

APPENDIX VIII

Report of the Board Of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches to General Synod Abbotsford, 1995.

Esteemed Brothers in the Lord,

The Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches hereby submits to your assembly, according to By-Law 1, section 3.17, a report of its work and decisions since November 1992.

The Board notes with great thankfulness that the work in the College could continue unhindered during the past two and a half years. A highlight in the past years was the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the College. This was remembered on the Convocation in September 1994. We can with thankfulness to our heavenly Father look back at twenty five years in which by the grace of God the churches could be provided with ministers. May the College continue to be a blessing for the churches.

The Board also wants to express thankfulness for the substantial help the College continues to receive from the sisters churches in Australia.

This report is divided in four parts. First, an account will be given of the work of the Board. In the second part, the work in the College will be highlighted. The third part deals with the facilities and staff of the College. The fourth part addresses several miscellaneous matters.

I. Meetings of the Board

Since the General Synod of 1992 the full Board has met 5 times. In November 1992, during General Synod 1992, the Board met so that the newly appointed Governors could sign the required Declaration and tasks within the Board could be assigned. Regular Annual Board meetings were held in September 1993 and 1994. Each full Board meeting was preceded by a meeting of the Academic Committee. In February 1994 the Board met to deal with the Survey and Questionnaire sent out to graduates and consistories. In February 1995 the Board met to finalize the report to General Synod 1995. These February meetings were possible since the two Governors who live out West were scheduled to visit the lectures.

The Executive has met twice in the last two years. In June 1993 and in June 1994 it prepared the Agendas and Proposals for the Annual Meetings. The minutes of these Executive Meetings were forwarded to all the members of the Board.

The Finance and Property Committee of the Board of Governors has prepared a report for your assembly which is added to this report.

II. Theological College

With thankfulness the Board can report that the instruction at the Theological College could continue without major interruptions. The Lord spared the lives of professors and students, gave them strength for their respective tasks and blessed them with good health.

II.A. Faculty/Senate

Each Annual Meeting the Board received a detailed outline of the courses that were taught during the previous Academic Year. The Board could receive these reports with great thankfulness. The professors are faithful in teaching their courses. At times guest lecturers were invited. The Schedule of Lectures had to be changed at times due to extra curricular activities by the professors or for other reasons. The Board was always notified of these changes.

The bond between College and Churches was strengthened by the visits of several professors to the churches in Western Canada. The Board received

favourable reports about these visits. It therefore continues to ensure that each year one professor visits the churches in the West.

On December 18, 1993 the Board organized an "Open House" for Prof. and Mrs. J. Geertsema on the occasion of their 30th Wedding Anniversary and the 30th anniversary in the ministry of Prof. Geertsema. As a rule the Board remembers the 25th and 40th anniversary, however, the Board was of the opinion that in the situation of Prof. Geertsema the 30th should be remembered. Their 25th was not remembered. In addition, Prof. Geertsema concluded his studies for Master of Theology. The Board expressed its thankfulness and appreciation to Prof. and Mrs. Geertsema.

With regard to the Senate, the Board can report that it could continue its regular work as well. It should be mentioned that the Senate lost one member during the past term. On March 4, 1993 the Lord took Prof. L. Selles unto Himself. To quote from the Principal's report of 1993: "Since his retirement in 1986 at the age of 71, he stayed very much involved in the life of the College and participated fully in the meetings of the Senate." The Board remembers with thankfulness the work of Prof. Selles as one of the first professors at our Theological College. He has served the churches in many ways. Our praise goes to the Lord of the Church for what the churches could receive in Prof. Selles.

Prof. Drs. H.M. Ohmann is not a member of the Senate, yet as former professor he deserves mentioning in this report. In 1993 he retired from active duty as Professor of Old Testament at the Theological University at Kampen. We remember with thankfulness his work as Professor of Old Testament in the years 1968 – 1980 at our College.

II.B. Principal

On September 10, 1993 the principalship of the Theological College was transferred from Dr. C. Van Dam to Prof. J. Geertsema. General Synod 1992 had set as date September 1, 1993. According to this date the new principal would have to give the principal's report at the Convocation only a few days later, as well as confer the degrees. Faculty and Board were of the opinion that this was impractical. It was therefore decided to move the time of expiration to the day after the College Evening.

The Board can report that the previous Principal, Dr. C. Van Dam, and the current Principal, Prof. J. Geertsema, were present at the meetings of the Board and helped the meetings with their insight and advice.

