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Western Theological Seminary

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Western Seminary Cooperates with Reformed Church Boards and Agencies

Theolog readers will be interested to know the great variety of cooperative projects in which the seminary is engaged, along with boards and agencies of the Reformed Church in America. Nurtured by the Reformed Church and serving the church at a point of focal importance, the seminary rejoices in the close relationships it enjoys with the boards and agencies of the denomination.

The Board of World Missions

Through the years many Western graduates have entered the work of the overseas missions supported by the Reformed Church in America and administered by its Board of World Missions.

A recent interesting example of a specialized relationship is that of the Rev. J. Sam Ponniah, pastor of the Church of South India, and a graduate of Bangalore Theological Seminary in that country. The World Board undertook the travel expenses for Sam's entry into the country and for his return back to India at the end of his program of work for the master's degree. The seminary met all Sam's expenses for tuition, fees, and living costs through a $1,300 scholarship which was offered him from the resources of the Reformed Church World Service funds.

During the two summer quarters, the World Board arranged a series of speaking arrangements for Sam in various geographical areas of the Church, especially at classical mission fests and similar gatherings where Sam was a member of a team of missionaries engaged in this specialized activity.

This year's graduating class numbers two candidates for the overseas work of the church. Mr. Rowland D. Van Es is under appointment to the World Board, and Mr. William J. Burke has already been assigned to work in Formosa. These candidates will undergo specialized training under the direction of the Board of World Missions in preparation for their life's work in the overseas church. The seminary is currently working out with the World Board a tentative program of scholarship assistance, whereby prospective candidates from seminaries in the Orient and elsewhere may enroll for the Master of Theology degree at Western Seminary, with their support underwritten by a three-way program: The Board of World Missions paying a third, the seminary paying a third, and the candidate or his supporting church paying the balance of his expenses. When this program is finalized, a more detailed report will be made to the church at large.

During the last Christmas holidays, the 19th Ecumenical Student Conference on the Christian World Mission was convened on the campus of Ohio University at Athens, Ohio.

The Board of World Missions arranged for the attendance of ten students from Western Seminary at this significant event, and underwrote their expenses so that they might participate in this conference. The impact made upon the Western student delegation was inestimable, and the stimulation for better understanding of the world mission of the church was very great.

When benevolence contributions are made to the Board of World Missions, a significant part of such gifts find their way into the important program of the training of men for the world mission of the church in its overseas work.

The Board of Education

For many years the Board of Education has helped new students at Western Seminary by providing them with scholarship assistance grants. Begun at the college level if they declare themselves candidates for the gospel ministry, the Board of Education underwrites a portion of their support. Currently, a substantial number of students enrolled at Western Seminary are receiving Board of Education grants in the amount of $265 each academic year.

The Board's program of financial aid to students is undergoing intensive study at the moment.

A major undertaking of the Board of Education during the last few years is the preparation of Covenant Life Curriculum materials. In this effort, faculty members of Western Seminary have been active partners. Professor Erlaine E. Lubbers continued an association in this project which began when she was in the Richmond, Virginia office of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. She is writing materials in the area of family nurture. Dr. Elton M. Eenigenburg, Professor of Christian Ethics and Philosophy of Religion, is writing a text on the history of the Reformed Church.

During recent years, the National Laboratory School has been housed at the facilities of Hope College, but has used the classrooms and chapel of the seminary building for part of its program. This cooperative venture will again be carried on from July 12 to July 18.

This year for the first time Western Seminary will be the site of the training program for the Caravaners under the direction of the Youth Department of the Board of Education. Forty-eight Caravaners and directors and leaders of the program will meet at the seminary on Wednesday, June 24 and will continue their training program up to July 3, when they will disperse to their areas of work. They will reconvene for a review session on August 1 and 2. The group will be housed in Zwemer Hall with meals served by the college at Phelps Hall. The chapel, three sections of commons, and classrooms, along with visual aid equipment, will be placed at the disposal of the Caravan project.

