

25TH
ANNIVERSARY
THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
HAMILTON

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary Meeting and the Twentieth Convocation of the College

By J. Geertsema

On Friday the ninth of September we celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Theological College of the Canadian [and American] Reformed Churches. Time and again the gratitude to God of His grace in the gift of the College and in this anniversary was expressed. As the Rev. W. Loopstra said at the opening of the College on September 10, 1969, "Glory to God!"

The president of the Board of Governors, Rev. J. Visscher, opened the meeting with reading 2 Timothy 2:1-13. In v. 2 of this Scripture passage we read how the apostle Paul instructed his fellow office bearer, to entrust to faithful men what he had heard from Paul. Of these faithful men Paul says that, in turn, they must be able to teach others. In this way the truth goes from generation to generation and is guarded and kept in and by the church.

Rev. Visscher welcomed those present, especially the graduating students and their relatives, and Dr. and Mrs. J. van Bruggen from our sister institution in Kampen. (Dr. Van Bruggen was invited in connection with the twenty-fifth anniversary.) He spoke about the many blessings of the Lord in the twenty-five years of existence of the College. Most of the present ministers in our churches and many in the Australian sister churches have graduated from the College. He read letters of congratulation from the churches at Carman, Langley and Kelmscott, as well as from the deputies for the training of ministers in Australia. There were also congratulations from the churches at Albany and Prof. and Mrs. Ohmann.

After Prof. J. Geertsema read an abbreviated version of his "Principal's Report," Dr. J. Faber presented his address on "The Theological College: Twenty-Five Years of Service" or "Past and Place of the Theological College." Both the Principal's Report and the address of Dr. Faber can be found elsewhere in this issue. Dr. Van Bruggen, then, received the floor to give us the greetings and congratulations from "Kampen." These, too, are presented in this issue.

The graduation ceremony followed. The principal conferred the degree of Master of Divinity on Mr. John Challies and Mr. John Louwerse. He spoke the Latin formula: "*Senatus Academiae Hamiltonensis te . . . [the name] Magistrum Divinitatis declarat.*" I write these words down and shall add the English translation so that the reader who may have heard them knows their meaning. The formula says: "The Senate of the 'Academy' [for University or College] in Hamilton declares that you . . . [name] are Master of Divinity."

We are thankful that the College could confer the degree on these two students. Mr. Challies hopes to become

minister of God's Word in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, while Mr. Louwerse is called by the church at Houston (B.C.) and hopes to enter the ministry there in October. It is our wish and prayer that our brothers may receive the blessing of the Lord and become a blessing in their life and work for others.

The Hamilton/Ancaster choir "Sursum Corda" sang a few selections which were enjoyed by all. It was followed by a short address by the committee of the Women's Saving Action. This, too, is presented to the readers in this issue. The sisters Mulder, Van Dam and Zietsma also presented slides about their work during the past twenty-five years. The slides added an important aspect of the picture of the past quarter of a century. The library receives a cheque of \$25,000 from the Women's Saving Action, for which the College community is very grateful. Those attending the evening gave to the College thirteen hundred and forty dollars for the expansion of the library.

Rev. W. Den Hollander closed the official part of the evening with giving thanks to the Lord for his many blessings. Before we left the auditorium of Redeemer College, we sang two stanzas of our national anthem, "O Canada." The social part was intensively used. We met not only brothers and sisters from Ontario but also from Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia. They came for the anniversary celebration. Together we enjoyed a nice evening in gratitude to the Lord.

Every day, but especially at an occasion like this twenty-fifth anniversary, there is gratitude to the Lord in our hearts that He has given us as Canadian and American Reformed Churches together with our Australian sister churches, our own College for the training of our ministers. From the address of Dr. J. Faber and the contribution of Rev. W.W.J. VanOene it becomes clear that the churches realized the necessity and need of their own College. It was not just a few elders and ministers, but the churches themselves. At first, with a few, there was some hesitation or even a bit of opposition. But once the decision was made to establish our own College, all the churches placed themselves behind it. This is clear from the support which the College received. And although we do not all think in exactly the same way, it cannot be denied that unity in training promotes unity in the preaching and teaching in the federation of the churches.

In this respect it is also a joy to see a growing awareness of belonging together between our churches and the churches in Australia. Together we are stronger. Not only

is one-third of the present number of students from Australia, but via the Australian Churches we have now a student from Timor, Indonesia. It is our hope and prayer that we may be an instrument in the hand of our Lord for the gathering of His church in more places on this earth. As churches and church members, and as College, we have the calling to serve Him in His on-going work of gathering and building up His Bride in the true faith. It is a joy when He grants us to do this "at home." The joy increases when He allows us to do this in a wider circle.

Joy is there too when this labour in His service can be done in cooperation with others. It is for this reason that we enjoyed having Dr. J. van Bruggen from Kampen in our midst. He did not only address us at the College evening. He also gave three guest lectures to the College community and those ministers in Ontario who were able to attend.

Moreover, as Faculty of the College, we had a discussion with our colleague about closer cooperation between Hamilton and Kampen. We do not have the right to confer a Doctor's degree. Kampen has. At this moment one of our graduates, Mr. R. Dean Anderson, is in the process of writing his dissertation. We hope that more students will complete their theological studies in Kampen and earn their doctor's degree. The churches will benefit from such continued studies.

An anniversary is not only a matter of looking back in gratitude. It is also a matter of looking forward and making plans for the future in the service of the Lord for the well-being of His church. May the Lord continue to use us for His work and bless us as Churches and their College. May He make us faithful to His Word as we confess it. May He make us a blessing for others, too. **C**

Principal's Report 1994

By J. Geertsema

With great thankfulness to the LORD our God for His blessings I may report to you about the activities during the past academic year. But before I do this, I like to ask your attention for a moment to the fact that we may celebrate tonight our twenty-fifth anniversary in the fiftieth year of the Liberation of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary

On the tenth of September 1969, the College was officially opened. This happened, under God's blessing, in accordance with a decision of the General Synod of Orangeville 1968 (Acts, Art. 132, III). This decision reads "*Recommendation: Synod set the opening date of the Theological College on the second Wednesday in September, i.e., September 10th, 1969. Adopted.*" As a result, the Board of Governors announced in the *Canadian Reformed Magazine* (CRM) of August 2 & 9, 1969 (Vol. 18, nos. 31 & 32), that "the official opening of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches will take place, the Lord willing, on Wednesday, September 10th, 1969 . . . in a Solemn Academic Convocation, where the president of the Board of Governors will officiate, and in which the Staff of the College will be installed with stipulations and prayers." In the preceding is-

sue of CRM (Vol. 18, nos. 29 & 30), the Rev. G. VanDooren wrote an article with the title "Birth Pangs of a Seminary," and remarked, "Notwithstanding our humble start and the feeling of inability in the face of the tremendous task we were of the opinion that we have to offer a course of truly academic quality." He stressed, time and again, that the College is "for the churches by the churches."

So when the tenth of September came, twenty five years ago, the Rev. W. Loopstra, president of the Board of Governors, addressed a crowd of some twelve hundred thankful church members in a solemn convocation in the Central Presbyterian Church building in Hamilton. He spoke on, and called his audience to "Glory in God." Rev. Loopstra, "Thankfully acknowledged the churches and the members thereof who by their generous donation of funds have made the execution of the resolutions, made by Synod, possible." But, said he, we should remember Paul's words at the end of 1 Cor. 1, "If a man is proud, let him be proud in the Lord." Glory in God! Then, as president, he declared, "It is my very great pleasure to dedicate the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches for this purpose that the preaching of the Divine wisdom and power revealed in

the cross of Jesus Christ be safeguarded in a world full of human, secular, sinful wisdom, which separates itself from the Word of God as it is taught in the Confessions of the church. The Canadian Reformed churches, and not only they, all Christ's churches, yes also the world, need pastors who preach this wisdom and power of God" (CRM, vol. 18, Nrs. 38 & 39, Sept. 20 & 27, 1969).

We are now twenty five years later. Through the undeserved grace of God the contents of the teaching and learning at the College has been Christ Jesus, the wisdom and the power of God. Through the same undeserved grace our God sustained the College during this quarter of a century. He carried the College through the great difficulties at the very beginning when He took one of the full-time teachers, the Rev. F. Kouwenhoven, from his earthly task and when illness prevented others to teach. Throughout all these years He continued to provide the "generous donation of funds" by the churches through the love and care of the church members. To start something is one thing, to keep it going is another. The churches started and continued to carry their College as God's gift to them and as a task for them to maintain. However, our faithfulness in having and maintaining the College is only through the



Dr. C. Van Dam, Dr. J. De Jong, Prof. J. Geertsema, Dr. N.H. Gootjes

faithfulness of our God. He did not deal with us according to our sins and shortcomings. So, tonight again, we are proud but not in ourselves. Our pride is only in the Lord, our faithful and gracious God. We glory in God.

I mentioned that this twenty-fifth anniversary of the College takes place in the fiftieth anniversary year of the Liberation. Our College cannot be conceived of in the right way without this background of the Liberation. What the churches received from the Head of the Church in the Liberation, now fifty years ago, belongs to our heritage. Hereby we keep in mind that the Liberation did not create something new but was the continuation of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands, itself inheriting the heritage of two previous Dutch reformations in the nineteenth century, and with it the riches of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, through Luther and especially through Calvin, and through them also the treasures of the early Church. It is the gospel of the triune God. The Liberation inherited the blessings of the Secession (1834) and of the Doleantie (1886). It inherited renewed insight in and faithful adherence to the confession of the Reformed churches and to the adopted Church Order of Dort, in both seeking to serve faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and His cross being the wisdom and power of God. It is our prayer that the LORD our God will help us in His grace that He may make us faithful in the next years to what He has given us so far in order that we may continue

to serve the coming of His kingdom, and the preservation and increase of His Church, and all this in the way of His Word.

College evening

Last year, on September 10, at the Nineteenth Convocation and the Twenty-fourth Anniversary Meeting of the Theological College, Dr. C. Van Dam, as the out-going principal of the College, presented his Principal's Report. Prof. J. Geertsema spoke about "The Trust of Jesus Christ in Hebrews 2 verse 13." The degree of Master of Divinity was conferred on Mr. Alfonso d'Amore, member of the Free Reformed Church at Hamilton, Ontario; on Mr. James G. Slaa who serves as minister of the church at Elora, Ontario; on Mr. Clarence J. VanderVelde, now minister of the church at Yarrow, B.C.; on Mr. John L. Van Popta, serving the church at Ottawa, Ontario; and on Mr. John Van Woudenberg, now ministering God's Word to the church at Watford, Ontario. In an annual ceremony, Mrs. E. Mulder, Mrs. J. Van Dam, and Mrs. C. Zietsma, presented again a cheque, from the Women's Saving Action for the library of the College, to the principal.

Change in functions

According to decisions of the Synod of Winnipeg 1989 (Acts, Art. 61, D.5 (p.42) and, in line with it, Synod Lincoln 1992 (acts, Art. 17, IV (p.16)), the principalship at the College became a rotating function. Therefore, after the College Evening on 10 September 1993, Prof. J. Geertsema received the task of principal

and academic dean, as well as librarian of the College for the next three years. This meant that also the other functions within the Senate and Faculty were re-assigned. The task of registrar and corresponding secretary came to Dr. N. H. Gootjes and Dr. J. De Jong became the recording secretary and dean of students, Dr. C. Van Dam receiving three years of rest from a specific extra task besides that of teaching.

Students

Last year, five new students were admitted to the Master of Divinity program, the training for future ministers. They are Mr. Roelf Christiaan (Karlo) Janssen, Mr. Richard Edwin Pot, Mr. Stephen Andrew 't Hart, all from Australia, and Mr. Stephen Carl Van Dam and Mr. Arie Pieter Vreugdenhil from Ontario. Mr. Hilco Arjen De Haan was admitted to the Diploma of Theological Studies program, set up for, e.g., teachers and mission aid workers. About three weeks into the term Mr. Dirk Poppe was permitted to join the five freshman students for the ministry, while in December Mr. Vreugdenhil withdrew from the studies at the College. The total number of students was sixteen in the first and fifteen in the second semester.

