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Calvin College

Calvin Theological Seminary

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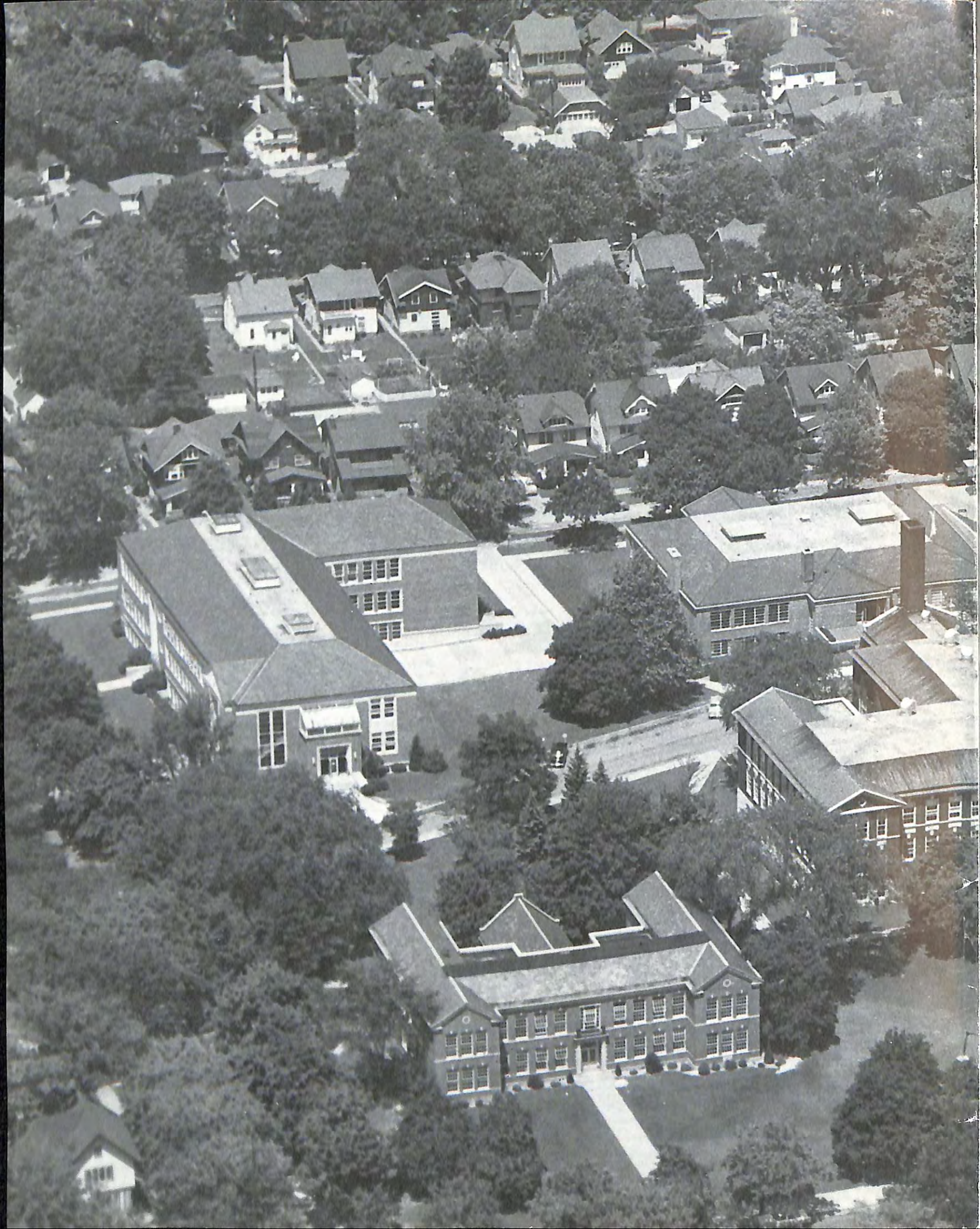
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*Love
beyond
knowledge,
Grace
beyond
imagination*



125
YEARS



Love beyond knowledge, grace beyond imagination

A history of Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin College
written on the occasion of Calvin's 125th anniversary.

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125
YEARS

THE TASK THAT AWAITS US

In 1876, on March 15, the Reverend Geert Egberts Boer was installed as the first full-time instructor at the school that eventually would become Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. Having lived the first four decades of his life as a pastor in the Netherlands, he not surprisingly spoke that day in Dutch. But what he said then, regardless of the language, resonates still 125 years later.