Prior to this year, the Caravan program was a joint venture with the Presbyterian Church, and the training was done at Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio.

In planning sessions held by the director of the youth department and the administrators of the seminary, it appeared that the seminary was an ideal facility for this program and it is hoped that future training sessions may be held at Western.

The Board of North American Missions

As a part of the directed field work of the seminary, Western students each year are assigned to stations under the supervision of the Board of North American Missions. They do survey work for proposed extension churches, work with newly-organized churches in extension areas, man the Indian Mission stations, and are assigned to inner-city churches. In cooperation with the Practical Department of the seminary, the North American Board makes these assignments for students, and underwrites all the expenses involved in travel to and from

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the field of service and living expenses during the time of their work in their assigned areas.

This summer field work assignments were given to Paul Zoschke for Macy; William Ryan for Dulce; Donald Vaurens for Winnebago; Lewis Seudder to Paterson, New Jersey for inner-city work; and Winslow Galbraith to the Church of the Master, the Bronx, New York City.

Mr. Ralph Ver Ploeg, a graduate of the class of 1964, has been assigned to the work at Chiapas, Mexico and will enter a program of training to prepare him for this important work.

The Board of Pensions

An outstanding contribution made by the Board of Pensions to the life and work of the seminary is the arrangement whereby students entering the seminaries of the Reformed Church become eligible for coverage under the Major Medical Program and the Group Life Program which is available to Reformed Church ministers. By special arrangement with the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, the Board of Pensions in 1961 was able to make an arrangement whereby students of the seminaries could enter the Major Medical Program, and later when the Group Life coverage was offered, this was also extended to students of the seminary.

The Permanent Committee on Theological Education

The General Synod of 1963 dissolved its old Committee on Professorate and inaugurated in its place the Permanent Committee on Theological Education, for the primary purpose of reviewing and guiding the work of theological education in the Reformed Church through its two seminaries.

The ten members of the committee include the presidents of the seminaries, the chairmen of the Boards, a faculty member and a trustee from each institution, and two members from the Board of Education.

Memberships on Boards and Agencies

From time to time, members of the faculty of the seminary serve as officers of Synod or as members of committees or commissions established by Synod. In many ways such as this, the special skills of members of the faculty become available for the larger work of the Reformed Church.

Presidents of each of the colleges and the secretary of the Board of Education are ex-officio members of the Board of Trustees of Western Seminary.

Western Seminary and the Reformed Church in America are indeed partners in education.

Seminary Receives Generous Bequests

During the spring of this year, Western Seminary has received final distribution of two very generous bequests.

From the estate of Miss Lucy B. Van Zanten, who had been a member of the First Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois, the seminary received a bequest of $60,000.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees voted to allocate this gift to the newly established Development Fund, so that it may eventually be used for the development program of the school being planned by the committee appointed for the Centennial celebration.

A bequest from the estate of Mrs. Harriet L. Zevalkink, wife of James J. Zevalkink, founder and for many years prime mover of the Reformed Laymen's Publicity Committee, has been received by the seminary. The total of the assets granted is approximately $150,000. The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees has also assigned this gift to the Development Fund for eventual use in the development program of Western Seminary.

The many friends of Jim Zevalkink will remember how he went about the church with a spirit of grand Christian optimism promoting the extension effort of the church in newly organized fields of service. They will rejoice with us to know, that his often expressed wish that all the gifts with which God had entrusted him would one day be given to the seminary to help in the work of the preparation of men for the gospel ministry, has now come to fruition.

By allocating gifts of this type to a Development Fund, the seminary trustees are giving tangible evidence of their philosophy that they continue to look to the churches for the ongoing support of the operating program of the school from year to year. The continuation of the close relationship that exists now between the churches and the seminary is one of the great assets which the school has, and which ought to be preserved for the future.

