

## APPENDIX 4:

# Report of the Board of Governors of The Theological College

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 section 6.1 of the Canadian Reformed Theological College Act, 1981, a report of its work and decisions since May 1995.

In article 19 of the Church Order the churches have agreed to

... maintain an institution for the training for the ministry. The task of the professors of theology is to instruct the students of theology in those disciplines which have been entrusted to them, so that the churches may be provided with ministers of the Word who are able to fulfil the duties of their office ...

The Board of Governors can report with thankfulness to the Lord that the work at the Theological College could continue without interruption during the past three years. The Board expresses thankfulness for the support of the churches in prayer and financial contributions. Special mention must be made of the support by the Australian churches. The Board reports with thankfulness that the instruction could continue without interruption and that the professors were faithful in their teaching. Also during the past three years the churches were provided with ministers of the Word. This is the purpose of maintaining a College and instructing students.

### 1. Board of Governors

The Board of Governors met five times during the past term (Sept. 1995, Sept. 1996, Feb 1997, Sept. 1997, Nov. 1997). Copies of the minutes of these meetings will be available for Synod. The Academic Committee met three times (Sept. 1995, Sept. 1996, Sept. 1997). The Property and Finance Committee met regularly as well and will submit its own report on its meetings to your assembly.

General Synod 1995 appointed the brs. R.Aasman, M.Kampen and J.VanderWoude, to the Board. These brothers signed the Declaration of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed

Churches in the first meeting they were present (Sept. 1995). The Board was saddened by the sudden death of one of the Governors, br. Adri VanEgmond. We remember with thankfulness the work he could do as Governor during the eight years he served on the Board and wish his family the comfort of the Lord. His passing away left a vacancy in the Board which your assembly will have to fill. In addition to this vacancy, the brs. VanSpronsen and Veldkamp will complete their term, as Governors. The Board expresses thankfulness for their dedication and participation in the work of the Board and the College. The Board submits a proposal to fill the two vacancies in the Property and Finance Committee. Your assembly will receive confidential information concerning the proposed appointments.

In summary, we report with thankfulness that the work of the Board could be done in brotherly harmony.

## **2. College**

### **2.1. Senate/Faculty**

The difference between the Senate and the Faculty is that the Senate consists of current professors as well as emeriti professors, whereas the Faculty consists of the professors in active service. In other words, the difference between the Faculty and Senate at this point of time is Dr.J.Faber. No small difference indeed. The Board is thankful that Dr.Faber is still involved in the work of the Senate. In 1997 Dr. Faber was minister of the Word for forty-five years. He and his wife also remembered their forty-fifth wedding anniversary in the same year. We are thankful for Dr.Faber's faithful service within the churches. We also wish him and his wife God's blessing.

The Board also wants to mention the passing away of Rev.G VanDooren in September 1995. Rev.VanDooren had been lecturer for many years at the College. He instilled in many students the love for preaching the gospel and the pastoral work. As churches we can be thankful for what the Lord gave to the churches through this servant.

When we now move on to the Faculty, the Board can report that the professors were able to continue their work without serious problems. There were situations of illness, accidents or concern but it did not hinder their work. The Lord has given to the professors the health and strength necessary to fulfil their task. Each year the Board received a report from each professor outlining their course work.

The Board wants to convey to your assembly its appreciation for the dedication of the professors to their task. When one keeps in mind that our College has only four professors and has to cover in a scholarly manner the same subject areas as other Seminaries or Colleges then one realizes the heavy work load our professors have. We pray that the Lord may give them the wisdom and strength to continue their work. The Board comes to your assembly with a request regarding granting tenure.

On Oct.12, 1996 the College community could celebrate the 25th anniversary of Dr.C.Van Dam in the ministry of the Word. This was celebrated with an Open House in which many church members showed their appreciation. In the evening this joyful event was remembered by the college community. It was a very festive evening.