This year, four new students were admitted to the College. They are Yonson Dethan of Timor, Indonesia, who has already completed a theological training in Timor and will be admitted on the sophomore level, and further Mr. Marc Jagt of the church of Burlington-West, Mr. John Smith of the church at Fergus, Ontario, and Mr. Douglas Vande Burgt of the church at Langley, B.C., who enrolled in the Freshman Year.

Professors and extra-curricular activities

In December 1993 and in March 1994, Dr. C. Van Dam and Dr. N. H. Gootjes travelled to the churches in Alberta-Manitoba and British Columbia, respectively, in accordance with a decision of the Board of Governors that regularly one of the professors should make a speaking trip to either the churches in Alberta-Manitoba or the churches in British Columbia as a representative of the College to foster the bond with the churches in the West. Dr. Van Dam went from December 10-16, after the lectures of the first semester were ended and spoke about "Clean and Unclean in the History of Revelation" to the congregations in Winnipeg,

Edmonton, Neerlandia in combination with Barrhead, and Coaldale in combination with Taber. The congregations in Carman and Calgary listened to an address on "The Incense Offering." Besides these addresses for the churches, Dr. Van Dam held a speech on "The Diaconal Task: Some Old Testament Roots and Their Continuing Significance" at an office bearers' conference in Winnipeg, while a presentation about the College was given to the children of the Parkland Immanuel Christian School. In the Fall Dr. Van Dam addressed the Parent and Teacher Associations in Burlington and Smithville on "Wisdom, Knowledge, and Teaching" and spoke about "Creation and Evolution in the Classroom" at the convention of the Canadian Reformed Teachers Association, as well as about "Faith and Reason" at a student retreat in Ontario in March of this year.

Dr. N. H. Gootjes' trip was from March 4-12, 1994 during the Spring break at the College. He spoke about "Apostolic Miracles Today?" to the congregations at Smithers, Houston, Vernon and in Langley for all the churches in the Fraser Valley. He addressed an office bearers' conference in Abbotsford on "Euthanasia" and a ministerial workshop on "Prayer in the Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century." For the Reformed Students' Fellowship, Dr. Gootjes spoke on "Creation and Providence." At several of these meetings and more privately there was contact and there were discussions with ministers and people of the Independent Christian Reformed and the Free Reformed churches. Both Dr. Van Dam and Dr. Gootjes reported that their trip was very much appreciated by the churches. Dr. Gootjes delivered his speech "Creation and Providence" also earlier in the course year for the Burlington Study Center, and his speech about "Prayer in the Confessions of the Sixteenth Century" was delivered also at the May 1994 ministers' workshop in Hamilton.

Dr. J. Faber and Dr. J. De Jong spoke for the conference of the Church History Committee of CARE (Curriculum Assistance for Reformed Education) in July 1994 in Hamilton. Dr. Faber's topic was "Church History as Field of Study" and Dr. De Jong spoke about "Current Issues in Church History."

Prof. J. Geertsema spoke for the ministers' workshop in January on "The Importance of the Grammatical Structure of a Text for Exegesis" and about "The Influence of the 'New Age' move-

ment on Education" for a teachers' conference in Burlington, Ontario, and in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in February. In Winnipeg, at that occasion, he also addressed the Office Bearers Conference on "The Deacons and their work according to the New Testament." In June Prof. Geertsema went to the Netherlands to attend the International Conference on "The Vitality of Reformed Theology," organized by the Theological University of our sister churches in Kampen and the Theological University of the Christelijke Gereformeerde churches in Apeldoorn. At this conference he presented a workshop paper on "Wholeness: the Unifying Theme of the Letter of James."

All five members of the Senate contributed to the "Festschrift" offered to Prof. Drs. H. M. Ohmann at the occasion of his retirement, entitled **Een Sprekend Begin. Opstellen aangeboden aan Prof. Drs. H. M. Ohmann** (A Telling Start Essays presented to Prof. Drs. H. M. Ohmann). Dr. J. Faber's contribution has as title "Nominalisme in Calvijn's preken over Job?" (Is there nominalism in Calvin's sermons on Job?). Dr. C. Van Dam wrote about "Duidelijke taal. De boodschap van de hemelen volgens Psalm 19:5a" (Clear language. The message of the heavens

according to Ps. 19:5a). Dr. N. H. Gootjes contributed a study on "Boerenwerk volgens algemene openbaring? (The betekenis van Jesaja 28:23-29" (Is the work of a farmer done according to general revelation? The meaning of Isaiah 28:23-29). Dr. J. De Jong wrote about "Niet zonder grote oorzaak. De plaats van de metafoor in de prediking van het Oude Testament" (Not without great cause. The place of the metaphor in the preaching of the Old Testament). And Prof. J. Geertsema wrote about the words "Ik zal op Hem vertrouwen" in Hebr. 2:13a" ('I shall trust in Him' in Hebr. 2:13a).

As for publications, Dr. J. De Jong published an article about "The impact of New Trends in Biblical Interpretation on Preaching" in **Koinonia** (vol. xiv, 2 (1993)). Dr. Gootjes published a paper on the problems around euthanasia entitled **Both in Life and in Death** through the Inter League Publication Board.

The Library

At the previous College Evening the library received again the annual cheque from the Women's Saving Action, with money which was donated and collected by the sisters in our churches. We are very thankful that this necessary support continues year after year. Our appreciation is the



Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Geertsema
Coeditors: J. De Jong, R.A. Schouten,
C. Van Dam, G.Ph. van Popta

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION
41 Amberly Boulevard
Ancaster, ON, Canada L9G 3R9
ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE
MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):
CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5
Phone: (204) 663-9000 Fax: (204) 663-9202

SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 1993		Regular Mail	Air Mail
Canada*		\$32.00*	\$57.25*
U.S.A.	U.S. Funds	\$35.00	\$50.00
	International	\$46.25	\$78.00

* Including 7% GST - No. R104293055

Advertisements: \$6.50 per column inch

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Publications Mail Registration No. 1025
ISSN 0383-0438

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greater because we realize that on the one hand the present economic situation is not as good as it was a few years ago, while on the other hand all books, but especially those from Europe, are becoming more and more expensive, while the dollar is losing its value. For the same annual amount of money the library can buy much less up-to-date study material. From the personal library of the late Prof. Drs. H. J. Schilder, the College could purchase the complete set of the Old Testament journal *Vetus Testamentum*.

From several members of the churches we received again much appreciated gifts. Among them are a commemoration coin for Jan de Bakker, the first martyr in the Netherlands in 1525, and older and new books such as a large part of the library of the late professor Christine Boot, of Freiburg, Germany.

With regard to the library, a major change is taking place. During the first years of our College the books of the library were taken up in a card system, whereby the numbering of the so-called Dewey cataloguing system was used. Then two things happened. In the first place, computers became common tools and for libraries computer cataloguing programs were designed. In the second place, practically all the institutional and public libraries adopted the Library of Congress cataloguing system instead of the Dewey system. The decision was made some ten years ago to put our library holdings in a computer cataloguing program with the Library of Congress numbering system. It is evident that having all the books in a computer catalogue makes the search for titles and subjects much easier and more efficient.

In the beginning of this transfer Mrs. Janet Marren helped us. The College also hired Ms. Marion Van Til who, from 1987 until November 1993, worked first two days and later one day per week in particular for this project. However, it became evident that the transfer progressed too slowly. Therefore, the Board was happy when it could hire Miss Margaret Van der Velde as full time associate librarian per November 1993. The much appreciated service to the library of Mrs. Van Til was no longer needed. The transfer is now progressing to the satisfaction of all and we expect that the transfer will be completed within approximately three years instead of about thirty years in the previous conversion program. This speed of the transfer is in part also the result of the use of the database of

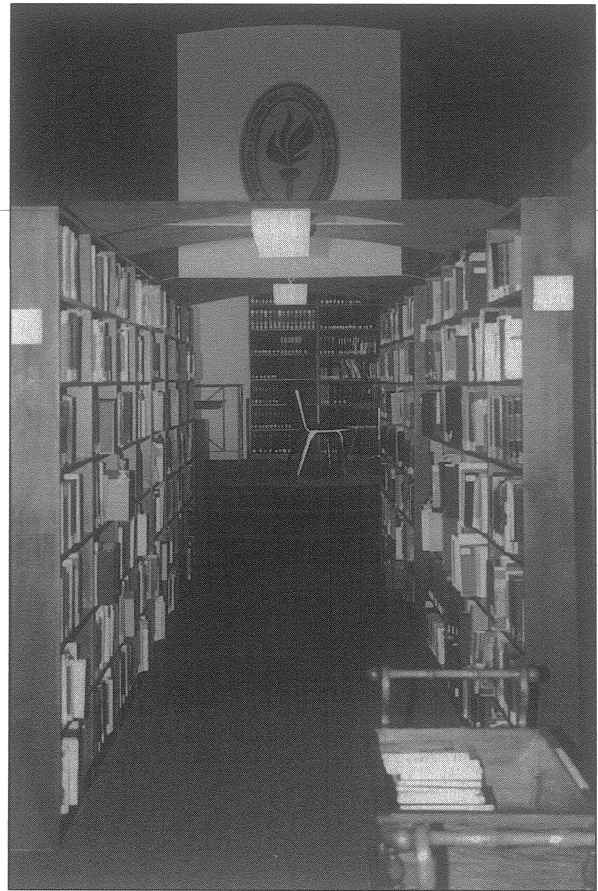
catalogued book records from the Online Computer Library Center in Dublin (Ohio).

Also again during the past year the library received the very helpful aid of volunteers. In the first place, there was Mrs. Allison Schutten, who was planning to help out also during the summer months. However, because of a serious accident of one of the children, she was not able to come in the past summer. In her place Shanna Bartels helped us out. Other volunteers were Mrs. H. Eikelboom, Mr. G. Gritter, Mr. U. Krikke, Rev. J. Mulder, Mrs. M. Ostermeier, and Ms. E. Van den Aardweg, regularly and for a longer period, and for a shorter time, Mrs. R. Buitenhuis, Miss J. Mans, Mrs. L. Oliver, Mrs. S. Poppe, Miss L. Strating, and Mrs. W. Vanderwoude. I mention in particular Mrs. A. Blokker and Mrs. B.C. Jissink, both from the Ebenezer Villa. We, in the College, and in particular, those working in and for the library, appreciate this volunteer work very much because it saves much time for the librarian.

The College and the Churches

Established by the churches now twenty five years ago, the College has functioned in the midst of the churches for the churches. It is our prayer and hope that we may continue together in this way as churches and their College: in the midst of the churches and for the churches. These churches are in the first place all the Canadian and American Reformed churches as well as the Free Reformed (sister) churches in Australia. But we hope also to be of some benefit for all those whom God places on our way, such as at this moment the Reformed churches on Timor in Indonesia. We are part of that Church which the Lord gathers out of all the nations of the earth from the beginning to the end of this world.

The question can sometimes come up whether the churches will soon have a sufficient number of ministers. Hav-



Theological College library

ing at this moment fifteen students and only four vacancies in Canada and three in Australia, this question could seem to be a valid one. However, we, human beings, do not have things in our hands. God rules. Christ takes care of His Church. It is possible that within four years the situation will have changed completely. Moreover, with a continuing trend to split up the larger congregations and form smaller ones, as well as the need for missionaries and at least one home mission minister, to mention only this, we should not say that we soon will have no work anymore for our candidates. And most of all, the word which Christ spoke to His disciples, before He sent them out ahead of Himself (Mat. 9:37-38), is still true today, "The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest." May we as churches and their College continue to serve this purpose and be fruitful for our Lord's harvest. And may He continue to bless us for the building of His church worldwide in obedience of faith to His will and so for the coming of His kingdom to His Name's glory. C

Past and Place of the Theological College

25th anniversary meeting and 20th convocation Friday, September 9, 1994.

By J. Faber

At this joyful occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed churches I would like to make some remarks about its *past* and its *place*.

I. Past

Speaking about the past of the Theological College, I restrict myself and give special attention to its pre-history and its very beginning. A more complete survey of the history is to be found in the principal's statements of these twenty-five years.