Memorial Scholarship Fund Established at Seminary

Mr. Gilbert Vander Broek of Grand Rapids, Michigan recently established the MINA VANDER BROEK MEMORIAL FUND in the memory of his wife who passed away as the result of a tragic automobile accident.

Given in conjunction with his son, the Rev. Kenneth E. Vander Broek and family now serving the Community Reformed Church of Southgate, Michigan, the gift sum of $17,000 has been assigned to the Endowment Fund of the seminary, with annual earnings to provide student scholarship assistance for overseas students at Western Seminary. It is the thought of the donors that in certain situations the earnings may be given to students enrolled in a graduate program at Western Seminary, in a type of training designed to enable such graduate students to make a more significant contribution to the ongoing work of the Kingdom of God.

At a time when there is growing pressure for scholarship assistance, and greater need of financial aid to students in educational institutions, this generous gift will help through the years to meet this need of students at Western.

Class Reunions Held

(See photos, pages 3 and 4)  

Two Western Theological Seminary classes held reunions on Commencement Day this year. Dr. Frederick H. Olert, pastor of the Central Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, planned a luncheon meeting for the reunion of the class of 1929, celebrating their 35th anniversary of graduation.

The Western Theological Seminary class of 1944 commemorated its twentieth anniversary with a day of reunion on Wednesday, May 20. The day's activities began with noon luncheon at the American Legion Country Club, followed by an informal period of sharing individual experiences. Greets were read at the gathering from members of the class unable to be present, including messages from Rev. Gordon Van Wyk in Japan and Rev. Robert Swart in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A dinner meeting of the class was also held in the evening at Phelps Hall with Dr. and Mrs. Lester Kuyper and Dr. and Mrs. Richard Oudersluys as honored guests. Drs. Kuyper and Oudersluys are the only current members of the Seminary faculty who were also on the teaching staff in 1944. In addition to these reunion gatherings, the class participated in all the Seminary commencement activities of the day. Chairs for the day's events were Dr. and Mrs. Henry Voogd.

Both groups attended the evening commencement program of the seminary and were seated in reserved pews in the auditorium.

The Class of 1960 is making tentative plans for a reunion next year and the alumni association officers hope that other classes will make plans for similar reunions on the seminary campus.
Board Approves
Four Appointments

Four appointments were made by the Board of Trustees which will significantly augment the faculty for the 1964-65 year.

Lubbers

Having finished her initial period of two years, the Board voted to retain Professor Elaine E. Lubbers on the faculty as Assistant Professor of Christian Education. Possessed of a fine mind and an innovating spirit, Professor Lubbers will continue to make a significant contribution in the field of Christian Education. In the past year the observation program was particularly beneficial in the relating of instruction to the actual mission of the church. Further programs are being devised so as to make Christian Education and related concerns a matter of vital interest in the life of the seminary and in the training of ministers.

Brownson

Dr. William C. Brownson, Jr. has been invited by the Board of Trustees to be the Assistant Professor of Preaching for an initial two-year period. Dr. Brownson is currently minister of the First Reformed Church of Roseland, Chicago, Illinois. Following his college work, he received his B.D. at Columbia Theological Seminary at Decatur, Georgia and only recently received his Doctor of Theology degree from Princeton University. He did his work in the field of New Testament, writing his thesis on Romans 8:26, 27. In a statement received from Dr. Brownson in an earlier discussion relative to his appointment, he said, "I believe that preaching is the most momentous task ever committed to man. In my mind, one cannot sufficiently magnify the significance of this office—minister of the Word... At the same time I heartily reject the concept of public worship as merely 'hearing the sermon' as though other parts of the service were non-essential preliminaries. The church exists in this world to worship God as well as to witness to his Lordship and salvation. The preaching of the Word, as a divine-human activity, is the central part of that worship but not the only part. In the whole of the Christian worship service, in Word, sacrament, prayer and hymn, God acts and man serves."