The professors are also involved in other activities. To give you some examples: Prof.J.Geertsema was asked to teach in Kampen in May 1997. Dr.C.Van Dam went to Mexico and taught at the Juan Calvino Seminary. Dr.J.DeJong attended the meeting of the Alliance and Synods of the United Reformed Churches. Dr.N.H.Gootjes was delegated by the churches to attend the ICRC in Korea. The professors always asked the Board for permission to be involved in these activities. Any change in the Series Lectionem is faithfully brought to the attention of the Board. The Board receives a report of these activities as well.

The Fall of 1996 saw a first in the history of the College. Dr. C.Van Dam received a half year sabbatical. He was replaced by Drs. G Hagens of the Gereformeerde Kerk of De Bilt/Bilthoven. Dr.Van Dam reported to the Board on the work done during the sabbatical. The Board received this report with thankfulness. This report ends with this positive conclusion regarding the sabbatical policy:

"It stimulates the initiation of larger projects and allows more time to do systematic research and writing. In the long run, such work can only improve the teaching at the College and enhance the reputation of our College."

The Senate indicated to the Board that it regarded this first sabbatical a success. Currently plans are being made for a sabbatical for Prof. Geertsema.

General Synod Abbotsford appointed Dr.N.H.Gootjes as Principal. The transition took place after the Convocation of 1996. The Board thanks Prof.J.Geertsema for his work as Principal. The current Principal, Dr.Gootjes is present at all the meetings and the Board appreciates his input. His term will be completed in 1999. General Synod 1995 appointed Dr.J.DeJong as principal designate. At this time the Board proposes that the General Synod appoint Dr.DeJong as Principal for the period 1999-2002, with the transition to take place after the Convocation of 1999. The Board also proposes to appoint Dr. C.Van Dam as Principal designate for the years 2002-2005, the Lord willing.

## **2.2. Students**

Since the Board's report to Synod 1995 several students have entered as well as left the College. Currently fourteen students are enrolled. Twelve students graduated during the last three years, of which seven entered the ministry of the Word. With thankfulness the Board notes that the students could continue their work as well. All received the necessary health. The Board also reports with thankfulness that there is a good bond between professors and students. A number of students received support

from the Faber-Holwerda Fund during the past three years. In 1997 the Selles Book Award was awarded for the first time.

Over the last years the College has received requests for admission from students from foreign countries. At times these requests could not be met due to lack of funds on the part of the student. The Senate brought this matter to the attention of the Board and the Board is considering ways in which these students could be assisted.

We pray that under the blessing of the LORD the churches continue to endeavour that there be students of theology.

### **2.3. Visits to the Lectures**

According to By-Law 1, section 3.16 (b) it is the task of the Board upon the advice of the Academic Committee to exercise supervision over the confession, doctrine and life of the faculty, including temporary instructors and over the instruction they give at the College in order that everything may be barred from their teaching that is not in accordance with the Holy Scripture, the Confession and Church Order of the churches.

As part of fulfilling this task the Governors regularly visit the lectures. Two members of the Academic Committee visit in the Fall, and two other members in the Spring. They report on these visits to the Board. Usually these reports take very little time at the Board meetings. This is not because of lack of interest, but rather because the conclusions are always very positive. This is certainly a reason for thankfulness. In this report the Board wants to convey to your assembly its thankfulness for the instruction at the College. As visiting Governors we may witness the commitment of the professors to their task. The lectures are presented in a clear and scholarly fashion. The faithfulness to the Word of God and the Reformed Confession is clear as well. Hence it is for good reason that students from abroad are attracted to study at our College. We express our gratitude not to put the focus on people, but to give reason for thankfulness to the Lord for the work that takes place at the College. We pray that this may continue.

### **2.4. Visits to the Churches**

The College is maintained by and exists for the churches. To express and maintain this vital bond with the churches the professors regularly visit the churches in the West. In 1995 Prof.J.Geertsema visited the churches in Alberta/Manitoba. In 1996 Dr.J.DeJong visited the churches in Classis Pacific. In 1997 Dr.N.H.Gootjes went to Alberta/Manitoba again. The reports of these visits are positive.