Near the end of his talk he addressed the students directly. In the recent book, *Offering Hearts, Shaping Lives*, Henry Ryskamp recounts that moment. Boer, notes Ryskamp, turned to the students and continued: "I now stand in a special, a specific relation to you. This tie will be drawn ever tighter in a communion of true faith; henceforth I hope to work at your training and development: to point out to you your needs according to the requirement of the times, to warn you of dangerous shoals upon which you could easily be shipwrecked, to teach you and to pray with and for you – this is the task that awaits us."

That heartfelt homily is as true for today's 4,300 Calvin students and 250 faculty members as it was then for seven students and one professor. His words also are an inspiration to me in my work as Calvin's current President. When I came to Calvin in 1995 I was blessed to follow the 20-year tenure of Dr. Anthony Diekema, who had, in turn, followed the 25-year tenure of Dr. William Spoelhof, my president when I was a Calvin student. What I found was that Diekema and Spoelhof, and before them Presidents Schultze, Stob, Kuiper, Broene, Hiemenga and Rooks, had held fast to Boer's clarion call and had helped shape a college which, drawn together by the bonds of faith, was eminently ready for the tasks that awaited it in the 21st century.

Certainly, more than a century ago the founders of Calvin did not anticipate a school with a nation- and world-wide student body, a school that would swell in numbers while bringing in students from a variety of denominations. They likely did not envision a curriculum with almost 90 majors and programs, including such recent fields as biotechnology. And they probably did not foresee a networked, multi-building campus, filled with classrooms, residence halls, labs and work stations, situated on hundreds of acres of prime Grand Rapids real estate.

But throughout all of these changes, Calvin has not wavered in its commitment to providing a place where liberal arts can be studied within a Christian framework. Academic excellence and top-notch Christian scholarship are not just hoped for, but expected. Calvin has stayed true to its Kuyperian mission of reclaiming all of creation for Christ, as is evidenced by its diverse curriculum, demonstrated by its faith-integrated teaching, and reflected in the lives of more than 50,000 alumni pursuing lives of Christian service around the world in all walks of life.

The founders of Calvin set the foundation on which the school continues to rest: a faith-centered approach to higher education that brings minds-in-the-making and hearts-in-the-offering to all that takes place in and out of the classroom.

In the pages that follow you will have a chance to trace that brightly colored thread of faith that runs through the tapestry which is the Calvin College history. I trust that you will find, as I have during my tenure as President of Calvin, stories in this history that educate, enlighten, and inspire. And I hope that you, too, will take part in the task that awaits us.

Gaylen J. Byker
President
Calvin College

THE GENIUS OF EXCELLENCE

We do education better than anything else!

By “we” I mean the faith community that created and sustains the schools profiled in this commemorative history: Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin College.

We are better at educating our young people than at evangelizing our neighbors. Political action and social service are not our *forte*, although we have gained ground on these fronts. We were relative latecomers to missions. We are not great church planters and have not grown mega-churches. But our schools are numerous and excellent. Christian elementary schools, high schools, and colleges represent an awesome commitment of financial resources and personnel. And the test scores, graduation rates, placement patterns, and successes of graduates from an enviable educational system document success. We have inherited a precious gift; we have a substantial trust.

The 125th anniversary of the seminary and the college that are the centerpieces of our educational endeavors provides the occasion to reflect, to thank God, and to renew our commitments.

Why have our educational endeavors been so fundamental in our collective value system? Why have they been so successful? What will it take to sustain and enhance them? What niche do they fill, what singular service do they provide in the wider Christian family?

A covenantal commitment to our children and young people made at the baptismal font is fundamental. We invest in Christian education because we have vowed to do the very best for the children with whom God has entrusted us. A holy respect for creation, which compels us to explore it fully and to protect it fiercely, yields depth and texture in Christian education. The conviction that all of life is religious service produces dedicated, responsible people whose lives are integrated, whole, and usually successful. The belief that we are to challenge and to transform what has gone awry gives our education a redemptive purpose and delivers us from uncritical cultural conformity. These and other religious values are revealed in Christian education that is excellent and serviceable. They permeate the speeches and writings of early Calvin educators. We owe these pioneers an immense debt for setting us on the course of educational integrity and excellence.

My one hope on this occasion is that as you read the narrative that follows, you will remember the spiritual genius of education at Calvin and renew your commitment to it.

