



INTERNATIONAL REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

TEACHING REFORMED THEOLOGY ONLINE
TO PORTUGUESE SPEAKERS WORLDWIDE

Newsletter

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“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”

John 17:17

The Sanctifier Spirit

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Today it is not difficult to find books in Christian bookstores that speak about the Holy Spirit as the “forgotten” person of the Trinity. Some claim that the church desperately needs to rediscover the Spirit because it is crucial for a spiritual revival. Of course, it is true that only He can work true revival. However, we soon realize that the emphasis in this literature often falls on the search for a transcendent experience with the Spirit, disassociated from God's Word. For this and other reasons, clear teaching about the Holy Spirit and His work becomes extremely necessary so that excesses are avoided and divisions, which are not a characteristic of a life filled with the Spirit, are prevented. So we ask, who is the Holy Spirit, what does He do and how can we receive His benefits?

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is presented in the Scriptures by means of two words: *ruach* (Hebrew) and *pneuma* (Greek). These two words are also used for “wind”. The association with wind is deliberate. The Spirit is analogous to the wind because of His invisibility and unpredictability while assuming a noticeable presence: *“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”* (John 3:8) The Holy Spirit is like the wind, but He is not an impersonal force; He is a Person. He thinks (1 Corinthians 2:11), speaks (Acts 8:29), can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), and has a will (1 Corinthians 12:11). He is not only like the wind. He is not only a Person. He is God Himself. Lying to the Spirit is the same as lying to God (Acts 5:3-4). The disciples were commanded to baptize *“in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”* (Matthew 28:19) Thus, the Holy Spirit has all of the attributes found in the

Godhead: He is Almighty, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Gracious, Loving, Merciful, etc.

What does He do?

The Holy Spirit regenerates people (John 6:63), applies justification to us (1 Corinthians 6:11), inhabits believers (Romans 8:9), sanctifies (2 Corinthians 3:18), baptizes (1 Corinthians 6:19) seals (Ephesians 1:13-14), and fills the believers (Ephesians 5:18). The Holy Spirit, however, does not act disassociated from the Word of God, for He is the “Spirit of truth” (John 14:17) and uses the truth to sanctify and fill the believers (John 17:17; Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:16). In fact, He is the divine author of all Scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21).



It is He who enables believers to proclaim the good news (Acts 1:8), and it is He who produces in them the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

How can we receive His benefits?

John 14:16 says *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever...”* The word Helper in the Greek is *parakletos*, which means helper, intercessor, advocate. This word has a legal

connotation of someone representing another and defending his cause. He defends the children of God against the enemies of the world and against the enemies within their own hearts. Jesus said that the Father would send another Paraclete because He was also a Paraclete. 1 John 2:1 says, *“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”* The key to receiving the benefits of the Spirit is to understand, through the Word of truth, the work of the first Advocate – Jesus Christ. The Spirit's work is to point to Christ, making us remember what He did for us on the cross, and who we are in Him. When facing doubts, temptations, discouragements, fears, He “whispers” to our hearts that we need not fear. His role is to make the work of the Lord Jesus beautiful to our eyes and to our hearts. The Holy Spirit did not come to point to Himself. The Lord Jesus said, *“He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”* (John 16:14) The evidence of the role of the Spirit in us is to contemplate, love and enjoy Christ and His work. The Spirit is not a self-centered person.

A Spirit-filled life, therefore, will demonstrate love for the Word of God, the fruit of the Spirit, a selfless life, appreciation for the application of the gospel to believers' lives, and a desire to witness to this gospel. Are our lives characterized by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit? Are old habits and temperaments progressively being put away? We have everything we need for transformed lives, even though they will not yet be perfect in the present age, because we have two Advocates (Helpers) – one in heaven and another on earth.

Note:

Bible quotations are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

FIEL Conference in Portugal

The Fiel Publishing House held a Christian leadership conference in Lisbon, Portugal, March 23-26, 2015. The conference theme was "Conquering the World." Our Brazilian promotional rep, Sara M. C. Leite and her husband Túlio (a member of our Board of Directors) were there. Sara brings the following report:



"This year, I again had the thankful pleasure of participating in the Fiel conference in Portugal. I could enjoy the fellowship with Portuguese from various locations, with Angolans, Brazilians living in the country of the event and even a brother of Sao Tome and Principe. In order to promote our college, I put up a stand with a banner, gifts and promotional brochures. I talked to several brothers who showed interest in attending the college. I left flyers with brothers who were willing to take them to their churches. It was well-liked by those who stopped by the stand. The fact that the IRTC offers Masters degrees (e. g., M. Div.) among its programs of study is an advantage for many who already have

bachelor's degrees and would like to complement their courses with a post-graduate degree in theology.

I was pleased to meet professor Pieter Meijer, a founding member of the College who was temporarily serving a church in Portugal, in the Algarve region. I also met his wife Alida.



One of the interesting things this year was the increase in participation by students of theology.

We also visited the work of a local Baptist church that gives the use of a house they own, for homeschooling organized by parents and teachers of the church. The church also has a work that provides nursing services for the elderly in their own homes, as well as providing a day care for seniors.

We visited a Baptist Seminary and had the joy of seeing books in their library, that were sent by Fiel Publishing House. We reiterate that there is a great demand for Reformed books in Portugal. We made an appeal to other publishing houses to donate books to the seminary for students to have access to good Reformed theological content."

Why and How to Support the IRTC

"You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

(2 Timothy 2:1-2 – ESV)

The College has set a goal of raising USD92,000.00 in 2015. This will allow us to meet our expenses for this year, as well as implementing our need for a full-time person in Administration, to be engaged in 2016. Our goal suggests that we need to raise an average per month of USD\$7,666.67. Thus far our income for the year from all sources totals about US\$21,000.00. This means that we are not on track to attain our goal. We are USD\$18,000.00 short of where we would be if we were achieving average monthly amounts. We are praying that the Lord may bless us with another USD\$71,000.00 by the end of the current year.

We invite you to join us in honoring and preparing those who are striving to serve the Lord in teaching, preaching and sharing of the Word for the advancement of the Kingdom of God on earth. You can contribute financially, in prayer, and also in promoting our educational ministry to Portuguese-speaking people. If you would like to make a donation, visit the "Donations" page on our website (www.pro-rege.net/ds14.htm). There you will find all the information necessary for making your contribution in the USA. Canadian donors, please make your donations at www.irtcsociety.ca. *Soli Deo Gloria.*

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