A. 1954-1962

The very first General Synod of the Canadian Reformed churches held in Carman, Manitoba, already spoke about an own seminary. This was forty years ago, in 1954. Synod 1954 decided that the degree of candidate of theology, obtained at the Theological Seminary of our sister churches in the Netherlands, would be necessary for ecclesiastical examinations. The remarkable thing is that the decision ends with the following clause: "until it is possible for our churches to be supplied with candidates, trained at our own seminary."

If I calculated well, in 1954 there were fifteen Canadian Reformed churches. They were dispersed over this vast country of ours, divided into a classis East and a classis West and altogether they did not yet have 1,500 communicant members. Those members were poor struggling immigrants, often single or with large families. They were served by eight ministers of the gospel. There were at most seven vacancies and all worship services were still conducted in the Dutch language. No wonder that vacant congregations regularly called ministers from the Netherlands, graduates of Kampen, the theological seminary of our sister churches. And yet

the first national synod of the Canadian Reformed churches in 1954 visualized an own seminary.

Let us characterize this vision as a sign that also in church life Reformed immigrants cherish their independence.

The following synod (1958) even rescinded the exclusive binding to the degree of Kampen. It took into consideration the difference in pre-seminary studies on the American continent and in the Netherlands. It also spoke of the need to know that theological state of affairs on this continent and the fact that years of study in the Netherlands alienate a student from the Canadian society. The cold war situation of 1958 is reflected in synod's consideration about the geographical distance, possible international tensions and war time with a lack of communication between Canada and the Netherlands. The dream of an own training for the ministry became more vivid. Deputies were to ask of the churches six collections per year, in preparation of an own training for the ministry ("ter voorbereiding van een eigen opleiding.")

The third synod (Hamilton 1962) maintained the principle that the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ themselves should take care of the training for the ministry. Synod 1962, however, deemed it presently not feasible to appoint professors and lecturers.

Instead thereof a kind of manse training was established: eight ministers were appointed to be teachers and four to be governors. Before admission to this provisional form of training a student should have obtained a Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree. Synod stated that there are young people in our churches who wish to be trained for the ministry and their number will grow if the proper steps are taken to facilitate the theological instruction. However, it

did not really work this way and only one young man completed his training for the ministry in this manner, namely the Rev. C. van Spronsen in 1966.

In the meantime, Synod 1965 had appointed three governors from Western Canada and three from Eastern Canada and requested them to study the whole matter of the Theological College in all its aspects. It even authorized them to purchase an estate in the province of Ontario. It raised the contribution of the churches from one dollar to seven dollars per communicant member per year.

B. 1965-1969

In this second half of the sixties the matter of the Theological College came into a maelstrom and my narration becomes more subjective.

Of the young men within the Canadian Reformed churches who wanted to become minister one still found his way to Kampen but in September 1968 three others went to Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Their choice of this institution was influenced by the situation in the Netherlands.

Since 1963 there was great turmoil within our Dutch sister churches. In 1966 an "Open Letter" appeared and in connection with this publication a schism came about also in the church at Kampen. A letter written by a prospective student to the theological seminary in that city remained unanswered. This student was among those who found then their way to Philadelphia. It shows that the turmoil in the Dutch sister churches affected the theological instruction also of Canadian young men who desired to obtain an official degree at an established institution.

Meanwhile the danger was that the three different ways the students chose – the provisional training, Kampen or

Philadelphia – would be detrimental to the unity of the Canadian Reformed churches. There was already a difference of opinion about the question whether needy students who chose to go to Westminster Theological Seminary should receive financial aid from the general deputies according to Article 19 of the Church Order.

Moreover, the situation in the Dutch sister churches divided the Canadian Reformed community. Beside the weekly entitled *Canadian Reformed Magazine* – the forerunner of *Clarion* – another publication had appeared in 1967, namely *Shield and Sword*. A later historian will be struck by the fact that these Canadian church papers for a great part were still written in the Dutch language and extensively dealt with particular issues in the Netherlands. There was a different evaluation especially of the procedures and of the application of the church order in the churches of the “old country.” Distrust arose among the Canadian brothers. It was fed by different evaluations of the still ongoing discussions with the Christian Reformed Church of North America.

There was no discussion at all in the church papers about the desirability or possibility of an own theological institution in this situation. The report of the governors of the provisional training was sent too late to the churches. Synod Orangeville was to begin on November 7, 1968. The only remark about this important point of the agenda was made in a Dutch daily. On October 23 the Rev. L. Selles wrote in his column “From the land of the Maple Leaf” about “the extremely difficult issue of the Training for the Ministry, difficult because our powers are small and the requirements for a responsible training are large.”

When Synod opened, one of the delegates of the West, the Rev. J. Van Popta, was ill and replaced by his alternate. There was uncertainty with respect to the way the Canadian Reformed churches should go in the matter of the theological training. Two churches had appealed the decision to raise the quorum from one dollar. They had not paid the requested seven dollars per communicant member and also other churches were in arrears. While Synod 1965 had authorized to use \$6,000 for the purchase of books, only \$491 were spent. No estate in Ontario had been purchased since the governors had deemed such action premature. There was now an overture

of the Board of Governors to appoint two professors but there was also a letter of some of them, sent at a later date. It did suggest that further preparations were necessary before a College could be set up. The church at Hamilton was of the opinion that “there are better and more appropriate possibilities, also more realistic and responsible.” The church at Edmonton suggested that Synod “investigate whether there are other Theological Schools or Colleges where a reformed theological training can be obtained” (Acts Art. 170). The governors of Westminster Theological Seminary had declared themselves willing to let Canadian Reformed ministers teach e.g. Reformed church history and church polity. We read in the Dutch daily *Nederlands Dagblad* of December 9, 1968, that this seminary was even willing to consider creating itself a chair for a professor to be designated by a general synod of the Canadian Reformed churches. This possibility of using Westminster Theological Seminary was also recommended on the floor of Synod. But what did Synod Orangeville 1968 decide?

There were lengthy discussions in which the president and the secretary of the Board of Governors participated. Then, on the twentieth of November 1968 Synod decided “in principle to appoint professors for the Training for the Ministry.” Thanks be to God for this principal decision. The majority of the delegates to Synod – especially the

elders – must have thought “Now or never.”

On November the 25th the Rev. G. van Dooren wrote in his Synod impressions, published in C.R.M.: “. . . the matter of the Training for the Ministry has proved to be the big issue. At this moment we cannot say much. There has been a meeting of the ‘curatoren’ (Governors) the whole day. Tonight there is a session with closed doors. Suspension is in the air.”

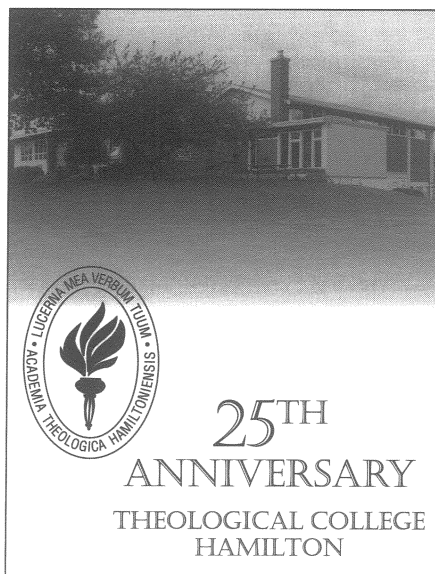
And then on November 27th he tells this story: “After two days of ‘secret session’, Synod finally opened its doors to the public, consisting at that moment in only ONE lady, our faithful Jennie who, representing the whole Canadian Reformed community, heard the following proclamation by the President of Synod: After extended discussions and deliberations Synod has decided to replace the present, provisional set-up of the Training for the Ministry by a regular THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE, with THREE full-time PROFESSORS and TWO part-time lecturers.”

The faithful lady was sister Jennie Lodder, member of the church at Orangeville and typist of Synod. The president was the Rev. W. W. J. VanOene. The five appointed brothers were the professor of systematic theology J. T. VanPopta, Cloverdale, B.C.; the professor of Old Testament Drs. J. Faber, Rotterdam, the Netherlands; the professor of New Testament L. Selles, Chatham, Ont.; the lecturer on Church History and Church Polity H. Scholten, M. Th., Smithville, Ont.; and the lecturer on Pastoral Theology G. VanDooren, M. Th., Burlington, Ont.

We read in the Acts that the chairman expressed Synod’s gratitude that these appointments could be made. “May the Lord restore the appointee the Rev. J. T. VanPopta, who still is seriously ill. May the Lord establish the work of our hands upon us, Psalm 90.”

The Rev. J. Mulder informed me, by telephone, of my unexpected appointment and invited me to Synod. This was Wednesday afternoon. The following day, Thursday, I arrived from the Netherlands. I was interested in the positive work of setting up a Theological College. But in consultation with my wife I had already decided not to accept an appointment as professor of Old Testament, since such was not in the line of my previous studies. My resolution to decline was strengthened, when I noticed that because of distrust the Rev. F. Kouwenhoven of Toronto had been

OUR COVER



bypassed, although he had obtained a Master of Theology degree and had been the teacher of Old Testament in the provisional training.

But then on Saturday, October 30, in the providence of our wise God and Father, the Rev. VanPopta was taken away. He died without ever having heard of his appointment as professor.

On Monday December 2, under the deep impression of the death of this beloved brother, Synod changed my appointment from Old Testament disciplines to systematic theology and appointed Rev. Kouwenhoven as Professor Old Testament. Distrust was set aside and also this last appointment was made by single nomination and it was unanimous. All brothers felt that the Lord in his sovereign rule had guided them in this way.

The following day, December 3, we had our first meeting as appointed faculty and our first combined meeting with the Board of governors. The Board approved the appointments of principal, vice-principal, secretary, librarian, and dean of students/registrar. It was then already decided that in a solemn convocation at the opening of the College on September 10, 1969, the principal would deliver an address on "The catholic character of the Belgic Confession."

Already on January 1, 1969, he came in function; on April 1 the two other professors and the two lecturers followed. In the period of preparation I prepared a curriculum, went to auctions, bought books for our fledging library and finished my doctoral studies in the Netherlands, while my unforgettable colleague Selles stayed for six weeks at Westminster. He was to serve the College as professor New Testament for seventeen years.

Students would be as important as professors. Would they come? Well, in the summer of 1969 four students enrolled, two of them from Philadelphia, Wietze Huizinga and Keith Van Dam, further Menno Werkman from the provisional training and Jack Visscher.

A stately mansion in Hamilton was bought and by this choice of location Hamilton's congregation received a much needed revival. On the set date, September 10, 1969, now twenty-five years ago, the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches was opened. There was a large audience: brothers and sisters from West and East among whom were all the Canadian Reformed ministers. Also present were a

Free Reformed minister, the Rev. J. Overduin and a delegation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church headed by the old Prof. Paul Woolley of Philadelphia.

It was an important milestone in the life of the Canadian Reformed churches and we could only say: "This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (Ps. 118: 24, 25)

However, a few weeks later, on October 4, 1969, the Rev. Kouwenhoven, professor of Old Testament, suffered a heart attack and died. He could not be replaced before following Synod. In the same beginning period of the Theological College lecturer Scholten became ill. For one and a half year he was unable to deliver the lectures in church history and church polity.

But the work at the College had begun and was to continue. A few men carried the work of study and teaching, of library and administration and they did so in close harmony with one another and with the students. Synod 1971 brought relief by appointing drs. H. M. Ohmann professor of Old Testament in which function he was to serve the College for ten years.

Meanwhile, in the beginning period, the God of life had taught us humility and our utter dependence upon Him alone.

II Place

When I now break off the historical narration about the beginning of our institution, I do so in order to make some remarks about the *place* of our Theological College. By using the word "place" I do not mean its geographical location in the city of Hamilton – first at Queen Street South and now at West 27th Street –, but its ecclesiastical and theological position.

Ecclesiastical Position

The historical narration made clear that the Canadian Reformed churches right from the start took the position that the training for the ministry should be under control of the churches themselves. The Scriptures indicate that there should be preachers: How are men to believe in the Lord of whom they have never heard? and how are they to hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:14). And the same apostle Paul writes in his last letter to Timothy about the relay race of the gospel: What you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will

be able to teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2). The training for the ministry is "for the church and by the church." We inherited the adherence to this principle from the churches of the Secession in the Netherlands.