James A. De Jong
President
Calvin Theological Seminary



OUR SCHOOL

1876-1894

Richard H. Harms

Within months of leaving the Reformed Church in America (then known as the Dutch Protestant Reformed Church) in early 1857, the congregations that would become the Christian Reformed Church were determined to remain a Dutch-Calvinist community set apart from the rest of nineteenth-century American society. Their most challenging religious problem was a shortage of ordained clergy. Only one minister was available to serve the estimated 140 families in four congregations spread across West Michigan. Elders and lay readers read sermons on Sundays to lighten Rev. Coenraad van den Bosch's load, but he still had to visit each congregation regularly to administer the sacraments, among other duties. His early travels were difficult, as there were no roads between Grand Rapids, Graafschap, Noordeloos (North of Holland), and Vriesland. He often had to blaze a path through the forest for his ox and cart from his home congregation in Noordeloos.

This arrangement worked after a fashion, since the denomination did not increase greatly during the first few years due to the economic depression of the late 1850s and the onset of the American Civil War. During the early 1860s, circumstances had improved sufficiently to allow the Graafschap and Grand Rapids congregations to call their own ministers from the Netherlands. However, because people in the Netherlands were unclear as to why the West Michigan congregations

had left the Reformed Church in America in 1857, no ministers came. As a result, the classis or regional governing body formed by the four congregations suggested that they look to their own ranks for possible ministerial candidates.

SCHOOL IN THE PARSONAGE

Training such candidates would be difficult. A theological school was out of the question, since two of the four congregations did not have the economic wherewithal to pay for a parish minister. A teaching minister was also out of the question. The solution was to follow the example of the congregations that had seceded from the Dutch state church in 1834 and establish the school-in-the-parsonage — an apprentice-like system in which a



Douwe J. Vander Werp

student worked directly with a clergyman in the parish ministry. The cost of training and living expenses would be provided to a candidate during the period of study. No tuition would be charged, nor would van den Bosch receive pay for his instruction.

Support for this plan was strong, and small amounts of money began to be collected regularly in the congregations and set aside until sufficient funds would be available for theological training.

But there was no indication of how van den Bosch would have provided such instruction, should candidates be found, in addition to performing his parish work and engaging in the farming that was needed to support his family. Two years later, in 1863, Wilhelmus Van Leeuwen, a minister and previously



Instruction began informally in 1864 in the parsonage of the Graafschap Christian Reformed Church.

a schoolteacher in the Netherlands, came to pastor the Grand Rapids congregation. On his arrival in West Michigan Van Leeuwen offered to teach candidates for the ministry in addition to doing his parish work in Grand Rapids.

Finding candidates took a bit longer. But in August 1864, Jan Schepers, a 27-year-old widower, felt called to the ministry. He was from a pious family that had immigrated to West Michigan in 1849. His father served many terms as an elder in the Dutch-speaking Presbyterian congregation in Drenthe and, later, in the Christian Reformed congregation in Vriesland. His cousin was a minister of a Dutch-speaking Presbyterian congregation south of Holland, Michigan. Schepers, who had had almost no formal education, came to classis and offered to take instruction.

To determine whether he had an aptitude for the ministry, classis asked him to prepare a short exposition based on I Timothy 1:15 for the next classical meeting. Because this was the first time Schepers had ever spoken in public, the presentation left "much to be desired." In spite of Schepers' nervousness while speaking, classis agreed that he could become a candidate for the ministry but would need four years of training – one year of preparatory instruction with Van Leeuwen followed by three years of theological training. Because these rural Dutch-immigrant communities wished to remain ethnic enclaves where the native tongue was spoken and read exclusively, the minister, as the most educated person in the congregation, also was expected to serve as a liaison with the larger

“Because these rural Dutch-immigrant communities wished to remain ethnic enclaves where the native tongue was spoken and read exclusively, the minister, as the most educated person in the congregation, also was expected to serve as a liaison with the larger English-speaking community.”

English-speaking community. This was particularly the case in such non-ecclesiastical matters as legal, land, and financial dealings. Therefore, classis stipulated that Schepers become more fluent in English during his preparatory training.

Schepers' parents agreed to raise his infant son, and he sold his farm for \$400, estimated to be enough to sustain him during four years of study. Another \$200, already collected among the congregations, was available should the \$400 prove insufficient. Following the practice in the Netherlands, this aid was in the form of interest-free loans, repayable as soon after completion of studies as possible. Repayment went back into the fund (called *Ex Bonis Publicis* or EBP), which also continued to collect additional funds from the congregations to provide for future loans.

Instruction with Van Leeuwen in the Grand Rapids parsonage began November 14, 1864. According to Schepers, his education included formal instruction twice per week and

informal instruction while helping Van Leeuwen with pastoral duties in the congregation. The library consisted of Van Leeuwen's personal books. When Van Leeuwen accepted a call to Paterson, New Jersey, the next year, classis arranged for Schepers to study with pastor Douwe J. Vander Werp, who had come to the Graafschap, Michigan, congregation in 1864. Van Leeuwen and Vander Werp provided formal training in positive refutation, practical theology, biblical history and geography, church history, Dutch, and Biblical exegesis.