Pastoring one of the Reformed Churches in Chicago, Dr. Brownson has shown moral courage in his attempts to make the gospel relevant to the social issues that impinge on living in the urban centers of the population today. Because of his urgent sense of mission and our belief that he is able and willing to grow into an even fuller understanding of the role of the minister in today's world, we look forward with real excitement to the fulfilling of this assignment.

Dr. and Mrs. Brownson and children plan to move to Holland some time during the early part of the summer.

Levai

Dr. Blaise Levai, managing editor of the American Bible Society RECORD and other publications, was named to serve as Director of Field Education and Assistant Professor in Preaching. Having first accepted the invitation of the Board, Dr. Levai later asked to reconsider his decision. Upon being granted this privilege, he decided to decline the invitation of the Board. He thus continues as managing editor of the American Bible Society RECORD.

Presently, the Executive Committee along with the administration of the seminary is seeking to fill the vacancy created by Dr. Levai's declination. It is hoped that soon an announcement may be made relative to the filling of this post.

Koops

The fourth appointment made by the Board of Trustees at its annual meeting was that of the Rev. Hugh A. Koops, who is currently writing his doctoral thesis at the University of Chicago. Rev. Koops will be a sabbatical replacement for Dr. Elton M. Eenigenburg. A graduate of Calvin College and Seminary, and a former pastor in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, Mr. Koops is now in his third year of graduate study at the University of Chicago.

The particular field of study in which Mr. Koops is engaged is that of the Divinity School's Department of Ethics and Society which makes him a logical choice as a sabbatical replacement for Dr. Eenigenburg, who is Professor of Christian Ethics and Philosophy of Religion.

In accepting this appointment, Mr. Koops has postponed using a coveted Rockefeller Fellowship Grant which will enable him to complete the writing of his thesis the following year.

This all points to a significant year of contribution made by new voices and new minds, all of whom are prepared by training and attitude to present challenging instruction to the entire student body.

President Ridder's
Summer Schedule

There are several items of significance in the schedule of the president for this summer in addition to the routines of administering the seminary, preparing for the fall term and settling three new faculty members on campus during the course of the summer.
The schedule for the summer runs like this:

Joint Faculty Convocation of Western and New Brunswick at Buck Hill Falls, June 2 and 3.

Attendance at General Synod, June 4 to 8.

Biennial Meeting of the American Association of Theological Schools, June 9 to 12, Fort Worth, Texas.

Seminary Professors' Conference sponsored jointly by the Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies and the American Association of Theological Schools, June 22 to July 1. (Professor Eenigenburg will also be in attendance as Academic Dean.)

Missions Rally Speaker at Camp Manitoqua, July 4.

Ecumenical Evangelism Conference at Green Lake, Wisconsin, July 25 to 31.

Board Approves Centennial Plans

At the annual Board meeting held on May 19 and 20, the Board of Trustees of the Seminary approved plans which have been developed for the celebration of the Centennial in 1966.

The year of celebration will be June, 1966 to May, 1967.

Three subcommittees appointed early last winter have been meeting regularly, and at least one of them has now finished its basic work.

The Publications Committee

The Publications Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Elton M. Eenigenburg, has made plans for the production of a small, soft-covered book which will tell something of the history and the aims of the seminary. Following an introductory chapter telling the story of the seminary, there will be three chapters representing the three fields of study — Bible, theology, and the practical field — showing how in each of these areas the seminary seeks to prepare men who are Reformed and to whom the Word is central. In addition, there will be a chapter, written by the President, indicating the goals and dreams of the seminary as it seeks to be used of God in its second century of service.

The thought behind this Centennial booklet is to have it used widely throughout the church in workshop-type presentations, in which the church will be engaged in discussions on theological education.

In addition, special issues of The Reformed Review will appear, in which more scholarly material will be included. Lectures offered during the Centennial year observance will also be included in these issues of the Reformed Review.