General Synod 1992 designated Dr. N.H. Gootjes as Principal for the years 1996 – 1999. The Board recommends that this General Synod decides to appoint Dr. N.H. Gootjes as Principal and designate Dr. J. De Jong as Principal for the years 1999 – 2002, the Lord willing.

II.C. Visiting the Lectures

The Governors visited the lectures on a regular basis, once in the Fall and once in the Spring. A report of each visit was submitted to the members of the Board. With thankfulness the Board can report to your assembly that each time the visitors could report that the work at the College is done in faithfulness to the Word of God and in harmony with our Reformed Confessions.

II.D. Curriculum

In its September Meeting of 1993 the Board decided to send out Survey to all the consistories within the Federation as well as a Questionnaire to all former students. The purpose of this was to find out whether the teaching at the College is geared to the work in the congregation. Suggestions were solicited.

The response was good, especially from former students. As a result of these enquiries the Board decided in September 1994 to

appoint a study committee consisting of the Principal, the Professor of Diaconology and two members of the Academic Committee to

1. evaluate moving from the present history-oriented approach to a more practice-oriented approach in certain courses in the diaconological department; and
2. consider the suggestions from the ministers and churches regarding the practical aspect of the training. For example, catechism teaching, speaking an edifying word, involving experienced ministers and guest lecturers, the use of workshops and seminars.

We can report that the committee has begun its work and will in due time submit a report to the Board. The Board wants to stress that it in no way questions the academic level of the teaching by the professors nor wants to diminish the academic character of the training at our Theological College. Our aim is to ensure that the students are well prepared for the work in the ministry. Any far reaching recommendation will be brought to a future General Synod.

II.E. Students

With thankfulness the Board reports that each year the Board and Faculty could admit several brothers to the College. In 1993 five brothers could graduate, of which four now are serving the churches. In 1994 two brothers completed their students, one of whom is now serving as minister. At present there are 15 students studying at the College.

III. Facilities and Staff

III.A. Library

The Library of the Theological College has been going through growing pains for some time. Twenty Five years of existence also means that the Library is maturing. When the College was opened the books were catalogued according to the Dewey cataloguing system. Currently, most libraries have adopted the Library of Congress cataloguing system. Some ten years ago the decision was made to put our library holdings in a computer cataloguing program with the Library of Congress numbering system. However, the transfer progressed too slowly. This in turn hindered an optimal use of the Library. The Librarian of the College made further study of these matters and this was discussed by the Board. The result was that Miss Margaret VanderVelde was hired as a full time associate librarian per November 1993. We are thankful to report that the transfer is now progressing much faster. Our hope is that in the near future the whole library will be on one system. This will certainly improve the accessibility of the library.

The Senate decided to appoint Miss Margaret Van der Velde, B.A., M.L.I.S., to the function of Librarian, and Dr. N.H. Gootjes to the function of Associate Librarian.

III.B. Women's Savings Action

In connection with the Library the work of the Women's Savings Action cannot go by unnoticed. Every Convocation the representatives of the Women's Savings Action presented the Librarian with a substantial amount of money. The monies raised by the Women's Savings Action are the main source of income for purchasing new books. It goes without saying that this work is greatly appreciated.

III.C. Facilities

The growth of the College Library necessitates a closer look at the future of our facilities. The Board of Governors established contact with the Board of the Teacher's College in order to see whether it was possible and feasible to establish a joint project. Committees from both Boards met several times. The conclusion was that the benefits of having one facility do not merit a sharing of facilities.

This does leave the Theological College with a need for more room. The Finance and Property Committee has prepared a proposal for your assembly. This proposal is added to this report. We request that your assembly give the Board a mandate with regard to future expansion of the College facilities.

IV. Miscellaneous

IV.A. Retirement and Appointment of Governors

Because Rev. B.J. Berends moved to Ontario there is one vacancy from the ministers from the West. In the Finance and Property committee the brs. H. Bulst and C.G. Heeringa have served three consecutive terms of three years and need to be replaced. The Board has submitted names of brothers to fill these vacancies, with a confidential curricula vitae.

IV.B. Tenure Policy

General Synod 1992 decided to instruct the Board of Governors to establish a policy for the granting of tenure.

The Board of Governors has asked the Faculty to study this matter. Their report is added to this report.

The Board concurs with the conclusion of the Faculty and proposes that the suggestions of the Faculty be adopted by General Synod 1995 as the policy asked for by General Synod 1992.

IV.C. Publication Foundation.