With the end of the Civil War and improving economic conditions, immigration grew. The four West Michigan congregations were joined by congregations in New Jersey, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. The need for ministers increased. By 1868, Schepers had progressed sufficiently to conduct services in the vacant pulpits, and during that summer he received a call to the newly organized First Christian Reformed Church of Chicago (now Ebenezer CRC, Berwyn, Illinois). After successfully passing the classical examination on September 3, Schepers, with his second wife, Johanna Van Strien, began 34 years in his parish ministry in Chicago.

The year before Schepers finished, Willem Greve, Leenert Rietdijk, and Jan Stad had joined him in Graafschap to study with Vander Werp. Another student, Jacob Noordewier, had come from the Netherlands in June 1867 when Rev. Roelof Duiker accepted a call to the Grand Rapids congregation. Since Noordewier had begun to study with Duiker in the Netherlands, classis

1864

1865

1866

1867

1868

1869



Jan Schepers, the first student, begins his ministerial training in Graafschap, Michigan.

permitted him to complete his studies with Duiker but stipulated that once Noordewier finished, Vander Werp was designated as the only instructor of the denomination.

During these first few years, the course of instruction expanded. In addition to Biblical History and Geography, Church History, and Exegesis, students studied Practical Theology, Homiletics and the basics of Latin, Greek and Hebrew. All instruction was in Dutch, but the candidates still were

expected to learn enough English to aid their congregations as language liaisons. Theology instruction came from *Kern der Christelijke Leer* (The Core of Christian Doctrine) by Aegidius Francken, written in a question and answer format. This format lent it-

self well to memorization, the generally practiced pedagogical method of the time. This memorized question and answer method had the advantage of requiring less from Vander Werp in preparing for instruction.

In addition to teaching, Vander Werp continued pastoring the Graafschap congregation, assisted by those students with sufficient ability. The congregation served as a laboratory where students developed their preaching skills. Vander Werp also served as editor of the first denominational periodical, *De Wachter*, which began in 1868. His total salary came from the Graafschap congregation; he received no extra compensation for teaching or editing but was allowed to keep all periodicals sent to *De Wachter* as exchanges. Due to

this work load, the Graafschap church council frequently excused Vander Werp from family visitation, a considerable concession since pastors of the time were expected, with an elder, to visit every family in the congregation annually.

As Vander Werp's teaching load began to grow in the two years after Schepers came to study with him, a second student appeared; although the record isn't absolutely clear, there may also have been a third student for a time during the mid 1860s. By 1869 he had eight students, three in the first year, one in the second, and four in the final year of study. The strain of instruction, in addition to his other responsibilities, caused Vander Werp to recommend to the 1870 General Assembly, which had replaced classis as the denomination's highest ruling body in 1865, that a theological school be established.

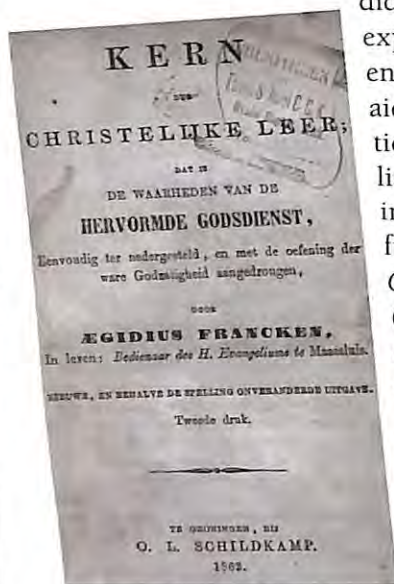
The recommendation did not come without precedent. The churches in the Netherlands from which many of the immigrants came had begun such a school in Kampen in 1854. Also, the recently organized Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa had established such a school with two instructors and five students in November 1869. In both the Kampen and South Africa schools, an ordained minister, not responsible for any parish ministry, provided instruction. The recommendation was well received, but the lack of funds for the salary of a non-preaching pastor prevented action. Although his recommendation had not been adopted, Vander Werp did receive a box of English-language books to augment his own from Rev. John Y. De Baun, a fraternal delegate from the English-speaking True Protestant Dutch Reformed Church in New Jersey and New York, at the General Assembly.