Synod Orangeville 1968 rejected the proposal to refer prospective students to other theological schools or colleges. Such a course "would lead away from a College of our own and would bring the churches to make use of a College or Seminary over which they would have no control whatsoever . . . (I)t is to be considered a matter of utmost importance for the future of the churches that the training for the Ministry be kept in our own hands" (Acts, Art. 170).

In 1981 the Ontario legislature passed an Act respecting The Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches. It was another historic moment. The Act incorporated our institution and gave it the authority to grant degrees in theology. The preamble states that "the Canadian Reformed churches, an unincorporated federation of reformed churches in Canada . . . maintain an institution of higher learning in theology for the training for the ministry." Note well: The *churches* maintain this institution for the training for the ministry. This indicates the ecclesiastical position of our Theological College.

The bond that ties the College to the churches is very important. This umbilical cord should never be severed. The churches provide the blood of *life* for the College and the College gives new *blood* to the life of the churches.

Did you know that in 1975 there were twenty-six active ministers and that still eighteen of them had studied in the Netherlands and that their average was 53 years? Eight ministers were Hamiltonians and their average age was 34.

Ten years later there were forty-three ministers. Twenty of them had studied in Kampen. Their average age was 58. Twenty-three had studied in Hamilton, average age 36.

The latest yearbook 1994 gives the number of forty-eight active ministers, missionaries and professors included. Let me not betray their average age but mention that only *twelve* received their basic training for the ministry in the Netherlands and *thirty-six* studied on the American continent.

I do not now consider our Australian sister churches who right from the beginning showed their heartfelt

interest and who especially in the last decade gave strong support to the Theological College. The composition of our present student body speaks loudly of Australian participation.

My conclusion from the figures for the Canadian Reformed churches is that in establishing their own College they became more independent from the Netherlands. The Synod of Orangeville was the first in which English was the language of the discussions. The founding of the Theological College was the historic moment in which the Canadian Reformed churches came to maturity. At the same time it was the moment in which they were miraculously rejuvenated.

At least as important was the fact that the fire of schism did not blow over the Atlantic Ocean. The institution of the College rather strengthened the *unity* of the Canadian Reformed churches. Around the appointment of the Rev. Kouwenhoven I reminded the Synod of Orangeville of the beginning of the Theological School in Kampen in 1854. Its opening had not only prevented that the students were scattered but it had also bound the teachers together in one body. They were of different stripe but of the same Reformed confession. Thanks be to God that since 1969 this has been valid also of Hamilton and the Canadian Reformed churches.

I will now be silent about the work that the Faculty did for the committees of the Book of Praise, Bible-translation and in the contact with the Christian Reformed and Orthodox-Presbyterian Church. It was all directed to the furthering of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ who gathers, defends and preserves his church in the unity of faith.

The strengthening of this unity of faith is one of the most important aspects of the twenty-five years of service of the Theological College. In this context I could even speak about the significance of the fact that we received some students from the Free Reformed churches and some from the Christian Reformed Church. In these twenty-five years of service we not only received young men from Canada, Australia and New Zealand but also one from Italy and now from Indonesia. The Reformed faith is universal and the Theological College has its modest place in the gathering of God's catholic church.

Theological Position

This brings us to our last point in the discussion of the place of the Theologi-

cal College, namely its *theological* position. It was clear right from the beginning that the churches wanted to obtain ministers of the gospel who are academically well-trained. They showed it in the appointment of the teaching staff. The academic qualifications of professors and lecturers were taken into consideration. Such is important for an academic institution. Let us express our gratitude to God who in the present Faculty gave us four professors who are not only Reformed confessors but qualified theologians. They continued their studies so that three of them became Doctors and one of them is a Master of Theology. These things are also gifts from God.

One of our first students is now professor of Old Testament and another of the first four is a Doctor of Ministry and our present president-governor. The professor of ecclesiology and diaconology is also one of the former students of our own institution. A university or college weaves the thread of its own life. Therefore it is important for the future that the Theological College uses the opportunity of the Act of the Ontario legislature and brings into place a program of Master of Theology studies as soon as possible. As far as the *students* are concerned, Synod 1974 not only rejected a proposal to drop the requirement of a B. A. degree but increased the years of study at the Theological College from three to four. The new curriculum underlined the special theological character of Hamilton. It is its emphasis upon the knowledge of the languages of Holy Scripture. I do not know of any theological institution on the American continent – or in Europe for that matter – that pre-requires two years of study of Hebrew and Greek at a university – and one year Latin for the sake of good measure – and then not only continues the teaching of these languages in the Freshman Year but gives instruction in advanced Hebrew and Greek during the Sophomore, Junior and Senior years.

It indicates our theological position. Since it has pleased the Lord God to grant us His Word in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, ministers of the gospel should never [be able to] shy away from study of the Scriptures in the original languages. And the study of Latin should make it possible for them to stay in contact with original sources of the church of all ages. It is part and parcel of our Reformed conviction. Twenty-five years ago, in July 1969, I defended in Kampen the following

proposition: In expanding a Reformed theological seminary one ought not first of all to pay attention to the study of the areas at the *boundaries* of theology but to the study of purely *theological* disciplines.

This conviction stamped the curriculum of our Theological College in 1969 and in 1975. The emphasis on Biblical languages should remain Hamilton's hallmark.

Our Reformed theological position should also be manifest in our lively bond to the reformational movement of the thirties in the Netherlands. In this year of the fiftieth anniversary of the Liberation we should not forget that the maturity and the independence of the Canadian Reformed churches do not exclude the task of our theological institution to expound the significance of the doctrines of God's covenant and church and of redemptive-historical preaching.

Also the library of the Theological College should show our identity in our European Reformed background. Its build-up has been graciously made possible by the Women's Savings Action so that in twenty-years it grew from a paltry one hundred volumes to almost twenty-two thousand. It should become more and more a *Fundgrube* for continental Reformed theology.

But, esteemed audience, I probably asked too much of your attention already.

Let me conclude with a personal word of deep gratitude to God. We heard of names and achievements in twenty-five years of service of the Theological College. But if anyone knows of missed opportunities and – worse – of sins, shortcomings and miseries of Faculty and students, I do. God himself called me through his Canadian Reformed congregations to be the principal of this institution for twenty-one years. But when we think of our sins and transgressions and our misuse of God's gifts, let us not despair of God's mercy and let us take refuge with our perfect Mediator and Saviour Jesus Christ. And when we now recount the *past* and the *place* of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and think of its small and frail beginnings and of God's constant faithfulness and abiding and abundant blessings, let us glorify the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Let us worship and adore God and Him alone.

"For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. 11:36). C

Congratulatory Speech

By Dr. Jakob van Bruggen

On behalf of the Theological University of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Kampen, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches, Hamilton (September 9, 1994).

Mr. chairman, members of the board of governors, colleagues, students and dear brothers and sisters,

It is a great pleasure to be in your midst as a representative of the Theological University in Kampen. My physical presence symbolizes the importance Kampen attaches to the existence of our sister College in Hamilton. Moreover, the presence of my wife symbolizes the joy it gives her and me personally to meet many of you again, . . . this time in your own country. In the name of the community of Kampen university, the board of trustees, the professors, the students, I extend our warm congratulations to you all this evening.

In our corporate prayer last Monday, we thanked our Lord together for your work and for your fidelity to the Gospel. We asked Him, by His grace, to continue to preserve this 25 year old institution into the distant future, that it may be of great service to the Canadian Reformed churches and to many others. May your College serve the propagation of the rich Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ through His blessing.


The senate of our faculty at Kampen has sent me to deliver some guest lectures to you as a congratulatory gesture at a scholarly level. I guess that you would rather receive that gift at a somewhat more appropriate time than this evening. The president has asked me to restrict myself to a few minutes at this time – a real challenge for a theologian (!).

Concerning the past it is not too difficult to be brief: So many personal connections have developed between our respective institutions that it is superfluous to lay stress upon our continuing good relationship. It is an honour to us that your present teachers used to be our own disciples.

Concerning the present I can also be brief: you have found your own way and your Seminary has developed into a real Anglo Saxon Reformed theological institution, just as we are a real European centre of Reformed Theology. We have much in common when we look to the past, but here in the present we also realize that we have both found our own form and system. It is a good thing that we are not exact copies of each other.

Concerning the future I cannot be short. I am glad that there will be an opportunity to speak with the faculty about that future. Let me summarize the important points. First: I hope that we can find a good way to make our institutions more compatible for students who wish to make use of them both. Second: I hope that we can develop a plan for a common approach in answering the growing need for education in Reformed theology. Third: I hope that at certain points we can develop plans for cooperation in research and publication. As you can see, there are great expectations. After 25 years we have the common duty to utilize to the utmost the gifts the Lord has given us in the Theological College in Hamilton and the Theological University in Kampen. May the Lord bless your future and give us a joint blessing as sister institutions!

I thank you, Mr. chairman, for the opportunity of delivering the warm congratulations of Kampen on this festive occasion.



CHURCH NEWS

CALLED AND ACCEPTED to Aldergrove, BC

Candidate H. Boersma
of Carman, MB

CALLED to Abbotsford, BC

Rev. W. den Hollander
of Orangeville, ON

This copy of the congratulatory speech is undersigned by the colleagues in Kampen to make visible that the congratulations are on their joint account.

Prof. Drs. J. A. Meijer
(N.T. Greek and Ecclesiastical Latin)

Prof. Dr. J. Douma
(Christian Ethics)

Mr. M. E. Hoekzema
(Psychology; Paedagogics; Education)

Prof. Drs. G. Kwakkel
(Old Testament)

Drs. C. J. Haak
(Missiology)

Prof. Dr. C. J. de Ruijter
(Pastoral Theology)

Prof. Drs. R. Kamphuis
(Dogmatics)

Prof. Dr. M. te Velde
(Church History after 1650;
Church Polity)

Drs. M. J. Rittersma
(Classical Latin and Greek)

Prof. Dr. J. van Bruggen
(New Testament)

Mrs. Drs. M. A. Blok-Sytsma
(Hebrew)



The Road Towards Our Own College

By W.W.J. VanOene

(Note of the editor: This contribution of the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene was asked for and received during the summer. Rev. VanOene mentions a number of facts also presented in Dr. J. Faber's address at the College Evening. This repetition cannot be avoided. However, we do not see it as detrimental since Rev. VanOene presents the history that led to the establishment of the College in more detail. JG)

The time has not yet come to write an exhaustive history of our Theological College, even though it is almost twenty-six years ago that the decision was taken to establish it, and twenty-five years ago that it was opened. Yet this fact may not go unnoticed, and some aspects of the history should be related at this occasion. The purpose of this submission is to give some particulars of the history leading up to the establishment of our own Theological College or Seminary.

It will be understood and undoubtedly also accepted that I do not write as an outsider, but as one who was involved in the matter of the training for the ministry from the very beginning. What follows is a record of personal recollections, and for this reason I shall not quote many official decisions literally. Our readers can find them in the Acts of the various general synods held since 1954. By these official decisions they can also judge the correctness of my recollections.

The first synod

For the first years after the immigration we felt ourselves more or less still one with the federation of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. We all came from there, the services were conducted in the Dutch language, the ministers had received their training there, and we received advice and support from the old country.

From the outset, however, the ties with the Netherlands were stronger in the East than in the West. Whether this

was a result of distance and separating mountain ranges or of the spirit of independence and autonomy which has characterized the West from the early days on, who can tell? A fact is that the Eastern churches were more oriented towards the Netherlands than those in the West.

This became evident also from the proposals that reached the first general synod, the one held in Carman in the fall of 1954.

From the East came the proposal to accept the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in Kampen as our own institution for the training for the ministry, and to request the churches to have two collections per year for that institution. Further also, to appoint some deputies to investigate the possibility of having our own institution.

Classis West of Nov. 11, 1953, however, proposed to ask the churches for a non-specified number of collections per year to form a fund for our own training for the ministry. Part of the monies thus collected should be used for the setting up of a library. Not a word about the Netherlands.

What did the 1954 synod do?

It decided in the first place that a degree from "Kampen" would be required for admission to the ecclesiastical examinations, and that the committee to be appointed should contact the Board of Governors of "Kampen" about the requirements for admission. Then already it was realized that the differences in high school education would cause difficulties for our students.