Synod 1992 decided to refer the proposed By-Law 10 back to the Board of Governors and recommended that the following changes be made to it:

1. that Section 3 of the Act be referred to under 2 to read "all of which shall be consistent with the object and basis of the College as described in the Sections 3 and 4 of the Canadian Reformed Theological College Act, 1981."
2. that one representative of the Academic Committee of the Board of Governors be included in the Publication Committee
3. that an Annual Report of its activities be submitted to the Board of Governors.

The Publication Committee informed the Board of Governors that it could not agree with recommendation 2 and 3 of General Synod 1992. With regard to recommendation 2 the Committee gives the following reasons:

- a) The By-Law was set up according to the example of a similar committee at our sister institute in Kampen, where this system worked well.
- b) If the Board of Governors would have to be responsible for every publication it can no longer be appealed to if objections are brought in against a publication; in such a case an appeal would have to go immediately to the Synod.
- c) Making the Board responsible for publications through the Foundation would create an exception, since the professors do not submit other publication to a member of the Board.

With regard to recommendation 3 the Committee recommends that "a copy of this report or these reports shall be sent for information to the Board of Governors."

The difficulties regarding this point centre on the question whether the Board of Governors ought to be involved in a Publication Foundation which carries the official name of the College. The Board agrees with Synod 1992. If the official Name of the College is used then the Board of Governors should be involved. If this involvement leads to great difficulties, as the Committee suggests, then the other option is that a separate Publication Foundation be incorporated.

IV.D. Sabbaticals

The Sabbatical Policy adopted by Synod 1992 allows a Sabbatical leave in the three year period after the principalship has been completed. In accordance with the adopted Policy, Dr. C. Van Dam has submitted to the Board a sabbatical proposal and a project proposal for research leave for the first half of 1996. The Board has in principle approved this.

IV.E. Australia

Last, but certainly not least, the Board wants to express deep gratitude for the support the Theological College continues to enjoy from the Australian sister churches. This support can be witnessed at several levels. We have several students that come from the Australian churches, the churches contribute to the costs and remember the work of the college in prayer. May through this the bond between our churches be strengthened.

V. Conclusion:

With thankfulness to our heavenly Father we bring this report to your assembly. The Lord of the Church has blessed us in many ways. This report is a witness to this. We hope and pray that this College may continue to be a blessing for the churches. To this end we pray that as Churches, Board, Professors and Students we remain faithful to God's Word and The Three Forms of Unity.

VI. Recommendations

The Board of Governors submits to your assembly the following recommendations:

- A. to receive this report and all its appendices.
- B. to accept the resignation of Rev. B.J. Berends and the brs. H. Buist and C.G. Heeringa as Governors with grateful acknowledgement of their labours, and pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of By-Law 1 (as amended)
 1. to appoint, elect or re-appoint six active ministers to hold office until the next General Synod and to appoint at least three substitutes from each Regional Synod area;
 2. to re-appoint the brs. K.J. Veldkamp and A. Van Egmond as Governors for a term from the date of their re-appointment until the first General Synod held after the date of their re-appointment;
 3. to re-appoint br. H.J. Sloots as a Governor for a term from the date of his re-appointment until the second General Synod held after the date of his re-appointment;
 4. to appoint the brs. M. Kampen of Burlington and J. VanderWoude from Hamilton as Governors for a term from the date of their appointment until the third General Synod held after the date of their appointment (with as alternates the F. Stoffels of Hamilton and L. Jagt of Burlington, in that order).

- C. to appoint Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes as Principal for the period of September 1996 to September 1999, and to designate Dr. J. DeJong as Principal for the years 1999 to 2002, the Lord willing. The transfer of principalship will take place the day after the Convocation in 1996.
- D. to approve all decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees for the years 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995 until the day of this report.
- E. to adopt the suggestions of the Faculty regarding a Tenure Policy as the policy asked for by General Synod 1992.
- F. to give the Board a mandate with regard to future expansion of the College facilities.
- G. to consider the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditors for the previous fiscal periods; to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities for these fiscal periods; and to appoint sr. A. Spithoff C.A. as Auditor till next General Synod.

Wishing you the blessing of the Lord in your decisions,

The Board of Governors,

Dr. J. Visscher, chairman

Mr. K.J. Veldkamp, vice-chairman

Rev. D.G.J. Agema, secretary

Mr. C.G. Heeringa, treasurer

Rev. B.J. Berends

Mr. H. Buist

Rev. W. DenHollander

Rev. P.G. Feenstra

Mr. H. Sloots

Mr. A. VanEgmond

Rev. C. VanSpronsen