

# CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

## DEPUTIES THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

GOVERNING STAFF

1965

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### R E P O R T F O R T H E G E N E R A L S Y N O D , 1 9 6 5

To the General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, which will meet, D.V. November 4th, 1965, at E D M O N T O N, Alta.

Esteemed Brethren in the LORD.

The Instruction for the Directors (Governors) of the Theological Seminary reads in point 6: "The directors will report on their activities to each General Synod". (Acts 1962, Art. 171, 6). To comply with this part of our instruction we submit to your meeting our first Report, dealing with our work as Governors since our appointment.

First of all, we have to remind you that it is easily understood that the matters of the Seminary proceed slowly. Our financial means are little and our scientific powers but few. Moreover, due to the distances in our country which make it impossible to have combined meetings of all the Governors from East and Western Canada, our decisions in the East have to be submitted to the Western Canada Governors to be criticized and/or approved before they can be made final decisions. Naturally, this way of handling matters is taking up much time! Finally, on account of our unfamiliarity with the situation in the scientific field in this country, much of our work was but stumbling and fumbling for the right way.

Now, going further into the matter we have to report the following:

1: Actually, our work got a start at a meeting of the Governors and the Teaching Staff, in so far as they were able to be present, at a meeting at Woodstock, Ont. on Nov. 11th, 1963. This meeting accepted br. C. VanSpronsen from Lethbridge, Alta, as a student, although he did not have a B.A. or equivalent degree, but because he was admitted to the Theological studies at the "Theologische Hogeschool der Gereformeerde kerken, Proederweg 15, Kampen, Neth." by passing the "Propaedeutisch examen" at the said Institution. Doing this the meeting was fully aware of the fact that this admittance of br. C. VanSpronsen meant the start of our own Education to the Ministry.

As a matter of fact, in this special case of br. C. VanSpronsen Governors and Teachers felt that a two years study should be sufficient. From the Teachers' report you might gather more about his progress.

Further, it was agreed that the Governors could not give financial support, being this a matter of the Churches themselves according to Art. 19 Ch.O.

2: In accordance with the 1962 Synod's suggestion Reverend G. Ph. Pieffers was appointed president of the Governing Staff (Acts 1962, Art. 197). Reverend D. VanderBoon was appointed vice-president, Reverend A. B. Roukema first clerk, and Reverend W. Loopstra second clerk. However, since Reverend G. Ph. Pieffers was stricken by a serious illness Reverend D. V. D. Boon is acting president for the time being. Reverend J. Mulder is acting Governor for the West. In our meetings in Eastern Canada Reverend W. Loopstra acts as president.

3: Yet, we feel the difficulties of our way of working. One of the Teachers suggested that the Governors from all over Canada would meet at least twice a year, but we think this is not feasible. On the other hand we feel that something should be done in the matter, although it will be difficult. Perhaps one meeting of all the Governors could be made possible once a year. Or, if this would be too much: a meeting of all the Governors just before, or on one of the first days of a General Synod, so that all the matters brought to the Synod by the Governors have had the full attention of a complete meeting of all the Governors together. If this is not feasible either we would suggest to the Synod to appoint more Governors so that those in the East and West as well will be able to meet separately. Naturally these meetings will have to inform each other about their thoughts, suggestions and decisions and submit them to their mutual approval. These meetings might coincide with the classical meetings but of course it would be up to the Governors themselves to arrange this.

4: In order to make it possible to execute Art. 2 and 5 of our Instruction (Acts 1962, Art. 161) we asked the Teaching Staff to provide us with a "Series Lectionum" but until now we did not receive any suggestion from them in this respect.

We also asked them to draw up a complete Curriculum for the Theological study, for people who have a B.A. or equivalent degree. The result of this shall be submitted to you as soon as possible.

In this connection we want to mention a request from a brother who wanted to be admitted to the Theological studies without having the required degree. The possibility of a "Supplementary examination" was mentioned, but the Governors felt that it was not in their province to set up such an examination. However they feel that people like this brother should be given a fair chance. Therefore, they want to suggest General Synod to do what they could not do, namely: to set up a "Supplementary examination" for exceptional cases. In our opinion the requirements for such an examination should be broadly the same as those for the "Propaedeutisch examen" in the Netherlands. That means, that such people should study: Latin (e.g. Augustin, Calvin), Greek (New Testament!), Hebrew, Confession (e.g. K.Schilder, Christelijke Religie), Capita selecta of Philosophy. The above mentioned brother was advised to start the study for a B.A. degree as soon as possible; as far as we know he followed our advice, yet hoping that you will assist him in this respect, giving him the opportunity to enter the Theological studies by passing a "Supplementary examination". We gladly support him in this!

