

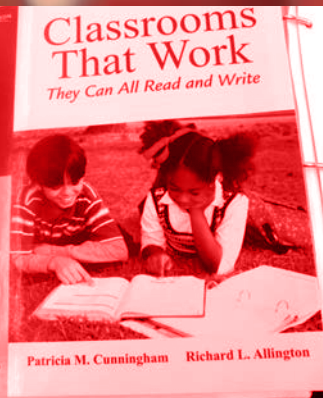


Covenant

CANADIAN REFORMED TEACHERS COLLEGE

"...tell the next generation..." PSALM 78:4

APRIL 2013



CCRTC NEWS

SPRING 2013

www.covenantteacherscollege.com





from the PRINCIPAL CHRISTINE VAN HALEN-FABER

The vestiges of winter may have been slow to disappear this year, but the calendar indicates that the 2012-2013 academic year at the College has entered its penultimate phase: final exams and a final practicum for all students, which will lead to the graduation ceremonies to be held on Friday, May 31 at the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church in Hamilton, ON. We anticipate that eight students will graduate: three in the one-year Diploma of Education program, and five in the three-year Diploma of Teaching program. We invite our readers to join us in person (or in writing) when we celebrate this festive and special event. This year's occasion is extra-special as it also marks the 30th Convocation in the thirty-two years of operation of Covenant Teachers College.

The calendar is not the only aid to help us mark time's passing. Course syllabi also serve as helpful reminders for students and faculty alike. A few years ago, the faculty initiated a discussion to help us focus on how each course serves the vision of the College to be the *definitive source of Reformed teacher training*. This vision

a full overhaul of all course outlines to reflect explicitly the connections each course makes to the vision of the College.

Another way of making time pass is by means of the special events that occur in addition to the regular daily teaching and learning. This semester saw the students and faculty attend the 'Your Only

“ I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. —HEBREWS 8: 8B-12

Comfort' conference hosted by the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary in celebration of the 450th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism. It proved to be an excellent opportunity for examining the relevance of our Confessions for the curriculum of a Reformed Christian school.

is echoed in the description found in the *Profile of a Reformed teacher-candidate* which in turn guides the shaping of each course within the two programs offered at the College. The full-time and sessional faculty members have almost completed

Each year, the students in the first and second year of the three-year program engage in two theme weeks. One week features a curriculum emphasis, while the other is focused on a "general knowledge" topic. For the curriculum theme, four groups of students developed a cross-curricular unit proposal around a novel. This year we chose books by Canadian

The Annual General Meeting was another event that reminded us of time's passing. With deep gratitude we acknowledge the appointment of br. Keith Sikkema as a full-time lecturer at the College effective August 1. We welcome him, and wish him the LORD's blessings as he prepares himself for the task. We also took note of Miss Judy Kingma's intent to scale back her involvement at the College. We deeply appreciate her dedication to the cause of Reformed education, and the many contributions she made to the work done at the College. We are thankful that Judy is willing to continue her work on a "half-time" basis, and pray that the LORD will continue to provide her with health and strength. With the appointment of Mr. Sikkema and the semi-retirement of Miss Kingma, the full-time faculty will stand at 3.5. This allows us to take a closer look at developing a plan by which the College can increase its in-service professional development offerings to all school communities. Those who are interested, and feel they can contribute their services in some way are invited to contact the Principal.

Each year, the students in the first and second year of the three-year program engage in two theme weeks. One week features a curriculum emphasis, while the other is focused on a "general knowledge" topic. For the curriculum theme, four groups of students developed a cross-curricular unit proposal around a novel. This year we chose books by Canadian

FREE TO READ: THE JOYS OF CHRISTIAN DISCERNMENT

CHRISTINE VAN HALEN-FABER



authors, Deborah Ellis and Eric Walters. As far as the other theme week goes, we are looking forward with excitement to gaining deeper insight into a Christian response to phenomenon of “the city and poverty” – using Hamilton as a case study. How might future teachers guide their future students into letting God’s light shine in darker places?