## **3. Facilities**

In the reports of the Property and Finance Committee you will find more and detailed information concerning this point. In this report the Board will restrict itself to only a few items.

### **3.1. Library/Librarian**

The Library continues to grow. According to the Library report of June 9, 1997, which served at the Board meeting of September 1997 the following general information is given: "The library contains approximately 21,952 volumes in a variety of languages, including English, Dutch, German, French and Afrikaans. Areas of subject coverage include biblical study, biblical language study, biblical commentaries, dogmatics, ethics, diaconology, missiology, history and related fields. There is also a respectable rare book collection, with the oldest volumes dating from the sixteenth century. A number of these books have never been reprinted, and are therefore indispensable for the College."

Under the skillful direction of the Librarian sr. Margaret Van der Velde the cataloguing and automation continues steadily, resulting in a library that becomes more and more accessible. Initially sr. Van der Velde was hired to help with the change over of the cataloguing. Upon request of the Senate the Board has made her position permanent.

Due to the increasing need for expansion the Board comes to your assembly with a proposal.

### **3.2. Women's Savings Action**

One cannot speak about the Library, without mentioning the work and the contributions of the Women's Savings Action. Each year many sisters go out and gather "pennies" for the Library of the College. Each year Women's Savings Action presents the Principal of the College with a substantial cheque. The Board wants to express its thanks for this work and these contributions. If it were not for these contributions the College would be unable to acquire the necessary resources without raising the assessment.

### **3.3. Staff/Volunteers**

The Board wants to mention with thankfulness the work of the non-teaching staff at the College. Also because of their work the College continues to function smoothly. For many years sr. Catharine Mechelse has served the College as administrative assistant. The Board expresses its appreciation for her dedication.

The bond with the churches is also apparent in the many volunteers which help out in one way or another. To quote again from the report of the Librarian: "Volunteers continue to come in on a regular basis. Reshelving, accessioning, and labelling of the books are all tasks performed by volunteers, leaving the librarian more time to devote to other tasks. Several volunteers are very senior in age and their assistance is all the more appreciated."

## **4. Proposals**

### **4.1. Tenure**

In September 5, 1996 the Board decided:

"To ask General Synod 1998 to direct the Board of Governors to grant tenure to Prof.Dr.J.DeJong and Prof.Dr.N.H.Gootjes. According to past practice tenure should have been requested at Synod 1995. This did not happen due to an oversight of the Board of Governors."

The Board regrets this oversight and therefore brings this request to your assembly.

### **4.2. Certificate of Pastoral Proficiency**

Some years ago the Board send out a Questionnaire to Consistories and Ministers which dealt with the Program of Studies offered at the College. The Board received many valuable responses and suggestions. Several of them could be implemented without major changes to the curriculum.

Many consistories and ministers suggested to give more time and attention to the preparation for the practical work of a minister. In response the Board appointed a committee to study this and come with recommendations. General Synod 1995 was informed of this (Acts, Art.97 II.B.8). The result of this study was a proposal for a Certificate for Pastoral Proficiency. This proposal was sent to the churches for their input in the spring of 1997. Thirty churches responded. These responses showed a overwhelming support (approximately 90 %) for the proposal. The Board received some valuable suggestions as well. Some of these suggestions have been incorporated into the current proposal.

Given the overwhelming support by the churches the Board felt it was proper to bring this matter to your assembly. The proposal for a Pastoral Proficiency Program is the result of much discussion within the board and with the members of the Senate. The suggestions that came from the churches were discussed within the Board. Some were taken over, others not. The Board is well aware that this proposal is not the final word, but rather a start of something that the Board and, going by the responses, also the churches would like to see implemented.