Collections for "Kampen?" If any church was eager to have such a collection, they would be most welcome to have one, but a general synod has no right to ask the churches to have collections for an institution not our own.

Another proposal

There was still another proposal from the East. It concerned the support of needy students.

Classis East of April 28, 1954, proposed to ask two collections per year in preparation of the execution of Art. 19 C.O. "and to charge (Brrr! VO) each classis with the administration of these monies and in the further execution of Art. 19 C.O."

To this proposal synod replied that it had no right to charge the churches with anything regarding Art. 19 C.O.

As for the proposal to have collections in preparation of the establishment of our own seminary, synod decided to ask for four collections per year for this purpose and to appoint deputies to administer the fund and to be diligent in the whole matter of training for the ministry.

The second synod

The matter of training for the ministry was again at the synodical table when the second synod was held in 1958, again in Carman, Manitoba.

In the three-and-a-half years that had elapsed since the first synod it became evident that the requirement that a degree be obtained from "Kampen" could not be maintained. It was rescinded by the synod of 1958.

It also became increasingly clear that the high school instruction in Canada differed considerably from the one in the Netherlands, at least as far as the classical training was concerned. Additional study would be required before one could be admitted to "Kampen."

Another factor was that traditionally the whole course of theological studies in Kampen was mainly oriented towards Germany and not towards the English-speaking world. It was considered necessary that our students be well-informed about theological trends and theories on this continent.

A further argument was that an absence from Canada for four or more years put an undue strain upon students and their families. This, it was felt, was a burden the churches had no right to impose. Besides, such a lengthy absence would unavoidably cause

some alienation, and this would be harmful.

What then to do about the requirement necessary with respect to the ecclesiastical examinations?

This was the solution: Until we shall have our own Seminary, a degree of Candidate of Theology, or a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Divinity degree would be the prerequisite. If such a degree had not been obtained from the Seminary of our Netherlands sister churches, complementary study would be required covering Reformed Dogmatics, Reformed Church History and Reformed Church Polity. What was required for this study was to be formulated, and examiners were to be appointed.

The synod of 1962

Was it a solution? For the time being, yes. But at the Synod of 1962 it was pointed out that there were already young men who were asking for training! It became more and more difficult to call ministers from the Netherlands, seeing that the English language was being used more and more exclusively. And also the present ministers were growing older, so that the need for new ministers became more pressing.

However "primitive" such a training might be at first, it was the conviction of the brothers that steps should be taken to provide this necessary training.

Synod did not consider it justified now already to appoint two professors and four lecturers. This was one of the options mentioned in the report of the deputies appointed by Synod 1958.

Other options were : make use of ministers, who continue their regular task but besides that give lectures to prospective students. Or: students travel from the one minister to the other, while occasionally lectures are given in a more central location.

When the choice had to be made between "full-time professors" or "part-time instructors," Synod 1962 chose for the latter set-up. It appointed nine ministers as part-time instructors, as also a Board of Governors with the mandate to start with the theological training as soon as one or more students would present themselves for it.

For admission to the training for the ministry a Bachelor of Arts degree or its equivalent would be required.

Synod also authorized the Board of Governors to purchase a specific property in Burlington ON, if it appeared that a college of our own could be af-

filiated with a university without being located in the same place as the university.

The need for the build-up of a library was clearly seen. Thus synod decided until the next synod to allow the Board of Governors an amount of \$3,000 for the library.

What about collections? No collections were asked any longer. In their stead came the decision that it was necessary for the execution of the decisions made that, until the next general synod, the churches should contribute \$1.00 per member per year.

Then came the 1965 synod

There it appeared that the money put at the disposal of the Board of Governors for the library by the previous general synod had not been used. The Board of Governors decided to make available for the library \$300.00 per instructor, stipulating that the instructors should choose only such books as were strictly needed for the training for the ministry.

This gesture did not mean much. It was to be expected that the instructors who, we may trust, had been chosen with a view to their demonstrated interest in a specific field of study, already had such resources as they considered necessary; and as there was as yet no place where to bring the books together while, besides that, the students were to go from the one minister to the other, there was no urgency to purchase any works. Possible students could borrow them from the instructors.

All in all, not much progress was made in the period between the synods of 1962 and 1965. No meeting of the complete board of governors or of the instructors took place. No authorization for any such meeting had been given by the 1962 synod. We were still groping for our way, so to speak.

Mr. C. VanSpronsen was accepted as a student. He had commenced his studies at "Kampen," where he passed the propaedeutic examination and had been admitted to the theological studies proper. With a view to the work done by him in the Netherlands it was felt that two more years of study would suffice for him. We all know that our brother successfully completed these studies and has served the churches in various capacities already for more than twenty-five years.

It was also realized that his admission meant that our own training for the ministry had started. The Board of

Governors stated this expressly in its report to the 1965 Synod.

For this reason it is the more incomprehensible that the Board of Governors expressed as its opinion that "Probably it would be wise if the Synod instructs the Staff to examine in the next three years whether, and if yes, where the Theological Seminary should be established."

"Whether" a seminary should be established? But did not already the 1958 general synod point to the necessity of having our own Seminary, when it decided about the documents to be submitted for the ecclesiastical examinations, that this should apply "until the moment when our churches can be provided with candidates that received their training at our own institution for training for the Ministry"?

And now, in 1962, appoint a committee to advise *whether* such an institution should be established?

Synod's decisions

What did Synod 1965 decide?

In the first place it made \$6,000.00 available for the library. This amount included the three thousand dollars that the previous synod had set aside for the purpose, but that was not used.

Further it decided that students older than thirty years of age could be admitted upon successfully passing an admission examination. As "mature students" they would be exempt from the obligation to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree first. Later this possibility was removed from the regulations. At present a qualified Bachelor of Arts degree is required of all who seek admission to the College.

The Board of Governors was also authorized to purchase property in the Province of Ontario. Among the conditions to be met, we find that there should be room for expansion, and that affiliation with a university should be possible.

This shows that synod did not accept the suggestion of the Board of Governors to have it investigated "whether" a seminary should be established. If one is still uncertain "whether" (or not) one should do a certain thing, one does not authorize purchase of property for the purpose, does one?

The charge to the Board of Governors "to investigate the whole matter of a Theological College in all its aspects" and to report about it to the next general synod can, therefore, not be understood

as including the "whether," but only as referring to the "how."

The same synod adopted the following rule for the Board of Governors: "The Churches take care of the Training for the Ministry by means of Governors who are appointed and instructed by the General Synod." This, too, refutes any thought that it was still up in the air whether a seminary should be established.

Up to Orangeville

For fourteen years the matter of our own institution for training for the Ministry had been under discussion. It was time for action.

During the years between the synods of 1965 and 1968 the Board of Governors investigated various possibilities.

Affiliation with a university appeared practically impossible. Establishment of a College under Charter by Private Bill was almost equally impossible, due to technical and legal complications and the cost involved.

Another possibility would be Incorporation under the Corporations Act and this without affiliation. But the Board of Governors did not come with any proposals in that direction either.

One of the biggest difficulties was that the College still had to be established, that as yet there was no library, and that the authorities were very reluctant to offer any encouragement because many young people "are herded into institutions with the idea that they are going to receive a recognized degree, but they find out too late that in many cases they are not able to continue their studies at another College or University."

The end-result was that the Board of Governors proposed that it be instructed "to advise the next General Synod whether it is warranted to proceed to the establishment of a Theological College under the Corporations Act, with a view to the need and the possibilities of such a course of action. Deputies are concerned that, at the present time, such a procedure is unwarranted."

Adoption of this proposal would mean a delay of another three years at least.

Would this be warranted?

The Board of Governors informed synod that

"a. One student is studying at our own Training for the Ministry;

b. Two men of over 30 years are preparing for admission examinations;

c. Four young men of our Churches are registered at another institution of learning."

In particular the last-mentioned reality caused concern with many.

No, their concerns were not with the brothers who did register at other institutions. Although the possibility was there to be guided in their studies by the instructors appointed in 1962, who could take it ill of them that they chose an institution whose degree would enable them to continue their studies for a higher degree?

It was realized, however, that, if there were more that had to follow this route because the churches failed to provide the necessary scholarly training at an institution of their own, the whole future of such an institution would be doubtful.

On our way

When it was time to travel to Orangeville, I visited the Rev. J.T. Van Popta in the hospital. At that time there was still good hope that he would recover speedily from his operation. During this visit we discussed various matters that would be dealt with at synod, and the point of a theological college occupied an important place in these discussions. We were both convinced that further delay would be detrimental, and were specifically concerned about two proposals found in the provisional agenda.

One church was of the opinion "that there are better and more appropriate possibilities. Also more realistic and responsible" than "to expand the existing training facilities to a full-fledged own and independent Theological Seminary with professors, lecturers, and other staff required, as well as a building and library."

Another church came with the suggestion "to investigate whether there are other Theological Schools or Colleges where a reformed theological training can be obtained."

This, we felt, would torpedo the whole striving for a College of our own. It would compel our young men to go to institutions over which the churches had no control whatsoever, exposing them to possible influences that were detrimental to a thoroughly Reformed stand. We did not understand it how churches could come with such proposals. It would mean a complete reversal of the course followed thus far.

Before I left, Rev. VanPopta urged me most earnestly to do whatever was in my power to counteract any such efforts and to promote the cause of an institution of our own. He was aware of the risks and dangers of a different course.

It goes without saying that I gladly gave him my promise to that effect. It was completely in the line of my own conviction.

At synod 1968

The unanimity of which I spoke above was also found within our advisory committee at Synod. The matters concerning the Training for the Ministry were entrusted to a committee consisting of the brothers J. Bareman, J. Medemblik, Rev. H. Scholten, and myself. It was a pleasure to work within this committee. All four of us were wholly convinced that, if no decision to establish our own Theological College were made now, this might mean the end of our own training and, possibly, of the future of the churches as truly Reformed churches. We learned from history that usually the universities and the seminaries were the places from which deviating theories and un-Scriptural doctrines penetrated into the churches, and such with detrimental effect.

Our readers can find the final advisory report on pp. 92 ff of the Acts of Synod Orangeville 1968.

One of the primary questions to be answered was: "whether such measures ought not to be taken which will give us, also in the future, ministers trained in the sound doctrine."

Let us examine some of the arguments brought to the fore in light of further development.

It was calculated that within the next fifteen years some ten new ministers would be needed, apart from the need for missionaries and/or the establishment of new churches.

We are twenty-six years later now. In those twenty-six years some twenty new churches have been instituted, and well over forty ministers have joined the ranks. Not all of these more than forty studied at our own College, but more than thirty did. This shows that the 1968 estimate of ten was on the low side, to put it mildly.

Another argument was that a College of our own might also be of benefit to others. Experience has borne out the correctness of this point as well. Not only has our College provided the necessary instruction for members from

our Australian sister churches, it has also been utilized by members of the Christian Reformed Church and the Free Reformed churches. This in itself would not have been a valid reason to establish such an institution, for the churches came first and always come first, also now. But it was a valuable added incentive.

Financial consequences

It was realized that the financial obligations would be increased considerably. But can the value of the preservation of sound doctrine be expressed in monetary terms?

There was also a strange submission by two churches regarding the contribution asked from the churches for the training for the ministry.

Synod 1954 had not taken on the matter of training for the ministry, on its own. There were proposals made by the churches.

Even a matter that belongs to the churches in common may not be taken on by a general synod unless proposals to that effect have been put before it by the churches. From then on it becomes a regular item on the synodical agenda, and no further proposals by the churches are needed.

Thus Synod 1954 was authorized to deal with this matter. It decided to ask two collections per year for the purpose.

Synod 1958 increased this to six collections per year. An attempt by the Rev. H. Scholten to make it eight failed to receive the required majority.

Then came Synod 1962. It decided to request \$1.00 per year per member until the next synod. This met with no opposition.

But when Synod 1965 set the yearly contribution at \$7.00 per communicant member, two churches approached Synod 1968 and stated that Synod 1965 had lorded it over the churches by increasing the yearly contributions. . . .

No one complained when Synod Orangeville 1968 was compelled to fix the yearly contribution at \$14.00 per communicant member.

A college established

As for the place where the College should be established, Synod accepted the recommendation of the Board of Governors to choose the city of Guelph, ON as the location for the Theological College.