As we reflect on another academic year almost completed, we stand in awe and gratitude for the many blessings our Covenant God showers on us, his people. In a time when faithful education based on biblical principles is under attack, we do well to reflect on the real reason for the existence of our schools. Are we prepared to stand together in actively defending, promoting, and supporting the cause of Reformed elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education as it is offered within our broader community? We trust that with your support, Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College will continue to serve the schools in ways that allow us together to (re)articulate and strengthen our identity.

During the month of February, there was an extra-lively buzz in the building: every Thursday evening a group of approximately 45 people met together to discuss the place and purpose of literature in a Reformed Christian school. The participants came from far and wide, represented many different school communities, and reflected a cross section of age groups. Clearly they had one thing in common: a love for reading and a willingness to talk about it.

A wide variety of novels including *Lord of the Flies*, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, *Brave New World*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Twilight* formed a shared starting point for discussion: are all texts created equal? Are they all profitable for personal edification, for in-class novel study, or for inclusion in a church or school library?

“ the buzz in the building was a contagious one as participants agreed that good literature instructs, delights, surprises, and reforms.

Under the capable and engaging leadership of Dr. Deanna Smid, sessional instructor in English Literature at the CCRTC, the four-part seminar series examined the value of literature for Christian readers. Dr. Smid started each evening with a lecture highlighting a particular topic. For example, during the first session the focus was on what it means to read on behalf of others, particularly children or students. How and why do adults read children’s literature? This session also helped articulate a common terminology for reading discernment. The second seminar focused on how a book says what it says. For a novel to be useful to Christian readers, it must be full of

literary beauty. How might the reader recognize and respond to such beauty? The third evening addressed the different roles novels play in our lives. We examined which texts are particularly suited for novel studies in Christian schools, and how they might be taught most effectively. The series concluded with an examination of the place and function of the library in a Christian school. In the end, it was agreed that the purpose of a Christian school library is to:

1. Provide information in the form of non-fiction books and novels
2. Send the clear message that learning doesn’t end in the classroom
3. Highlight the importance and delight of reading
4. Ensure that all school children have access to reading material
5. Allow for individual tastes and interests
6. Encourage students to read self-consciously as Christians

Indeed, the buzz in the building was a contagious one as participants agreed that good literature instructs, delights, surprises, and reforms. The best part is that, by the sounds of it, the buzz continues at the local school level. There is a shared acknowledgment that Christian discernment is of paramount importance in all aspects of teaching and learning – including literature. There is also clear agreement that a discussion forum aimed at building each other up, is very helpful. The CCRTC considers that it has a role by serving as a catalyst and facilitator in these matters. We express our appreciation to Dr. Deanna Smid for her willingness to lead us in the joys of reading and to guide us in the joys of Christian discernment.



SHORT REPORT RICHARD HOEKSEMA

agm – CCRTC SPRING MEETING

It was Friday March 1, 2013, and the Governors of Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers' College began their Annual General Meeting at precisely 3:00 PM.

After opening in the proper manner, Br. Frank Ludwig, chairman, welcomed all present to the two day AGM. All Governors are reminded that the College has a new mailing address (Covenant CRTC 410 Crerar Drive, Hamilton, ON, L9A 5K3).

The Annual General Meeting is the one time per year that most Governors can attend the meeting in person. Yet there have been three who regularly attended meetings via Skype since the previous AGM. Governors beyond reasonable driving distance were encouraged to consider such involvement and were directed to the Information Technology Committee for more information in this respect.

Here are some highlights from the two days:

THE FACULTY REPORT:

To date 216 Students have graduated from CCRTC. In-service presentations prepared by faculty members are available to help schools develop themselves. Local governors are encouraged to promote the College as the Definitive Source of Reformed Education and to encourage

high school students to consider the College. We need to consider succession planning as CCRTC instructors are needed in the future as well.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE:

Our Librarian spoke about the large circulation of books available at the College. These can be viewed online at <http://ctc.scoolaid.net/bin/home>.