Already in an early stage in considering this matter, the Board had to deal with the question whether this program should be integrated into the whole program at the College, or whether it should be placed within the jurisdiction of the churches e.g. by means of classical deputies. Though both positions may have positive elements it was felt that in the current situation neither one was a good solution. To integrate this program in the overall program at the College would cause difficulties for students from other churches that study at our College. It would also put an extra work load on the Faculty. If this program comes in the hands of classical deputies the whole program can be come a patchwork of practices and requirements. The question whether three months is sufficient was also

considered. This time period is not etched in stone. However, to make it longer will have serious financial consequences for the students. Although the task and responsibility of the coordinator has been spelled out, the Board realizes that this is only an outline. His remuneration has not been addressed either.

The Board is of the view that these are matters that will have to be looked at and evaluated as the program is put in place. Rather than continuing to discuss them, the Board feels that they can best be evaluated as the program is implemented. This even more so, because of the overwhelming support from the churches for such a program.

The Board also asks your attention for that fact that the Certificate proposed be considered part of the requirements for admission to the ministry as regulated by the Church Order, Art. 4B1.

### **4.3. Expansion**

General Synod 1995 considered the following:

With respect to the Theological College expansion proposal, it is proper that the Board of Governors approached Synod for a mandate regarding future expansion. Based on the evidence submitted by the Board of Governors regarding the growth and future needs of the library and other College functions, it is clear that an expansion of the College facilities is warranted. Considering that the submission of the proposal came late to the churches, the cost considerations are of a major concern to the churches, the proposals have incomplete cost estimates and it is not evident that the expansion is required immediately, it is therefore advisable that the Board of Governors study and prepare a more detailed and definite proposal. This proposal should indicate how this project can be financed from sources and means other than the regular assessment so that it does not unnecessarily burden the churches. A proposal should be submitted to the churches and the next Synod at least six months before the next Synod.

General Synod decided:

To direct the Board of Governors to study and prepare a more detailed and definite proposal for the expansion of College facilities, and seek the possibility of financing this project without increasing the assessment to the churches. A proposal should be submitted to the churches and the next Synod at least six months before the next Synod.

The Board comes to your assembly with a proposal for expansion of the College.

### **5. Recommendations:**

1. to receive this report and all its appendices.

*General Synod Fergus 1998*

2. to acknowledge the expiration of the term of office of the brs.C.VanSpronsen and K.Veldkamp 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)
  - a. 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;
  - b. to re-appoint the br.H.J.Sloots as Governor for a term from the date of his re-appointment until the first General Synod held after the date of his re-appointment;
  - c. to re-appoint brs.M.Kampen and J.VanderWoude as Governors for a term from the date of their re-appointment until the second General Synod held after the date of their re-appointment;
  - d. to appoint the brs.W.Oostdyk of Guelph and T.VanPopta from Langley 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 alternate for W.Oostdyk, br. H.T.VanderVelde of Attercliffe and as alternate for br. VanPopta, br. W.Smouter of Ancaster).
3. to appoint Prof.Dr.J.DeJong as Principal for the period of September 1999 to September 2002, and to designate Prof.Dr.C.van Dam as Principal for the years 2002 to 2005, the Lord willing. The transfer of principalship will take place the day after the Convocation in 1999.
4. to approve all decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees for the years 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998 until the day of this report.
5. to express thankfulness for the support from the churches in Australia
6. to grant tenure to Dr.J.DeJong and Dr.N.H.Gootjes.
7. to adopt the proposal for a Certificate of Pastoral Proficiency program.
8. to adopt the proposal for expansion of the College facilities.
9. 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.

The Board informs you that if Synod needs more input in connection with the proposal for expansion, the chairman of the Finance and Property Committee, br. K.J.Veldkamp is willing to assist your assembly. With regard to the proposal for the Pastoral Proficiency Program the Board is confident that members of Synod who are also Governors can give the necessary information.

The Board presents this report to your assembly with the prayer that the Lord may give you the necessary wisdom.



*Appendix 4: Theological College*

For the Board of Governors,

R.Aasman

D.G.J.Agema - secretary

W.DenHollander

P.G.Feenstra

M.Kampen

H.J.Sloots - treasurer

K.Veldkamp - vice chairman

J.Visscher - chairman

C.VanSpronsen

J.VanderWoude