We know that this decision was not honoured. A building was purchased in the City of Hamilton, first on

Queen Street, and later on, when expansion was necessary, on West 27th Street. But this is something belonging to the later history.

For a College professors are needed.

Once the decision was taken to establish the College, the Board of Governors was asked to meet and to come with nominations for the various positions. Five names were requested: three for an appointment as professor, and two to fill the lecturers' positions.

The Board of Governors came with a nomination, and synod appointed the nominees: Rev. J.T. VanPopta for Systematic Theology and related subjects; Rev. J. Faber of the Netherlands for Old Testament; Rev. L. Selles for New Testament; Rev. H. Scholten for Ecclesiology; and Rev. G. VanDooren for Pastoral Theology.

During synod the Lord took Rev. VanPopta unto Himself. This brother never learned of his appointment, and his passing on necessitated a new nomination. The Board of Governors then proposed to appoint Rev. J. Faber to the chair of Systematic Theology and the Rev. F. Kouwenhoven to that of Old Testament.

All accepted their appointment, and when the College was opened on September 10, 1969, two of the brothers who had commenced their studies at another institution came to continue and complete them at our own College. One of them, Dr. C. VanDam now serves as professor of Old Testament at his *alma mater*.

One brother began his studies in the year the College opened and was the first one to graduate as having received his complete training there: Dr. J. Visscher.

But since we intended only to relate some of the history leading up to the establishment of our own Seminary, we have to leave the rest to others.

The position of the professors

Rests one thing: What was the ecclesiastical position of the professors to be?

There was no problem at all as far as the lecturers were concerned. They just continued to serve their congregations and taught part-time. Matters were different in the case of the professors. They were full-time teachers and did not have time to serve a congregation in addition to their daily task. Were they still ministers of the Word or had they entered upon another voca-

tion so that they ceased being a minister of the Gospel?

Rev. L. Selles stated emphatically at synod that, if he could not remain a minister, he would not accept his appointment at the College!

When a minister is appointed as professor at the Theological University of our Netherlands sister churches, it is customary that he is declared to be "minister-emeritus," as mentioned in Art. 13 C.O.

At Synod Orangeville we were convinced that this would be wrong. The brothers were not at all "incapable of performing the duties of their office." If that had been the case, we would never have appointed them at our College!

Synod started from the fact that the professors served the churches in general, and it was concluded that they should remain the minister of the church they were serving, but that this church would be requested to release them from their obligation to do the work of a minister in that church, so that they might be able to give themselves completely to their task at the College.

In case a minister from another country was appointed, the church in the place where the College was to be established would be requested to call him, have him installed, and then release him for the work at the College.

This was in accordance with Art. 6 of the Church Order.

And this is still the rule.

Conclusion

Looking back after twenty-five years, we are grateful for the good hand of our God upon us, also with respect to our Theological College.

We, His servants, arose and built; but the God of heaven made us prosper.

May He continue to bless our College and cause it to be a blessing for the churches themselves and for many others who come to share the blessings we have received. C



Presentation by the Women's Savings Action at the College Evening

September 9, 1994

At the College evening this year we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Theological College and the Women's Savings Action. On this special occasion the Women's Savings Action decided to give a short slide show. Slides were shown illustrating some of the history as well as giving a look at the present facilities.

The slide show started with slides of the first College building located on Queen Street as well as the first faculty and students. Then we saw the invitation to the annual meeting of the League of Women's Societies in Ontario held in Fergus as it appeared in the *Canadian Reformed Magazine* 25 years ago. It was here that delegates asked themselves how can we as "women of the church" be of support to the Theological College. They unanimously decided to organize the Women's Savings Action for the College following a tradition of our sister churches in the Netherlands. Women's Societies across the country were invited to participate in this venture, and representatives were soon found in every congregation. Mrs. C. Lindhout was appointed to take care of bookkeeping and secretarial work assisted by Mrs. L. Selles.

A slide had been made of the tins which each family received. Each tin had a blue label marked "Women's Savings Action." On a regular basis, volunteers would come to collect the tins heavy with change. Being thrifty women, they soon found a way to make the tins reusable and so save some money. The trick was to stick a knife in the slot, lifting the one side and pushing down the other. Turning the tin upside down, the money came rolling out!

Very faithfully Mrs. Selles wrote reports for the Pink Pages of the *Canadian Reformed Magazine* and sent newslet-

ters to the representatives in each congregation.

The first money saved was used for finishing touches for the College building. Sheers and drapes were installed wherever necessary. New carpeting was also provided for different areas of the building. We then saw Mrs. Selles making the first presentation on behalf of the Women's Savings Action at the first College evening in 1970. With great thankfulness she was able to announce that the total collected was \$2,544.46 – the cooperation of the sisters and the amount collected had been beyond expectation! Mrs. Selles presented Dr. Faber with a cheque of 500 dollars for the library and money for a Gestetner stencil machine.

Slides were also shown illustrating the growth of the library. From the beginning library books were scattered throughout the building, because there was no specific room which could be set apart as a library. Each professor's office besides his own personal book collection also stored books in that department received or bought by the College. It had been hoped that the two-storey garage which was located at the back of the property could be converted into a library. But that proved to be unrealistic.

The screen then showed the first graduates from the Theological College, two years after its opening, Jan Gottschalk, Wietze Huizinga, Cornelis Van Dam, and Menno Werkman, together with their professors, Dr. J. Faber, Prof. L. Selles and Rev. G. Van Dooren. After the death of Prof. F. Kouwenhoven, Prof. H. Ohmann was appointed to teach Old Testament in 1971. Already by this time the library had become quite crowded. It was decided to renovate the basement for library purposes. This could, however, only be a temporary solution. The Women's Savings Action

decided to form a reserve fund from which the building or remodelling of a new library could be paid.

Some ten years later, we see the increasingly crowded conditions. The library continues to grow. The work of the Women's Savings Action continued to be done very faithfully in every congregation. Every year again we saw how many small amounts together make a big amount. Each College evening Mrs. Selles was able to make the annual presentation so that new books and periodicals could be purchased. Also money was given for a number of teaching aids such as an overhead projector and a cassette recorder. A suggestion was made to buy a computer, but (I quote from a newsletter) "since it requires specialized people to handle a computer, the purchasing of one was shelved for the time being." Imagine! This was only 12 years ago.

By this time a committee had been appointed to look at buildings and building sites, but so far without success.

Mrs. Lindhout once said: When we have saved \$100,000 in the expansion fund, it will be time for me to retire. This happened in 1982. During those 13 years Mrs. Lindhout together with her husband had taken loving care of the Women's Savings Action funds. A slide was shown with Mrs. Selles presenting a bouquet of flowers to Mrs. Lindhout at the College evening in 1982.

Mrs. Lorraine Lindhout took over from her mother-in-law for the next seven years, once again ably assisted by her husband. We are thankful for the contribution they were also able to make.

The last picture we saw of the College building was taken in 1984, the last year of lectures in the classic building on Queen Street. By this time Dr. C. Van Dam had replaced Prof. H. Ohmann and Dr. K. Deddens had been

appointed to teach the subjects which had been taught by Rev. W. W. J. Van Oene and Rev. G. Van Dooren.

After a number of years of pursuing different options, the search came to an end and new facilities were purchased in a quiet residential area on Hamilton's West mountain. A Presbyterian church building had been purchased which, with a number of renovations and an addition, would serve well as the new home of the Theological College. We then saw a number of slides showing different areas of the present facilities, concentrating especially on the library. At the College evening in 1985 Mrs. Selles handed the key of the new library to Rev. J. Mulder, the chairman of the Board of Governors. A total contribution of \$125,000 was made in 1985 by the Women's Savings Action for the capital cost of the building and the rebuilding of the library and its furnishings.

In his principal's report of that year Dr. Faber said: "Our library is rightly called the show piece of our new building and it is a constant reminder of the love and dedication shown by the women of our churches." The library contains approximately 22,000 volumes in a variety of languages covering the many different subjects related to the courses taught. Almost all the books have been purchased with the donations which you have given.

The annual contribution provided by the Women's Savings Action is the only source of funds for the purchase of books and periodicals for the Theological College. There is an extensive reference library, containing commentaries, dictionaries and encyclopedias which are to be used only in the library. The library currently subscribes to 141 periodicals and journals. There is also a respectable rare books collection with the oldest volumes dating from the 16th century. The emblem of the Theological College is displayed prominently on the back wall of the library and contains the Latin words "LUCERNA MEA VERBUM TUUM" which means "Thy Word is my light."

In 1985 it was decided to computerize the library. The Women's Savings Action donated \$22,500 to purchase the necessary hardware and software to bring the library into the 20th century. Last year the Women's Savings Action provided funds so that the computer system for the library could be upgraded making it very efficient and up-to-date. The computer in the library not only offers access to the library's own collection, but also to McMaster University's libraries via modem. The card catalogue is increasingly being phased out.

In 1987 Mrs. Selles made her last official appearance on the College

Evening. We remember with fondness her love and enthusiasm for the work of the Women's Savings Action.

The last slide showed the plaque in the foyer of the College which acknowledges the contribution made by the Women's Savings Action. This contribution could only be made, because the Lord blessed our endeavours. As it reads in 1 Chron. 29:14b: "All things come from thee, and of thy hand have we given thee." To Him be the glory.

We hope that you have gained a renewed appreciation of the work of the Women's Savings Action. We thank all of you for your continuing support. We are happy to tell you that during this past year we collected \$28,799.63.

During the last 25 years many sisters have given of their time and energy for this very worthwhile cause. Without their dedicated efforts the library of the Theological College would be much smaller than it is today. Our heartfelt thanks to all of them. As far as we know three women have been actively involved in collecting for the Women's Savings Action for 25 years – namely, Mrs. Jean Breukelman and Mrs. Jean Selles from Abbotsford and Mrs. Jannie Jans from Burlington. Mrs. Jans was then asked to come forward to present a cheque for \$25,000 to the principal of the Theological College. **C**

Responding to a plea: Report on a visit to the Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia held in Byford, WA.²

By Rev. E. Kampen

Monday, June 20: ICRC

At long last the matter of the ICRC was tabled for discussion. As was expected, this was the big issue for this Synod. In the first round, nearly every member of Synod asked the floor, and each spoke at great length. Each round tended to last a whole morning/afternoon. Listening to the speeches gave a real insight into the tension about the issue. It was interesting to note how the division between the delegates about this

issue ran nearly along the same line as about the issue of Bible translation.

It is impossible to relate everything said. Since the issue, however, is of great interest in Canada too, it will be beneficial to review some of the arguments brought in against continued membership. In a sense, we hear an echo of what is said in Canada. Inevitably the focus will fall on the arguments against continued membership. That is because this would mean a

change of the current direction of the Australian churches. The arguments "for" are thus less noticeable at this point. The arguments can be summarized as follows:

a. "Presbyterianism": The first few speakers took aim in different ways at the fact that at the Conference Reformed and Presbyterians were put on par. This was most clearly expressed by one brother who said that there are contradictions between the Three

Forms of Unity and the Westminster standards. He took issue with the idea that Presbyterian churches are true, and the Westminster Standards are Reformed confessions. His main argumentation was a statement by a Synod in 1948, and a reference to comments made by P. Deddens with respect to church government that Westminster is hierarchical whereas Dort is Scriptural. By a number of speakers it was expressed that by participating in the ICRC we let things in the back door by which we would lose our heritage gained from the liberation.

b. *Sister church relations dictated by the ICRC*: It was felt that by participating in the ICRC, speaking about unity of faith, we were compelled to recognize as true churches all the member churches of the ICRC. The Australian churches would thus lose their autonomy with respect to sister church relationships as the ICRC pre-empted their own decision making process.

c. *Ethical conflict*: It was considered unethical to tell the PCEA at the ICRC you are true church, when you could not make that statement in your own country.

d. *Losing our children* (argument of fear): All the things taught to the children over the years would be lost. They would now think they could go to these other churches and join them, as well as intermarry. It could impact on who should be allowed to attend the schools, who could join the FRC political party, etc. The FRC identity would change.

e. *Unity of faith*: It was felt that you could not speak of the unity of faith as long as you did not officially recognize one another and have a sister church relationship. There would need to be greater *uniformity* before one can truly speak of *unity*.