PR COMMITTEE:

It was approved to revamp the College website, turning it into a viable tool for staff, students, visitors, and eventually distance education.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

This Committee brought some discussion that resulted in the approval of the budget. Membership fees have increased in order to stay in line with rising costs. This increase was set at a rate of \$40 per month (up from \$33). It was noted that, after many years of no increase, the time has come to increase the membership rates.

ACCREDITATION:

The Ad Hoc committee for this purpose has begun laying the groundwork for

the completion of such accreditation for our College, while keeping in mind the needs/wants of our supporting societies.

STAFFING:

On Friday evening, the majority of the staff, including sessional instructors, were welcomed and asked to introduce themselves. The Governors were introduced to the new full-time faculty member: Mr. Keith Sikkema. Following this, Miss Judy Kingma gave an overview one of the courses she teaches: *Foundations of Curriculum*. While this press release does not allow for a complete overview, the presentation demonstrated the level of dedication and skill that is at the College.

While these were two information packed days, and much still needs to be achieved, it was readily apparent that many of our school societies value the College and the work that is being done there. There remain a few societies who are not members. The governors are aware of concerns in this area as well.

Now that these days are behind us we have opportunity to reflect on the grace of our God and His goodness. May He continue to bless us all in the pursuit of reformed education both in our College, and in the schools that we support via definitively reformed educators. To Him be all glory.

INTRODUCING MYSELF

KEITH SIKKEMA

Earlier this year, the PR Committee asked me to “write an introduction of yourself, telling about your past experiences and ... areas of expertise.”

By birth a baby boomer (middle child with ten living siblings) from Uithuizermeeden, by immigration (1978) a late bloomer, and by current girth and hair features not atypical, I spent 29 of my 36 career years between the Great Lakes, teaching almost all grade levels between K and 13. First, I taught and learned one year among mostly Frisians, and, later, six among Indonesians. Some of the speech and stories still stick.

At her lap as a pre-schooler, to a Genevan tune, my mother taught me the old covenant words from Psalm 25, What man is he that feareth the LORD? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth. These words continued to comfort and direct when I came to see myself as a peregrine or pilgrim, in need of the Saviour, on course towards “the Better Day”: first because of my interest in eschatology, and increasingly understanding that all our work is calling and service for God’s glory and in His present and coming kingdom. Although not without a measure of adventure, it was with that perspective that I “peregrined” from Friesland and Groningen to Chatham, to Sentani, to Smithville twice, to Dutton, and finally to Amaranth (i.e., Orangeville). I met many fellow pilgrims on the way, including Coby, my wife; and everywhere, with God’s syllabus and their caring contributions, I learned head- and heart- and hands-on lessons,

“What man is he that feareth the LORD? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth. –PSALM 25

some of which I have undoubtedly forgotten, but which help me understand tidbits of what it means to teach primary, junior, intermediate, and senior students; to mellow in appreciation of different perspectives, needs, contexts and cultures, and to laugh at myself; and, often in good company, also to accept serving roles of mentor- and leadership, being concerned with others’ needs in school (e.g., through CRTA, CARE, and principalship), family (like in Education Matters), and church (as an office-bearer).

Traveling along with Coby and our four children, I received support and direction from many, and even opportunity for further formal studies. I completed my M.Ed. at Brock University with an exit-thesis entitled Home Schooling in View of John Calvin, 2004. I always cherished Church- and Bible History and the narrative approach, and found myself led to embrace Curriculum Development. In various contexts, I have worked on curriculum at all four levels, and it was an honour to serve as writer for CARE’s CCMC Report and the Bible Study Framework. Such was God’s course for me and my family, and for telling the next generation. It is a humbling privilege that I may peregrine further at Covenant College. Please pray for strength, focus, and the LORD’s grace along the way.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

FROM THE BOARD

There are a few changes afoot that the board would like to share with you...

OUR MAILING ADDRESS HAS CHANGED!

