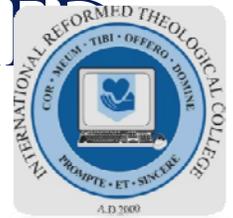


INTERNATIONAL REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE



An online college that teaches in Portuguese (www.pro-rege.net)

We seek supporters for this ministry which provides Reformed theological education to students in Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique, and worldwide, students who do not live near a school and cannot move away to go to a traditional college.

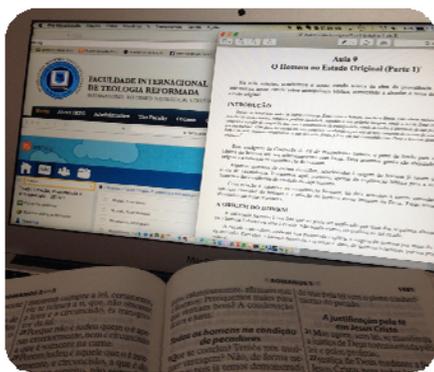
Quisqueia

New Learning Environment for 2014

The 2014 academic year (which runs from February to December) saw the inauguration of a new learning platform, that is, new for the IRTC. We have accepted an offer by the Dutch Reformed NET Foundation, who invited us to join other partner schools in using a cloud-based teaching environment called itslearning, which is located in Norway. As a partner institution, we annually make a financial contribution to the NET Foundation and benefit by having at our disposal a feature-rich learning environment that rivals those used by the major universities, but at a cost that is manageable for us. We invite you to become familiar with the NET Foundation at <http://www.netfoundation.nl/>. You will soon discover that this organization is a strong partner that God is providentially using to make us a stronger college.

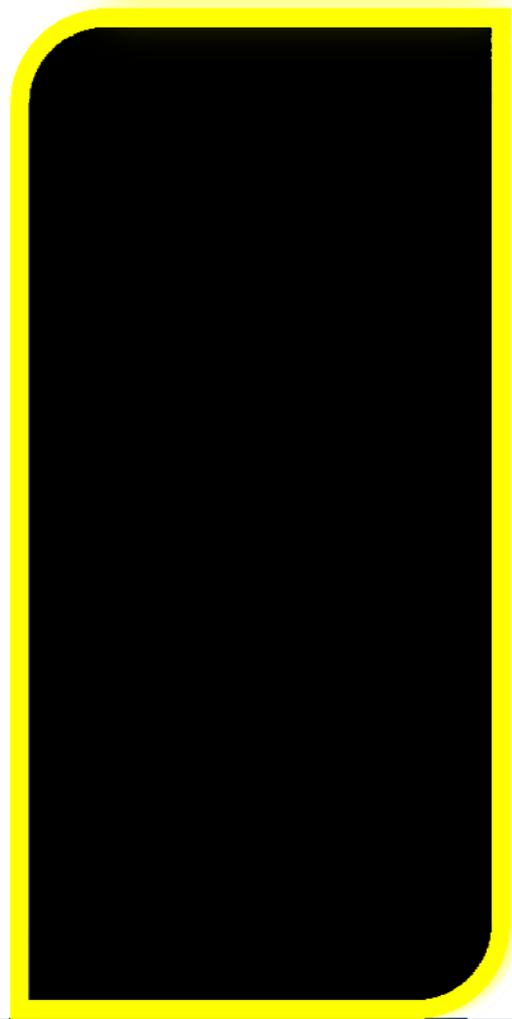


We also invite you to actually visit our teaching environment at <https://netfoundation.itslearning.com/>. We have some demo courses

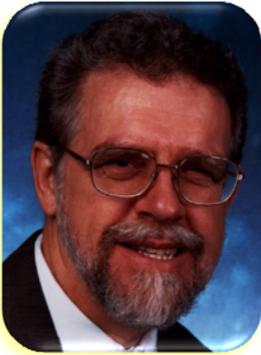


On a free afternoon, a student studies Anthropology on the new itslearning environment. (Image shared with permission from Evanilton Santos)

available if you sign in as fitrefdemo for both the username and the password. If you do not speak Portuguese, you can visit a course about Jonathan Edwards. It is made available by the NET Foundation and I do not know who prepared it. Feel free to explore the environment and discover that it has many excellent features, including videoconferencing and the possibility for students to access their courses by means of a wide variety of devices.



