



# INTERNATIONAL REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

TEACHING REFORMED THEOLOGY ONLINE  
TO PORTUGUESE SPEAKERS WORLDWIDE

Newsletter

www.pro-rege.net

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*“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved,  
a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”*  
2 Timothy 2:15 ESV

## Orthographic Agreement Among Portuguese-Speaking Countries Prof. Sebastião Guimarães

**There are eight countries in the world that have Portuguese as their official language. They constitute the “CPLP” - Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, namely: Brazil, Portugal, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, and East Timor. Each of these countries has its peculiarities in the use of the language. This resulted in problems, ranging from practical difficulties in the linguistic relationships among these countries to official restrictions imposed on the international recognition of our language.**

Let me explain. There were so many differences in language usages among the various Portuguese-speaking countries that it reached the point of publishers contracting “translators” to make the text compatible when a work by a Brazilian author was published in Portugal or a work by a Portuguese author was published in Brazil. At the UN, Portuguese could not be included among the official languages, even though it is spoken by a significant number of inhabitants of the planet. To the question, “Why not recognize Portuguese as an official language,” The UN replied, “Which Portuguese? South American? European? African?”

Portuguese was the only language of the West that had two official spellings. French has only one. Spanish has a common spelling in 21 countries. It is true that English has two spellings (e. g., center/centre, colour/color), but this is a language that has no spelling fixed by law. Both forms are considered correct.

When a Brazilian pursues post-graduate studies in Portugal, he/she has to produce the dissertation or thesis according to the local spelling. The Portuguese are adamant about this.

Among many Portuguese-speaking authorities, this situation gave birth to the desire to see their language have a unified spelling. Thus the idea of signing a major agreement for the spelling among the eight countries was born. The idea prospered, even as many positioned themselves against it and others in favor of it.

Note that we are dealing with an agreement with regard to spelling! I stress this because there were participants who condemn the agreement, arguing that it is impossible to unify the oral expression of the language, which indeed was not even among the goals. It is absolutely impossible to control speech by decree. The intention was only to unify written spelling, as a set of commonly adopted conventions.



### Historical Efforts

Already in 1904, Portugal made enormous efforts to organize internally its own spelling—it wanted to end what was called “the spelling anarchy” that reigned there. In 1907, it was Brazil that produced a project that also denounced a “spelling anarchy” and intended to promote internal unification. This project failed. In 1911, Portugal managed to make a reform and the situation looked like this: Portugal had an official spelling and Brazil did not. In 1915, Brazil took the initiative to seek a spelling unification between the two main Portuguese-speaking countries. The intention was to

harmonize the 1907 project with the Portuguese reform of 1911, but the desired unification was not achieved.

In 1943, a “Luso-Brazilian Spelling Convention” was signed. It was severely rocked in 1945, when new principles were adopted that were unacceptable for Brazilians. For example, there was the return of certain consonants that were previously dropped, in favor of Brazilian practice. It was at this time that Portugal abolished the umlaut, which only now is being removed in Brazil. In 1971, several changes were made in Brazil that reduced divergences with Portugal. Several accents were dropped from certain words.

### How the New Agreement Came About

The first meeting to discuss the current agreement took place in 1986 in Rio de Janeiro. The proposal was surprising. Many considered it to be too radical, but in a second round in 1990 in old Lisbon a document was approved, which was supposed to come into effect on January 1, 1994. The Brazilian Congress approved it already in 1995. Portugal resisted. There was a reason for this. About 0.5% of the words would be changed in Brazil, while in Portugal 1.5%, three times as many. For the first time a spelling reform would favor the Brazilian way of writing. Only in July 2008 Portugal signed it.

The Agreement entered into force in Brazil on January 01, 2009, although not obligatory. It only became mandatory in January 2013. However, the government preferred to give more time for its implementation because of doubts and controversies that still persisted. It was established then that the obligation would come into effect on January 01, 2016.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> IRTC Module of 2015



The classes for the current 10-week module of studies were scheduled for the period between April 20 and June 26. The courses being offered are of great value to every man and woman of God who wants to grow in knowledge of the Creator and Savior of the world. Wherever the internet can be accessed, the IRTC online offers students convenience and flexibility for balancing their studies and other life responsibilities. The 2nd module courses are the following: Teaching Basics, Evangelization, Hebrew, Hebrews and General Epistles, Prophetic Books of the OT, Exegetical Research Methodology, and Contemporary Theology.

### Let us pray for Nepal

Nepal was hit on April 25 by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake, leaving more than 6,600 dead and thousands injured, and lacking food, water and shelter.



Let us pray that the Lord will be merciful to the country and provide sufficient emergency resources for the relief of such enormous pain and suffering. Let us pray for conversions in that country, and that this tragedy will result in the saving of many lives. Let us pray that the Lord would send missionaries to Nepal! Remember that: *"...The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."* (James 5:16 ESV)

## How to Know God's Will

Prof. Frans Leonard Schalkwijk in his book *Meditations of a Pilgrim* (Cultura Cristã Publishing House) brings valuable lessons for strengthening the faith of every Christian.



One of those lessons is how to know God's will. If you would like to know God's will for a decision that needs to be made, Pastor Frans Schalkwijk offers the following counsel:

- "Write down Psalms 25.12; 32.8; 143.10 (God's promises and our prayers).
- Then make two columns.
- In the left column, place a large "+" (positive), and on the right a "-" (negative).
- While praying, start to write the arguments for (+) and against (-).
- Then write down your preliminary conclusion.
- For a few weeks, place it before the Lord and talk about it with godly brothers and sisters.
- Add or change your arguments for or against.
- Write your final conclusion, placing it before the Lord.
- Having peace, walk ("a stopped horse cannot be guided"). Walk carefully, and
- Trust that God will put an obstacle in your way, if necessary, based on Romans 8:28.."

*"Teach me to do your will, for you are my God..."* (Psalm 143:10 ESV) According to Pastor Schalkwijk, the Lord "usually guides us through his Word, by circumstances or the advice of other godly persons." In our quest to know God's will for a specific situation in our lives, may we never forget that "the first step towards a solution is to always want to do God's will and not only know His will. If our heart says, 'Yes, Lord, by Your grace, I want to do Your will', the Holy Spirit will guide us. His leading is more like a compass than a GPS. How to follow Him? Trust the Lord and let Him guide you. When you come to an intersection, do not go through a red light!"

### 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

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](http://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](http://www.irtcsociety.ca). All the glory *"...to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us..."* (Ephesians 3:20 ESV)

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