In support of the ICRC one member of Synod noted that the issue had been blown out of proportion. A minor issue had been made a major one. He felt that those opposed handled the matter in a far too technical manner, and that they should show more respect for the work of Jesus Christ. He felt the problem arose from a misunderstanding of what is a true church. He sensed that in the line of argumentation favouring withdrawing one takes the norm of art. 29, applies it to oneself, and then makes oneself the norm.

As advisors, we were allowed to participate in the discussion. Some of the points made were:

a. In the attacks on the ICRC, it seems that the history of the Liberation had become the norm in the sense of: this is how it was done then, so now we should still do it the same. It was stressed that even though we may be thankful for the lessons learned from history, history is not the norm but Scripture. The norms are the same but each generation must apply them anew for each generation faces new situations.

b. In some cases very openly, in other cases implicitly, there was the assumption that Presbyterianism is not reformed. Even those who denied that they were anti-Presbyterian time and again buttressed their arguments by attacking the reformed character of the Westminster Standards, often doing so by making caricatures of such things as their ecclesiology or speaking about the place of children in the covenant. This is not the position of the Canadian, or Australian churches for that matter.

c. There seemed to be an attempt to schematize too much, making everything fit into a logical system. It was almost like the Dutch situation was applied to the immigrant situation. There is need to see the dynamic work of Jesus Christ, and how we have to adjust to it. In connection with this, already in the fraternal address it had been stressed that we are not in the Netherlands anymore, and the neat and understandable categories that fit there, do not fit once we come into a different country. In the fraternal address reference had been made to the fact that in the previous century, the Reformed churches had no difficulty with the Scottish Presbyterians, recognizing it as the work of the Lord. If the water of the North Sea was not too deep to lead to this mutual recognition, to see each other as children of the same King, it would be a shame if we could now not find one another, when as children of those very same churches, we found each other in the same country.

At the end of the second round, again opportunity was given to address the issue. The following is a summary of what was said:

1. It was noted that the brothers tried to take the whole matter seriously, yet it was questionable whether they had the right approach. The matter of fear about

the consequences of belonging to the ICRC was taken up. The consequences indeed were being felt in the FRC as they were now forced to think about the doctrine of the church, namely, about the catholicity of the church and how to bring it into word and practice. This was beneficial.

2. There seemed to be an underlying assumption that the ICRC was not acceptable, so the brothers opposed would bring in all sorts of arguments to support their view, arguments which are scholastic. An example was the distinction "unity of faith" and "unity in Christ." This is an arbitrary distinction, for when you have unity in Christ you have everything.

3. The Australian churches should take their own decisions with respect to the Presbyterian churches seriously (there have been fraternal contact with various Presbyterian churches in Scotland and Ireland for years, as well as with the Presbyterian Church in Korea). It appears as if some are speaking about a *perfect* church. If you reject the ICRC because of the Westminster Standards then you should phase out all other contacts and take the next logical step and call them *false* churches. Then you are honest. This, however, would lead to isolation, for you will have to accuse the Dutch and Canadian churches of not being true due to their association with Presbyterian churches and acceptance of their standards as reformed.

4. "Judgment of charity" as used by proponents of staying in ICRC is not a good term. It is rather condescending, as if we are better. In ICRC you accept each other on the same level.

The discussion that afternoon was concluded with some remarks by Rev. de Jager, representing the Dutch churches. He also counselled to stay involved in the ICRC, remarks which he further expanded in his fraternal address that evening.

Tuesday, June 21

As the discussion was reopened, it became clear that the advice of the foreign delegates was not receiving unanimous appreciation. Some felt that their speeches were too bombastic, even threatening and instilling fear in speaking about the consequences of pulling out of the ICRC. Another felt the foreigners didn't understand the situation in Australia well enough and had painted caricatures. It was stated too

that the FRC was not anti-Presbyterian, as previous Synods had clearly shown.

As foreign delegates we were given another opportunity to participate in the discussion. Response was made to a number of questions from the round. It was made clear that the ICRC does not force us to come to full ecclesiastical unity. The purpose of the ICRC is to express and promote unity in Christ, and if possible and necessary to come to fellowship. The alleged ethical conflict was then addressed. It was asked rhetorically on what basis the FRC had contact with the PCEA, for example, for all the years past? What kind of unity do you have when you address their broadest assembly, when you read Scripture together, pray together? Do you approach them as heathens, or "Christians"? Do the discussions with them not imply that you have unity in Christ? If the discussions were honest, there was unity of faith. If not, then the whole situation would be unethical! It was asked if indeed they had been honest in their approach to the PCEA. The mistake regarding the ICRC was that you are not compelled to have sister church relationship, but you are free to discuss and pursue it. It was also pointed out that we might not have full ecclesiastical unity (organizationally), but we have unity in Christ. The Lord willing, the next step will come. We have unity and we hope we can build on it.

It was a little awkward, but due to the tension caused by comments as advisors, it became necessary to give somewhat of a self-defence. It was asked: why did you invite us as advisors? Certainly not as ornaments, for that would make us very expensive ornaments. The Canadian churches have to pay a bill of approximately \$5,000.00. Certainly, we were not expected to sit by passively. With respect to being aware of the situation, it was pointed out that a clear picture could be gathered from the *Una Sancta* articles as well as the Synod Reports. Further, we are confronted with the same issues in Canada. The comment about Presbyterianism was repeated, for despite denials, it always seemed to come down to the Westminster Standards again.

As the afternoon session drew to a close, it was felt that the matter had been discussed enough. To give the whole matter a chance to sink in, it

was decided to leave the making of the decision till the next morning.

Wednesday, June 22: ICRC & PCEA

The time had finally come for a decision on the ICRC. The decision in the end was to continue membership in the ICRC, although the next Conference would be made aware of some of the concerns of the Australian churches.

After a coffee break, the Synod began to deal with the PCEA. The ICRC discussion had set the pace for this. A proposal was on the table from the church at Legana to recognize the PCEA as a true church and in that framework continue the discussions. During this discussion it was pointed out by your delegation that the Canadian Reformed churches have worked with the OPC in this framework of mutual recognition. The question is not true or false but how we can live together ecclesiastically. Our problem is somewhat different in that we are in different countries.

Farewell and journey home

Before a decision on the PCEA was reached, the time arrived for your delegates to say farewell, as our plane would be leaving that evening. In the farewell address the synod was pointed to Phil. 4:2,3, where we read about Eudodia and Syntyche, two women who loved the Lord but who were in some sort of conflict. Based on Paul's advice in that passage, the brothers were urged to deal with matters as brothers in equal standing before the Lord, for good discussion cannot take place in such a climate of polarization. We sang Hymn 40:1,2 together, and prayer was offered up both for the Synod as it had to continue its work, and for the churches in Australia.

The Lord granted safety in our journey, and we were both able to return to the presence of our loved ones.

Conclusion

In light of the common ground we have with each other as English speaking sisters churches, and the common problems we face, it appears perhaps that it would have been more fruitful for both federations in years gone by to have concentrated their energies on these type of visits, rather than visiting the "mother" country. Perhaps then we might have helped the brotherhood in Australia prevent the polarization they faced on certain issues. We are not a large federation, but the federation in

Australia is far smaller yet! The smaller the circle, the more quickly issues get bogged down. Further, being so small, manpower is so limited! Especially in the Australian situation the load falls on such a small number of ministers who become overloaded with monumental assignments. It makes one wonder if in the age of the electronic information highway, we could possibly do more together, rather than trying to do everything in our own federation? I think here especially of the matters as Bible translations and Church Order. After all, we are only finite and we should realize our limitations.

As this report draws to a close, there is one aspect I as yet wish to raise. The impression might have arisen that we sat in judgment over the Australian churches, as if we ourselves are far better, and we have all the answers. It was made clear already to the Synod that we did not come with all the answers. Rather, we had come to show sympathy, support, and to help in whichever way we could, even though the very same issues also were present in our own country. Our presence was an expression of the catholicity of the church and the communion of saints. We could only serve them with the wisdom given to us.

It is our hope that our presence indicated to the brotherhood in Australia that we are certainly concerned about their well-being. Most of all, though, it is our hope that our presence on behalf of the Canadian churches will have been to their edification and to God's glory.

May the Lord bless our humble efforts, and may He bless His churches in Australia. C



Meditation

By G.Ph. van Popta

Read Acts 1:12-14

“ . . . they went up to the upper room . . . ”

THE ASCENDED LORD GATHERS HIS CHURCH

Immediately after the Lord ascended into heaven, the apostles returned to Jerusalem. They gathered together in the upper room with the women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and the brothers of Jesus.

The ascended Lord was gathering together His church.

Six weeks earlier it had looked very bleak. The crowds had quit following Him. Even the small group he had been left with had abandoned Him. Mark wrote those most bitter words about what had happened when the soldiers had arrested the Lord: “And they all forsook Him and fled.” The Shepherd was left without a single sheep. He died a leader with no followers.

When He arose, He had to search for His scattered flock. Two had left for Emmaus. Mary was crying in the garden. Judas had committed suicide. Ten disciples hid in a locked house, scared out of their wits. Thomas had given up. He was nowhere to be seen.

But Christ brought them together. He sent the two back from Emmaus to Jerusalem. He sent Mary to the disciples. He appeared to the Eleven. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 that He also appeared to His brother James. Here, in Acts 1, we can see the fruit of His labour. His church is gathered together in the upper room, praying.

Luke mentioned them by name. Peter, who had denied his Lord three times, was there. John and James, the two brash sons of Zebedee who had once had the audacity to ask for the two best places in the kingdom of God, were there. Doubting Thomas was there worshipping his Lord and his God. Matthew the tax collector was there. He had not returned to

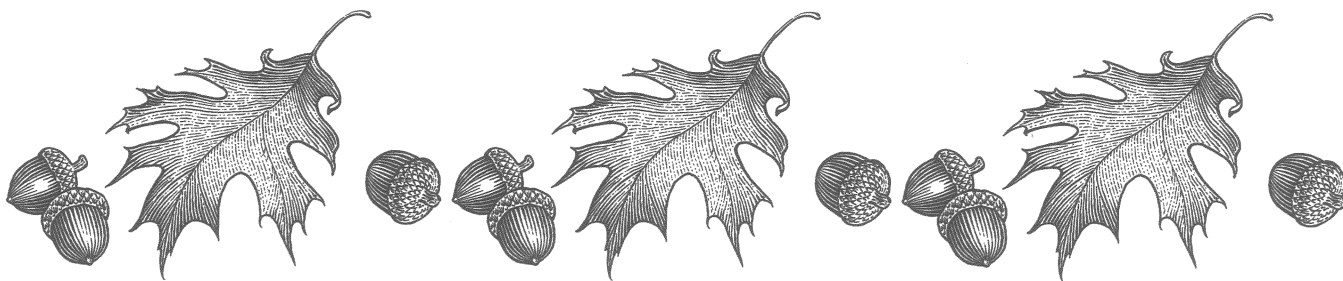
his old well-paying job of ripping off his fellow citizens as he collected taxes for Rome. Simon the Zealot was there too. He had once belonged to a violent liberation movement which was trying to establish the kingdom of God by murder and revolt. Simon the Zealot now saw that Jesus Christ would establish the kingdom, and not through murder, but by the power of God. The other five disciples, about whom we know very little, were in the upper room too.

Then there were “the women.” These were the wives of the apostles who had married. As well, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, the women who had followed the Lord and had provided for Him out of their own means, were there too. And there was Mary, the mother of Jesus. He had gathered her in as well. She now worshipped her son as her Lord and her God.

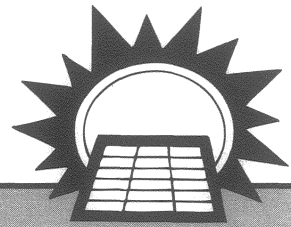
Finally, his own brothers were in the upper room as well. At first His brothers had thought Him mad. They had not believed in Him. But there they were – James, Judas, Simon. They believed in Him. He gathered them into His church. All three would become leaders in the church.

There were more. Verse 15 tells us that very soon there were about a hundred and twenty persons. The ascended Lord had gathered together His church of a hundred and twenty, men, women and children.