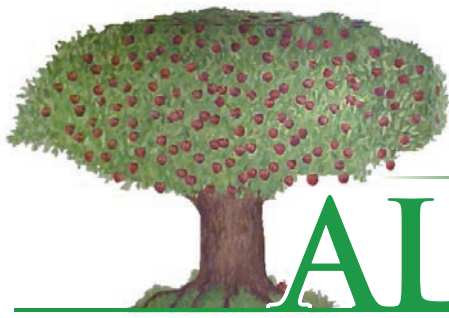
Please send all mail to:

**410 Crerar Drive,
Hamilton, ON L9A 5K3**

The postage paid envelopes were changed last Newsletter, but we continue to get mail addressed to the old P.O. Box!

BEGINNING IN SEPTEMBER WE ARE CHANGING OUR MONTHLY CONTRIBUTION LEVEL TO **\$480 per year or \$40 per month**

as per the finance committee’s recommendation. A report will be sent to each of the Governors regarding those participants in his/her community who have signed up for the \$33 a month or the \$396 annual commitment. Your Governor will be contacting you to get your “endorsement” to make the change on your PAP forms.



CCRTC

ALUMNINEWS

how it was and how it is



Heidi VanLuik

CLASS OF 2009

As a child I spent many afternoons playing school in the basement of our house. I can remember walking around my makeshift classroom teaching a most unwilling student, my little brother. There must have been many times when my mom chuckled as I walked around the basement with my coffee mug,

filled to the brim with water. When I was very young, I decided that I wanted to be a teacher. It would be a dream come true to be able to write on the chalkboard every day and to have a large classroom filled with willing students. In 2006, with this in mind, I enrolled in Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College. I feel truly blessed to have been able to spend three years studying at the College. Each of these years were packed full of learning. Every student who graduates from the College learns countless lessons. We discover how to plan a lesson, how to evaluate and assess, and how to deal with many different types of learners, just to name a few. The most important thing that I learned while at the College was what it means to be a Reformed teacher. This was reiterated in each of the classrooms that I was able to observe while on practicum. It is truly amazing to see and discover with the students the hand of the Lord at work in our lives. I am especially thankful to each of the associate teachers that I was able to spend time with, people who gave me the hands on experience in the classroom that I needed so much.

After graduating in 2009, I began my first year of teaching at the very same school that I had attended while growing up, John Calvin School in Smithville. I spent one year teaching grade three and am currently in my third year of teaching grade 2. Each day it becomes more and more clear to me how important a reformed education is for the Lord's covenant children. He loves each one of His children and He shows His love to each of them every day. It is very exciting to experience the love of the Lord each day anew with my students. Through teaching I have been able to grow in both faith and trust in the Lord. He has richly blessed me in the last few years of my life and I am excited see how this will continue in the future!

Lydia Van Andel

CLASS OF 2009

Starting my teaching profession in August 2009 was a dream come true. At a young age I already had dreamed of teaching. In grade two I dressed up as a teacher on career day. During summer holidays and on Saturday afternoons school was set up in my parents' basement and I was the teacher, thrilling my younger siblings and dolls with 'exciting' math lessons and stories. Covenant Teachers College was an amazing experience, preparing me for what teaching in Reformed Schools really involved.

At Covenant putting the theory into practice was my favorite part. Throughout my three years at College we had nine practicum sessions, in which I was able to visit six different Reformed Schools in Ontario, and was also privileged to have placements in Manitoba and Alberta. From all these placements many bits and pieces were taken and used in my classroom. Learning from experienced educators was truly a blessing as they shared their strengths and gave me opportunity to gain experience in classroom management techniques and teaching methods. After graduating from Covenant I enthusiastically started teaching in John Calvin School – Smithville. Was I really prepared? 18 covenant children sat before me on the first day of school, the day I had been waiting for had arrived. As I stood before my very first class I didn't really know what to say and was truly thankful for the first day of school assembly. Now was time to put into action everything that I had learned.

For three and a half years I was privileged to work in John Calvin teaching grade 6. It has been a blessing to share the great deeds of the Lord with His covenant children in my classroom. I have been a part of the triangle (home, school and church), assisting parents in raising their children in the fear of the Lord. Some days were challenging, while others were light hearted and exciting as we sang the wonders of our



“Let everything that has breath
praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.”