The Academic Events Committee

The work of the Academic Events Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Richard C. Oudersluys continues. Several basic decisions made thus far relate to a special convocation series in the fall of 1966 in which our history as a people and a seminary will be discussed by special lecturers. In addition, special lectures are being planned during the course of the academic year observance. These will be announced some time in the near future.

The Board also approved the committee's recommendation that beginning in the Centennial year and running on alternate years after that for a period of six years, a visiting professor arrangement be set up in which a professor of established reputation would be invited to the campus for an academic quarter. The thought is to bring someone of renown from either America or the Continent who would lecture on the campus during that period.

During the time when such a lecturer would be on campus, it was also voted to grant student scholarships for ThM work. Two Centennial year scholarships will be given, and every alternate year two additional scholarships will be made available to coincide with the visit of an outstanding lecturer.

Another aspect of the committee's work is the beginning of a continuing education program in the year 1966 in which the seminary would be brought to the church by means of area institutes which would be on an academic level as well as of inspirational and practical impact. Plans are proceeding for the inauguration of such a series of institutes at that time.

The Development Committee

The report of the Development Committee was also approved in the direction taken to date. After a number of meetings during the course of the year, the Development Committee made its final recommendation to the Board and this was accepted with the understanding that at a later date specific proposals would come before the Board for final approval.

Included in the report of the committee was the suggestion that we continue to acquire properties in a land clearance program between 13th and 14th streets on a line continuous with our present property line on the east side of Zwemer Hall. Already, the seminary owns three homes in that area and is negotiating for a fourth.

When the land is cleared, there would be the construction of a building to house faculty offices, faculty meeting room, and a two-level lecture auditorium for multi-purpose use. In addition, arrangements would be made to turn the present faculty offices into small seminar classrooms. One of the needs that we face increasingly is to have small, more intimate type classrooms for smaller classes with the advent of an expanded elective program. Also, with more people added to the staff, faculty office space has become a real problem. This new building will house these offices in addition to having a multi-purpose lecture hall where adequate speech laboratory equipment and Perhaps television facilities for the teaching of homiletics would be added. Also, being of a two-level type, it could be used for larger classroom lectures such as we would hope might occur when we bring to the campus an outstanding lecturer, as well as public lectures which are now given in the Commons. In turn,

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the Commons would become a true Commons in which the seminary family would have more social space available to it. Presently, with all types of meetings held there, the Commons actually is devoid of a single common purpose. It is hoped that it might become a true student lounge where a number of meals are served during the course of a week so as to create community within the seminary family. With only seventeen men living in the dormitory and the rest scattered throughout the city, we feel more and more the need of adequate facilities to get men to discuss together and to relate together in a meaningful way.

Along this same line, it was suggested that a president’s house be erected on the property adjacent to the new building. Last year the seminary purchased the president’s house, which is about a mile from campus. The thought here would be to build an adequate home on the campus of the seminary which could also be used for building community and for various entertainment purposes.

Another usage of the newly acquired land would be to provide for adequate parking space which has become a problem at the seminary because of our proximity to the college, as well as the growing need for parking space generally.

The final aspect of the report of the Development Committee was the recommendation that a substantial Centennial scholarship fund be established. With rising college costs and with a number of men whose resources have been depleted by the time they arrive at the seminary, along with decreasing enrollments which mean that scholarship money has now become a factor in seminary recruitment, it was thought that a substantial sum of money would be of great value in the continuation of our student recruitment program. This year, for example, Hope College has experienced more visitors to the campus in search of seminary students (applicants) than they have ever had in their history. Along with these recruiters came significant scholarships which were offered to qualified students who might wish to enroll at their particular seminary.

The details of each of these matters need to be worked out. We are now at the point of securing professional counsel to determine cost figures in order to establish priority and also to arrive at ultimate costs.

Alumni Project

At the business session of the Alumni Association of the seminary held in connection with the commencement activities of May, 1963, it was voted that the Alumni project for the coming year would be the furnishing of faculty offices.