The ascended Lord is still busy gathering, defending, and preserving for Himself, a church chosen to everlasting life. He is busy throughout the world in the midst of the nations. And we believe that we are and forever shall remain living members of that church, right? C



RAY OF SUNSHINE



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart. Ecclesiastes 5:20

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The summer is coming to an end. The schools will open their doors again, and after a beautiful summer with sunshine, long, lazy days, and vacations everything is settling down again. "Things are going back to normal."

Did you have a good summer? Were you able to get some time off and do some travelling, or camping or something like that? Or did you have to stay home. Were you happy, or did you not see any reasons to be happy?

We all go through times when we are unhappy. Sometimes we think that nothing goes right, and we don't think we can ever be happy again. It is true that we see many difficulties placed on our way. Maybe you saw everybody going on holidays, while you could not go anywhere. People are excited about things that you would have loved to do, too. Now you have to go into the winter again, without having a real break of any kind. All kinds of worries enter your head, and how can anybody expect you to be happy then?

In Ecclesiastes we read that it is a gift of God to accept your lot and to find enjoyment in your toil. Is that a gift that the Lord gives to some people and not to others? No, it is not! We are God's covenant children. We are chosen to be heirs in His kingdom. If we, God's children redeemed in Christ, cannot enjoy life, then who can? Being happy, and enjoying our life is not based on prosperity or all kinds of nice things that may happen in our lives. It is not so that rich people are happy and poor people are not. Often the richer a man gets the more worries he has. He does not enjoy his life, he is worried about his money. He is afraid that he will lose it, because he needs it more and more. A hard working man who is not rich can enjoy his life much more. He does not worry about losing his money, for he has nothing to lose.

God's children have much more to live for than earthly possessions, healthy bodies, expensive vacations, and highly esteemed positions. We know that our life here on earth will not go on forever. The Lord even says that our life here on earth is only very short. When we die it will not be long or we will hardly be remembered anymore. That sounds awful to people who live without the Lord. Therefore they try to do as much as possible to establish some kind of reputation. They try to impress the world around them. They fill their days with trying to make the most of their life, and they don't even want to think about the end of their life.

But our lives, as children of God, have a much deeper meaning. Our life here on earth is very short compared to the eternal life that is awaiting us. When we see the Lord as our Creator, and His Son as our Redeemer, and ourselves as His covenant children, then His light will shine in our lives. Every day is then a gift from Him, and we can enjoy it. Even the very difficult things that we have to face, even our handicaps and illnesses, we can see in His Light. We do not have to see them as burdens too heavy to carry, but we may be proud to perform our tasks for our Father to the best of our abilities. When we realize that we did not do anything to deserve His love, that our hope and faith is a gift from God, then love and thankfulness will live in our hearts. Then we see every day, every meal, every opportunity to work, as a blessing. Because it gives us the opportunity to praise the Lord and to serve Him. So we have to enjoy in thankfulness

every day of our lives. That enjoyment lives in our hearts. Our days may be monotonous, and we may not have the opportunity to do exciting things like other people do. Yet every job, every day is what you make of it. When you complain that your days are so long and your job is boring, then your thankfulness is missing, and God's blessing escapes you.

To live like that seems almost impossible when you have little to look forward to because you are always faced with physical limitations, or inability to do any kind of work. Yet there is good news for us, God's children. The ability to experience that enjoyment in our hearts comes from the Holy Spirit, through God's care for us in Jesus Christ. The enjoyment is combined with thankfulness for forgiveness of sins, for God's care, for His understanding; it is also combined with love. People who are selfish and greedy cannot love, they will never be happy. But with God's love in one's heart anybody can be happy.

In Christ Jesus we may enjoy our life, which is only short. Nothing to look forward to? We are on our way to a future so wonderful, that nobody can imagine it. Our future is with our Father in heaven. The past will be forgotten. All the difficulties of our short life here on earth will not even be remembered. We will all live in perfect happiness with our Father. That future is the basis of our lives today. That is how God keeps us occupied today with joy in our heart.

*How many sigh with heartfelt longing,
"If only we some good might see!"
O Lord, reveal Thy light and splendour
And show Thyself the strong Defender
Of all who put their trust in Thee!
More joy hast Thou to me imparted
Than others have whose goods increase,
Who in their grain and wine take pleasure.
Thee do I as my refuge treasure,
I will lie down and sleep in peace. Psalm 4:3*

Birthdays in October:

Alan Breukelman

2225-19 Street
Coaldale, AB T1M 1G4
It will be Alan's 28th birthday on the 17th.

Nelena Hofsink

Bethesda Clearbrook Home
32553 Willingdon Cr., Clearbrook, BC V2T 1S2
Nelena will be 34 this year on the 22nd.

John Feenstra

ANCHOR Home, 30 Rd. RR 2,
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0
For John it will be his 36th birthday on the 25th.

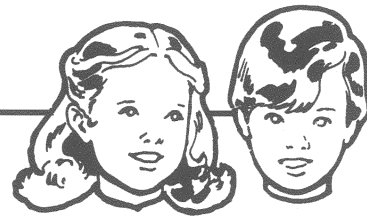
Mary Ann DeWit

Bethesda, 6705 Satchel Road, Box 40
Mount Lehman, BC V0X 1V0
Mary Ann will celebrate her 38th birthday on the 28th.

I wish you all a happy birthday. Until next month,
Mrs. R. Ravensbergen
7462 Hwy. 20, RR 1, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

Here is what one Busy Beaver found exciting in her summer vacation. Deanna Wierenga writes, "We went camping with my cousins. One night there was a big storm. There was lots of wind. The dock in the lake had big heavy anchors, but it was moved all the way to the pier. After that it rained pretty hard. We were all standing under our tarp. All the kids barely dared to move, except for one year old Betty-Anne. She was walking all over the place."

On Monday August 1, for the first time, I went water-skiing. The first three tries I fell, but the fourth I was up. I skied halfway across the lake but then I wiped out. I'll try it again next time."

I hope all you Busy Beavers had a wonderful summer holiday. And since it's all over now, it's time to announce the winners of the Super Summer Quiz Contest!

The first prize goes to Busy Beaver Jocelyn Schoon.

The second prize goes to Busy Beaver Cheryl Jelsma.

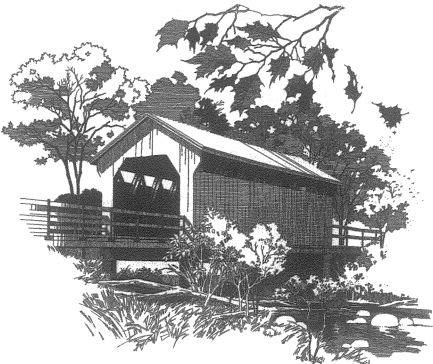
Congratulations to the winners, and a very big thank-you to all of you who took the time to answer all the puzzles and sent them in.

I hope to hear from you Busy Beavers about your families and hobbies, or anything else that keeps you busy, and if you have a penpal, don't forget to write them, either!

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS.

We all join in wishing you a great day celebrating your birthday with your family and friends. We wish you the LORD's blessing in the year ahead. Have a wonderful day!

Jaclyn Bartels	1	Joel Jelsma	13
Crystal Dekker	2	Kristina Fennema	17
Alyssa Lodder	2	Amy VanderHorst	18
Richelle Kruisselbrink	3	Leo Knol	20
Arlene Winkelaar	3	Cynthia VanLeeuwen	22
Laura Kanis	4	Colette Vandebos	25
Gerard VanWoudenberg	5	Sharon DeVries	26
Trevor Vander Velde	7	Alisha Dokter	28
Katherine Wiersema	7	Michelle Dekker	29
Marja Vandekamp	8	Denise Elliot	31
Florence Bouma	10		

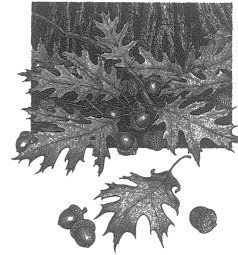


POEMS

by Busy Beaver *Sophie-Ann Ravensbergen*

*There once was a dog named Macdoodles
Who fell in love with the nicest of poodles.
Said the poodle named Dot
"Do you love me a lot?"
Said Macdoodles, "Just oodles and oodles!"*

*There once was a man lived in Spain,
One day he went on a train.
He talked as he walked,
He walked as he talked,
And the people thought he was insane.*



Quiz Time!

FEED ME

Almost everyone enjoys eating. Fill in the blanks with the correct food.

1. Daniel asked to be fed _____ and _____. Daniel 1:2.
2. John the Baptist fed on _____ and _____. Matt. 3:4.
3. Hiram traded Solomon cedar and fir trees in return for _____ and _____. 1 Kings 5:11.
4. Israelites were fed _____ from heaven. Exodus 16:35.
5. Elijah was fed _____ and _____ by a raven. 1 Kings 7:6.
6. Jesus fed a multitude of people with five _____ and two _____. Mark 6:38.
7. Lazarus wanted to be fed _____ from the rich man's table. Luke 16:21.
8. The prodigal son would have fed himself the _____. Luke 15:16.
9. Joseph sold his brothers _____ during a famine so that they might be fed. Genesis 42:25.
10. Elijah assured the widow that she and her son would not run out of _____ and _____. 1 Kings 17:14.

FIGURE THIS ONE OUT!

by Busy Beaver Cheryl Jelsma

There's a standing MISS why I'm FLAT said the woman as she made sure to LOOK KOOL CROSSING. She went home and the phone rang. When she had hung up, she exclaimed, LOIMVE! Who was on the phone? It's YOU JUST ME!

Answers:

Big misunderstanding... Flat broke... Look both ways before crossing... I'm in love... Just between you and me!



WORD WORD SEARCH!

by Busy Beaver Virginia Jager

R U N N Y S U T V X M L O R D B T D
 V W C Q G H O U S E U B R W Y E V
 B E A R H S Z Q V Y C A A B O C V S
 A X A P Y E K Y T Y H W C I Z T S E
 F B D Y O L Z N O W G O D G B R R U
 H Y V O U M R I O H G L M N K Q K I
 I Z C V I N E J S I D E W A L K Y H
 E P U T B F H L C N P Q O D P H L P
 Y A E R W T T K Y S P O O N J I U F
 D C O O K U O M W W A M L O O K E G
 R T O J N T M O S A I D O L G F F R
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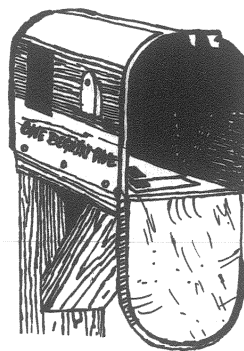
Find:

NOW	RUNNY	PIG	LORD	SAID
PUT	SIDEWALK	GOD	TOO	GET
BEAR	JESUS	TO	YOU	HOME
TWO	MOTHER	HOUSE	BIG	WANT
COOK	SPOON	MUCH	LOOK	

CRACK THE CODE

by Busy Beaver Yvonne Bysterveld

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q
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 R S T U V W X Y Z !
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From the Mailbox

Hi, *Sophie-Ann Ravensbergen*. Thanks for the colourful letter and the poems you wrote yourself! I guess you're glad to be in school now. What do you enjoy about school? Write back soon! Bye, Sophie-Ann.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Michelle Dekker*! I hope you like being a Busy Beaver, and that

you get a penpal. We'll use the game you sent in next summer holidays, ok? Bye, Michelle.

Hi, *Deanna Wierenga*. Thanks for your interesting letter. You sure had some excitement in your summer, didn't you? You were busy making puzzles, too! All the best in your new school year! Bye, Deanna.

Welcome to the Club, *Francien Breukelman*. Thanks for the family picture. You are almost the youngest in the family, I can see. Why don't you write again and tell me who everyone in your family is? Your baby sister is probably walking by now, right? Bye, Francien.

Hi, *Sharalee VandenBos*. How is your new school year going? The trip with your grandparents sounded like a lot of fun. Thanks for all the puzzles you sent. You worked hard on them. Bye, Sharalee.

ATTENTION!

Penpal wanted!

New Busy Beaver Michelle Dekker would love to exchange letters with another Busy Beaver. Here's her address:

RR3
 6231 Zumstein Rd.
 Wellandport, ON
 L0R 2J0

That's all for now,

Love to you all,
 Aunt Betty