One of the Teachers raised objections against the 1962 Synod's decision about a B.A. degree as a condition for admittance to the Theological studies. At his request we specified this qualification more fully, saying that in our opinion one who is admitted to these studies should have passed an Arts degree with compulsory major in Latin and Greek, and optional in Hebrew and/or German. However, one other Teacher, together with an elder of his congregation suggested to us that we "see to it that such Arts courses be taken at an Institute of higher learning faithful to Scripture in its scientific program". They requested us to consider this suggestion carefully, because they are of the conviction that "a graduate at this level might have obtained an education of such a secular nature which might be harmful to a Scriptural faithful pursuit of further theological studies". The Governors heartily agree with this. However we feel that we cannot overture General Synod to instruct us to see that future candidates take courses at an Institute faithful to the Scriptures. This would be an inadmissible infringement of personal liberty. On the other hand we think that something should be done, and can be done, namely, that the committee mentioned in Acts 1962, Art. 170 interviews future students not only at the beginning of their studies, but also some times during it, at least once a year, e.g. at the end of each year, in order to check whether their study has been harmful to a truly



Scripturally faithful pursuit of their education to the Ministry in a really Reformed Church. If, unhelpedly, this would be the case it would be in the committee's province to dissuade them from applying for admittance.

5: The Governors feel that a Final Examination will be necessary for every student. Otherwise each Teacher would be responsible for admitting a candidate. It will be better that the Teaching Staff as a whole makes a decision about every candidate. They should bear this responsibility together! We know this would hardly be feasible because of the distances in this country; it would hardly be worth the money for travelling when the Teachers from all over Canada would have to meet for just one examination of a few hours! Therefore, we suggest to divide this "Final Examination" into two parts, one for the West, and one for the East. Then this examination could coincide with the annual Regional or Particular Synods. Naturally both parts of the Teaching Staff have to inform each other about the results of each examination.

6: Concerning the set up of a Library we decided not to buy a site for it, but rather to leave the books at the Teachers' residence for the time being. The Teachers were informed that the Governing Staff is prepared to make available for a Library \$ 300.- per Teacher, for the period till the next General Synod. We asked them to forward to the clerk of the Governing Staff a list of books, which they think to be needed for their particular department of the Seminary. In our opinion \$ 300.- should be the limit at that time, on account of the short period before the Synod. It was stressed that they would choose only those books which are strictly needed for the training for the Ministry, as it is at the present. However until now we did not receive any answer from the Teachers in this respect.

The Reverend J. Mulder was requested to act as Librarian and he willingly accepted this. His duties are: a: to receive from the clerk of the Governing Staff the list of books which the Teachers ordered, b: to order the books, c. to register them, d: to hand out the books to the Teachers and others who want to make use of them, e: to keep a record of the books, where they are, f: to send a report about the Library to the Governing Staff annually.

7: In connection with our authorisation to purchase a site at Burlington, Ont., which was discussed by the 1962 Synod (Acts 1962, Art. 95, 96, 158, 171-177) the clerk was instructed to make an inquiry at the University of Western Ontario at London, Ont., about the question whether our Seminary or College could be connected or affiliated with the U.W.O., while being situated in Burlington, Ont.. However the Board of the U.W.O. advised us to inquire for affiliation with the nearest Institution when our Seminary would have been established. Noting this duly we felt that it would be better to take no further steps in this respect. Probably it would be wise if the Synod instructs the Staff to examine in the next three years whether and, if yes, where the Seminary should be established; in other words, that synod did not yet make a decision on this most important matter.

8: In our first meeting we had a discussion about an allowance for the Teachers. The Governors felt that it would be unfair not to compensate them for the work done. However since our Instruction does not mention it we came to the conclusion that it is not yet in our province to award such an allowance. The only thing that we could do was to make a proposal to you on the matter.

9: For the Financial matters we refer to the report of the Treasurer, which is appended to this report. Undoubtedly the Treasurer himself, who is appointed by the 1962 General Synod herself, will send in a more detailed report.

10: Finally, referring to the matters dealt with in this report, we propose to the Synod:

- I: To appoint three Governors for Western Canada and other three for Eastern Canada; to settle that a Governor who moves from the one part of the country to the other, will resign automatically as a Governor.
- II: To decide that at the end of his study every student has to submit to a final examination.
- III To decide that one who does not have a B.A. or equivalent degree nevertheless may be admitted to the Theological studies by passing a Supplementary examination; the requirements of this examination should be as is written above in this report.
- IV: To instruct the Governors to examine whether, and, if yes, <sup>where/</sup> the Theological Seminary should be established; to express her opinion about the necessity of affiliation of our Seminary with one of the existing Universities for the time being.
- V: To decide upon an allowance for the Teachers depending on the amount of work for counseling, examining, and eventual lecturing.
- VI: To adopt the "Rules and Regulations" as set up by the Governors.