—PSALM 150: 6

Creator, discovered the talents the Lord blessed us with and worked with the order the Lord has set in creation. I was able to learn and grow in the area of working with special needs students in the classroom, working with and supporting fellow staff members, and really gaining in understanding of what it means to be a Reformed educator. In February my role in the triangle changed. The Lord blessed my husband Matt and myself with a beautiful daughter, Janine. We are privileged to be parents of His covenant child. Even though my role as teacher in John Calvin has come to end, with the help of the Lord my role of teacher has not ended, but simply changed.

Going to Covenant Teacher's College was truly a blessing! Covenant prepared me for my role as teacher in our Reformed school teaching covenant children. It is our prayer that I may be able to use what I have learned and put it into practice in the role as mother in the home.

Sarah Welch (nee Ludwig)

CLASS OF 2002

When I graduated from Guido de Bres Christian High School and the following year finished my O.A.C. credits in my home town high school, I did not think about being a teacher. I had plans to study at McMaster University with aspirations of being a police officer. I spent three years studying and finished with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. I also enjoyed studying English and Political Science, which I later found practical in my teaching career. These years at McMaster University were thoroughly enjoyed but when I graduated in May of 2001, I was no longer very interested in police work. My parents suggested Teacher's college and I liked the idea.

My time at Covenant Canadian Reformed Teacher's College was a wonderful learning experience. I very much enjoyed the Reformed atmosphere that I had missed in the previous years. When I graduated in 2002 I felt prepared for life as a teacher. Prepared enough to know that it would be a challenging and busy year. To add to the busyness, I was engaged to my now husband, Dave Welch. I then applied to schools in the area that had openings and accepted an offer to teach Grade Six at John Calvin Christian School in Burlington.

My first year, like many others, was nerve-wracking, stressful, challenging, fun and so much more. Unlike many others, I also planned and enjoyed my wedding in December of that year. As my husband and I settled near Smithville, I decided to apply for a position at John Calvin School, Smithville rather than make the drive to Burlington daily. This worked out very well as there was an opening in Grade 6. The change to Smithville for the 2003-2004

school year went well and I enjoyed teaching covenant children just as I had in my first year. I taught there until the end of the 2007-2008 school year as we were expecting our first child. We were blessed with a daughter Alexis (now 5) in August of 2008. I enjoyed my maternity leave and faced the difficult decision of what to do the following year during hiring season. I was hoping to take on a part time position but as there were none available and John Calvin School in Smithville needed a full-time Grade 8 teacher, I decided to fill that role. Taking on the role of mother, wife, and teacher as well as adjusting to teaching Grade 8 made for a challenging year, but I also very much enjoyed my time with the students. During this year, we were again blessed to be expecting another child. I was able to finish off the school year, enjoy the great experience of the Ottawa trip, and watch my students graduate. In October 2009 we were blessed with a son, David (now 3). As a family we decided that going back to teaching with two little ones at home was not our preference. It was wonderful to fully settle in as a stay at home mother and life was blessed. In May 2010 we went on a short trip to Winnipeg to visit our family there. My husband began thinking about moving there. In August 2010 we decided to put our house for sale to move to Winnipeg. We made the move to Winnipeg by the end of the year and bought a small business there with Dave's brother. In May of 2011 we were blessed with another son, Blake (now 22 months). This made being a stay at home mother quite busy and I soon became more at home in Winnipeg.

In some ways it has felt like my teaching years are part of my past since I have moved to Winnipeg. Yet, I have still had opportunities to use my talents as well as experiences from my teaching years. I have been able to coach basketball, and have just began substitute teaching more regularly. Recently, I was able to teach three days in a Grade Four classroom and I am enjoying being more involved in this school community. Also about a month ago I was invited to a presentation by Mrs. Christine Vanhalen Faber while she came to Immanuel Christian School in Winnipeg to assess student teachers. It was wonderful to see and talk with her and really brought me back to my teaching years.