From My Heart to Yours



We are very thankful for this sophisticated improvement to our college. However, its introduction has also brought into stark relief an urgent need to which we have been drawing attention in the last three years. The position of chief executive officer is too much for me to handle. We are much in need of sufficient funding to be able to bring on a full-time person to

take over the organizational and administrative side of my responsibilities. I have never been the ideal person to carry out a leadership role in this college, but God's children must not run away when a calling is presented to them. In 2000 the College was just starting up and I was reasonably able to work with the information technology available at the time. Even though I had sight in only one eye and this was limited to a very small field, I was able to read slowly and to manage my responsibilities. On April 30, 2004, however, the Lord granted me an infection in my slightly-seeing eye and this left me unable to read. I am very thankful for assistive computer technologies that allow me to still function by means of a screen reader, that is, a program that reads electronic text to me. Nevertheless, this has drawbacks. Among the many limitations that test my patience is the following. If I visit a webpage, I have to listen through all the links at the top of the page and off to the side before I can finally listen to the article. It can be very time-consuming. Also, when something unexpected happens on the computer, it can be difficult to figure out how to proceed. I often have to call on my wife to

help me.

This is also what happened when we started using the new itslearning platform. Unexpectedly, it turned out to not be very compatible with my screen reader. I have been unable to do any teaching by myself. My wife has to do all the computer work, loading files, organizing, reading student responses to me, etc. It takes much time and keeps my wife occupied with this for many hours, when she already had a backlog of her own work to do. As an example of the backlog, I mention the IRTC budget for 2014. As the IRTC treasurer (until another person can be found), she started the work on the budget early, but then had to wait for needed input from others. While this input did not arrive, the problem with my inability to work with the new learning platform arose. This and other matters have been so time-consuming that we still have not been able to finish the budget. This bad situation clearly demonstrates the urgency for other people to take over our work. As for the budget, currently we are proceeding in ways that are similar to last year. This means that our basic needs for this year can be met with receipts on the order of USD\$65,000.00.

There are more problems. Year by year information technology becomes more sophisticated. Because I can't see and so many of the features are visually determined, I simply cannot keep up. Also, my memory isn't quite what it used to be and this complicates my work, since I cannot be helped by visual cues. Clearly, I (and my wife, Lucille) are much in need of relief.

From its inception in 2000, the IRTC has carried out its missionary, educational ministry only with the service of part-time instructors and staff—now some 30 persons. Although they labor diligently, there is much more that needs to be done. What we need most urgently is someone to dedicate himself full-time to coordinating and administering the work of the College, which continues to grow, now having more than 60 students and 20 part-time instructors. At age 65 and blind, I cannot keep up with the administrative work, writing newsletters, updating websites, coordinating the work of the instructors, answering enquiries that exceed the responsibilities of the secretary/registrar, etc. The growth of the ministry is hampered by my limitations. Because of the growth, and because of the ever-changing developments in technology, along with the need to work towards meeting educational standards for future accreditation, there is more than enough work for a person to be engaged full-time. The College expects that this position can be filled by a qualified person in Brazil and is praying that the Lord would raise an additional USD\$50,000.00 annually to provide for this need. The problems presented here have dragged on for three years already and the need is becoming more urgent each day. Of course, I plan to keep doing what I can, but I have to honestly make it clear that the IRTC is suffering for lack of an adequate financial base. We thank the Lord for encouraging improvements in funding in the last three years. We earnestly pray that now He may grant further significant changes through the assistance of his people in raising enough funds to support a full-time worker.

We appeal to you, our readers, can you help us? Please persevere in prayer, distribute this letter far and wide, and help find brothers and sisters who would desire to contribute financially. Please also remember our instructors and students who face so many challenges. A visit to the "Donations" page on our website (www.pro-rege.net/ds14.htm) will provide all the information necessary for making a financial contribution. It also has specific orientation for Canadian donors (our Canadian rep is Mr. Harold J. Ludwig, development@pro-rege.net).

Ralph Boersema, president