Praying that the LORD may bless Synod in all her work and guide her by His Spirit, to the edification of the Church and the glorification of His Name,

on behalf of the Governing Staff,

Oct. 28th, 1965

A.B. Roukema, clerk.

APPENDIX I:

Saldo 31 December 1963:	\$ 23430.32
Contributions in 1963	839.97
Idem 1964	3768.51
Interest Bank	532.23
Interest School soc. Nw Westminster	227.99
	<u>28844.02</u>
Expenses in 1964	35.01
Balance Jan. 22d, 1965	<u>28809.01</u>

APPENDIX II

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES.

Art. 1:

The Canadian Reformed Churches maintain a Theological Seminary for the schooling of Ministers of the Word.

Art. 2:

This Seminary has its seat at .....  
Transfer to another place can only be take place after a decision of General Synod to that extent.

Art. 3:

The combined Churches take care of this Seminary by means of Deputies who are authorized and instructed by General Synod. The nomination and appointment of Governors is in the province of the Lesser Assemblies (Acts 1962, Art. 171). Each Regional or Particular Synod appoints three Governors with alternates.

Art. 4:

The Governors meet at least once a year at the seat of the Seminary. Teachers may attend these meetings and have an advisory vote.

Art. 5:

The Governors shall supervise the Teaching Staff in order that everything be barred from their teaching which is not in accordance with the Scriptures and the Confession of the Churches. With the assistance of the Teachers they shall set up a Curriculum. A Series Lectionum, submitted to the Governors by the Teaching Staff, shall be adopted every year.

Art. 6:

The appointment of Teachers is in the province of General Synod after nomination by the Governors. Synod shall make a separate regulation for the termination, suspension and leave of their service.

Art. 7:

A Teachers must be a member of one of the Canadian Reformed Churches (or of one of the Churches with which the Canadian Reformed Churches maintain correspondence). Before entering upon their duties they shall subscribe to the "Form of Subscription for Professors and Teachers of the Theological Seminary of the Canadian Reformed Churches, drawn up by the General Synod of Edmonton, Alta, 1965". They shall submit to the supervision of the Governors but retain their right of appeal to the General Synod.

Art. 8:

General Synod decides upon the allowance of the Teachers.

Art. 9:

Governors give advice re the number of Teachers required and are authorized to appoint the officers within the Governing Staff.

Art. 10:

The Teaching Staff supervises the students and is authorized - only in extreme circumstances - to expel a student from the Institution, provided that the Governors approve of the measure.



Art. 11:

The Teachers shall in turn act as Rector for the period of one year. In his quality the Rector shall supervise the curriculum and shall be diligent in all matters pertaining to the instruction of the students of Theology.

Art. 12:

The Teaching Staff is authorized to examine in the discipline of Theology and may confer the degree of Bachelor of Divinity and the degree of Magister Theologiae Sacrae.

Art. 13:ADMISSION.

Those who will be admitted to the Institution, its courses and examinations, who:

- a: are a member of one of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and are able to show a good testimony of confession and conduct, issued by the consistory of their residence;
- b: have a B.A. or equivalent degree.

A committee consisting of two Governors and two Teachers shall counsel each candidate separately with regard to the significance of his studies as preparatory to the office to which he aspires. Those who have expressed their intention to register for the Theological studies, when they are yet studying for the B.A. degree must be counselled annually when they do not study at a Christian Institute for Higher Learning.

When exceptional cases present themselves, e.g. when people over 30 years of age not having a B.A. or equivalent degree desire to serve the Lord in the office of Minister of the Word, admittance to the Seminary may be granted after submission of a Governors' report on the case. Admittance shall not be granted without an admission examination. The requirements for such an examination shall be considered by the Governors and Teachers for each individual case.

c: In exceptional cases one who is not a member of one of the Canadian Reformed Churches may be admitted to the lectures and examinations by the Teaching Staff, provided the Governing Staff grants its approval.

Art. 14:

Under normal circumstances candidates shall complete their course work within six years.

Art. 15:

Each candidate shall be required to sustain an oral examination on all the subjects decided upon by the Governors with the advise of the Teaching Staff. If possible the candidate shall be examined at the time and the place of meeting of a General Synod; in other cases he shall be examined in the time and place of the meeting of a Regional or Particular Synod in the region in which the candidate has his domicile.

Art. 16:

Fees to be charged for the courses and the examination for the B.D. degree shall be determined by the Governors.

N.B.: To Art. 15 must be added eventually: "The requirements of the examination for the Bachelor of Divinity degree are laid down in a report of the Teaching Staff, which we did not receive yet."