When I look back on my teaching years I have fond memories of opening devotions, class discussions, Bible stories, science experiments, coaching various sports teams, thinking up interesting detention assignments, writing curriculum, the many interesting students, and even having student teachers in my own classroom. At the same time, I thoroughly enjoy my current role as mother and home maker. In all of this I give praise and thanks to the Lord for all His rich blessings in my life. "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD." Psalm 150: 6



from the finance committee

ARCHIE BAX

At about the half-way point in the fiscal year (February) we are blessed with sufficient funds to pay our bills and staff and currently have received funds that provide for about a 2 month cash reserve. We thank our Heavenly Father who provides for us also in this matter.

As you have read elsewhere, at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on March 1st and 2nd, the Board approved the filling of the fourth faculty member position.

Also, one faculty member will be working only half time. The result is that the budget presented at the AGM starting in September 2013 had an increase of about 13% in costs and in order to balance this, the revenue needs to increase by the same 13%, or almost \$70,000.

This is a substantial amount! As always we trust that the Lord will provide and with His blessings we will also be able to meet our obligations.

But having said this I also note that the same names and faces show up on donation lists and at meetings. The same people who contribute to the College also contribute to other kingdom causes, financially as well as with their talents. This got me to think back to earlier times and how things were done back then.

When the large numbers of immigrants came to Canada from the Netherlands they arrived here with no house, no church, no school, jobs but generally low paying work and even later they took the jobs they could get. From this they

gathered together with those united in the faith and started churches, which meant financial obligations, and served as office bearers and helped each other out in the communion of saints. They proceeded to call ministers and buy / build churches, taking on more obligations. On a personal level they purchased houses and raised families and started Christian schools to teach their children. And all these activities were important.

If we look at the traits these people had we can see that they served in, or participated in, all these kingdom activities. They contributed their time, skills and their finances. But underlying all these activities was the belief that this was important kingdom work. That we must have these institutions and we need to support them even if we have to do without some or even a lot of "extras".

This certainly characterizes the average person of the immigrant generation.

Now we come to the later generation. There is a handoff of responsibilities, if you will. I have said before that in a relay race, the race is won or lost in the handoff of the baton. In a way, with our Christian institutions, including the College, we have a very similar vulnerability. Just to highlight two aspects by way of example. With the new generation there is a redefinition of what is an extra. The boundary between a need and a want is blurred. We begin to believe the advertising that tells us that our life is not complete unless we also have this newest, latest, fastest

thing – which everyone needs now. We are constantly bombarded with these messages that try to convince us that we need to buy something – spend our money on it – and we are worth it. The other redefinition is why we do things. Increasingly we heard the world's perspective – what's in it for me? If I don't get anything "out of it" then I won't support it. This is not to say that Christian organizations like the College should not be held accountable and be asked to provide the services the local school boards require, both pre service as well as in service. But it also means that while the College is pursuing issues like accreditation it needs to be supported. If it is not supported and fails financially, accreditation cannot be pursued and a valuable resource in Christian education would be lost. Not sure what the value is? Get involved and find out, investigate what the College does and how it could be used in your area. Then support it.

Does all of this sound alarmist? It was not my intention. But if you think this is off base read Judges 2: 6 -11. We need to be aware of the pattern so that we don't follow it. Let us follow a better pattern as found in Ephesians 2: 10 "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

For the College to function we need your prayers and your contributions.

Until next time. God Bless.

 Please detach and mail to: CCRTC • 410 Crerar Drive • Hamilton, ON • L9A 5K3

Yes! I would like to support the CCRTC!

- One-Time gift of \$ _____ (cheque Enclosed)
 Monthly by pre-authorized Automatic withdrawal

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ PROV _____ PC _____

CHURCH _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL (optional) _____

Pre-Authorized Direct Withdrawal Form

I hereby authorize Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College to withdraw regular monthly payments from my bank account in the amount of and agree to accept annual increases as set by the board.:

- \$40/Month** - Withdrawn on the:
 15th of the month 30th of the month
- \$480/Annually** - Withdrawn on _____ each year
- \$ _____/Month** - Withdrawn on the:
 15th of the month 30th of the month

SIGNATURE

Please ATTACH a blank cheque marked "VOID" to this form.