wish to participate in this work to contribute with us, using the information elsewhere in this newsletter.



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