The generous response of the alumni for this cause is evidenced by the accompanying picture which shows Dr. Kuyper and Dr. Oudersluys seated in Dr. Kuyper’s office, with furniture provided from funds donated by the alumni. Similar furniture graces the office of Dr. Oudersluys.

At the alumni meeting held May 20 it was decided to equip additional faculty offices as the alumni project for the 1964-65 year.

Fourth Pastors’ Institute Held at Western

Under the joint sponsorship of Hope College and Western Seminary, the fourth annual pastors’ institute was held from June 15 to 19.

Entitled “The Changing Nature of the Ministry” the institute discussed and studied the function of the ministry in today’s rapidly changing environment. Courses offered included the theology of the ministry, the pastor’s understanding of the community, and changing relations between ministers and laity. Morning worship services were led by the Rev. Samuel Williams, pastor of the Pembrooke Community Reformed Church of St. Anne, Illinois.

Featured lecturer for the institute was Dr. James B. Smart, Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Union Theological Seminary at New York City. A graduate of the University of Toronto, Canada, Dr. Smart has pursued graduate studies in Old Testament and Semitics at the Universities of Marburg and Berlin in Germany. Besides serving as a pastor of Presbyterian congregations in Canada, Dr. Smart has been editor-in-chief for the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., setting up their “Christian Faith and Life Curriculum.” He is the author of eleven books and many articles in theological journals. His lectures at the institute cover the subject “The Theology of the Ministry.”

Dr. Donald H. Bouma, Professor of Sociology at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan, gave two lectures on the general subject “The Pastor’s Understanding of the Community.” Dr. Bouma was granted a Ph.D. degree from Michigan State University.

He is active in the Family Service Association Board, the Kent County Mental Hygiene Society, the Bethany Christian Home for Children, and the Kent Council of Social Agencies. His research activities include work on the church and its community, and he has lectured at various gatherings on subjects in this area of study.

The Rev. Samuel Williams, pastor of the Pembrooke Reformed Church at St. Anne, Ill., delivered lectures in this area of study.

The study of the changing nature of the congregation was led by Dr. Jacob Eppinge, pastor of the LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, by Dr. Lynn Vander Linde, Consulting Clinical Psychologist, Grand Rap-

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Pastors' Institute
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A panel of lay leaders from the Reformed Church at Midland, Michigan also presented material in this area of study.

This year's institute planning committee included Professor Elaine Lubbers and Gerrit J. ten Zythoff of the Western Theological Seminary faculty, Dr. Lars I. Granberg and the Rev. Lambert J. Ponstein of Hope College, and the Rev. Russell Vande Bunte, pastor of the Third Reformed Church of Holland.

Future sessions of the pastors' institute will feature a functional approach, shifting focus from year to year so as to include preaching, Christian education, administration of the local church, pastoral care and counselling.

Western Alumnus Celebrates Anniversary

The Rev. James Wayer, D.D. of the seminary class of 1904 celebrated the 60th anniversary of his graduation from Western Seminary.

A Hope College graduate of 1901, Dr. Wayer has a distinguished career as a minister of the gospel, having served the following parishes: Ebenezer, Holland, 1904-1907; Bethany, Grand Rapids, 1907-1919; First Reformed, Holland, 1919-1939; First Reformed, Racine, Wisconsin, 1939-1949; and after his retirement from the full-time ministry, an associate at Hope Reformed, Holland for some time following 1951.

In 1955 his alma mater, Hope College, granted him the Doctor of Divinity degree.

Mr. and Mrs. Wayer live at 26 E. 12th Street in Holland, Michigan.

Class of '64 Presents Gift to Seminary

This year's graduating class gave their alma mater a set of four colored stoles for the various periods of the church year and four antependia with colors for the various seasons of the church year, to be used over the pulpit of the chapel at the seminary. This lovely gift will enable the seminary to lend emphasis to the seasons of the church year.