The seed for organizing a school had been planted, and from 1870 onward the idea of a denominational

The strain of instruction, in addition to his other responsibilities, caused Vander Werp to recommend to the 1870 General Assembly, which had replaced classis as the denomination's highest ruling body in 1865, that a theological school be established.

theological school was discussed regularly by the General Assembly. The 1871 discussion was necessitated by a unique development. William Hellenthal, a graduate of the academy that became Hope College, wanted to become a minister in the Christian Reformed Church. His academy training was better than what he would receive working with Vander Werp, so the question was clear: Where should Hellenthal receive theological instruction to prepare him for the ministry? The General Assembly concluded that the only suitable place for such training was at the theological school in Kampen. Hellenthal received financial support for this venture from the student aid fund. Having made this commitment, the General Assembly did not feel able to fund its own school.

Either during the trip to the Netherlands (which included a stop in England) or shortly after his arrival, Hellenthal contracted smallpox. Although quite ill, he attended the first day of class in the fall of 1871 but died the next day. As a result, some in West Michigan questioned the wisdom of sending students from the United States to study in the Netherlands, so no further consideration was given to sending other students. Instruction remained in Graafschap, and the church council there adjusted Vander Werp's work load as



much as possible. When Vander Werp received and accepted a call to the congregation in Muskegon in 1872, it was understood that the students move there with him and that the congregation now provide the support for this teaching effort.

Vander Werp's 1873 request to establish a school was declined again because of a lack of finances, although the General Assembly did acknowledge that too much was being expected of Vander Werp. Contact was made with ministers in the Netherlands about the qualifications of a Kampen-trained student to teach in place of Vander Werp. Since the response from the Netherlands was not positive, efforts in finding a replacement ended, but Vander Werp was granted a small stipend for his teaching. In 1874 the Grand Rapids delegates to the General Assembly proposed calling a minister to their vacant congregation who could also teach in a theological school. In this manner, the congregation and the denomination could share expenses. The Assembly agreed to this, but of the trio of ministers chosen to be called (all in the Netherlands at the time) each in turn declined to come. Another trio was chosen by the Assembly in 1875. When the first choice declined, the committee felt unable to call either of the others because of the onset of the national economic depression in the United States during the mid 1870s.

During the winter of 1874-75, a tumor in Vander Werp's throat forced the General Assembly to act. When he traveled to the nearest large city, Grand Rapids, for a diagnosis, his tumor was determined to be malignant. The state of medical practice being what it was, he sought other opinions

from a doctor in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and, according to one witness, a "quack" in Ridott, Illinois. Two painful efforts to burn the tumor out of his throat failed. As his health deteriorated, Vander Werp relied on his students to provide the pastoral needs of the Muskegon congregation. Student and nephew John Vander Werp, who was paying his own expenses, left Muskegon to study with the recently arrived minister in Grand Rapids, Geert E. Boer, an 1865 graduate of Kampen. The other students had to remain, since they were receiving financial aid from the denomination, and one of the conditions of that aid was that they study with Vander Werp. By October 1875 the advance of Vander Werp's disease required that another instructor be found. Vander Werp died the following April.

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

Because of distance and expense, it was not feasible to call a special meeting of the General Assembly in October to name another instructor. Instead, Classis Michigan, the regional body in which Vander Werp served, arranged to have Boer teach the students provisionally until the next General Assembly. The students moved from Muskegon to Grand Rapids and took their instruction in the Commerce Street (then known as Spring Street) parsonage.

Boer had wanted to become a teacher in the Netherlands. In his late twenties, after working as a farm laborer and satisfying his military service obligation to the Dutch government, he was judged too old to begin training as a teacher. But, thanks to support from his well-to-do employer, Boer was able to take theological instruction in Kampen



Geert E. Boer

instead. In 1865 he finished the six-year course in four years. After serving in the parish ministry in two communities in the northern Netherlands, he came to serve the Grand Rapids congregation in 1873. He quickly came to be seen as a leader in the denomination for his advocacy of mission work, of Christian primary instruction, of Sunday School instruction, and the creation of Christian young people's groups. In 1875 he agreed to serve as editor of *De Wachter* in place of the overburdened Vander Werp. Because of his leadership, work with young people, and aptitude for instruction, Classis Michigan asked Boer to fill in until the General Assembly decided on a permanent replacement for Vander Werp.

Because of the urgency of finding a permanent replacement, the General Assembly met in February 1876, four months ahead of schedule. The

1870

Douwe Vander Werp recommends to the General Assembly the establishment of a theological school.

1871

1872

1873

1874

1875

The General Assembly acts on Vander Werp's recommendations due to his illness.

two efforts to call instructors from the Netherlands having failed, the assembly realized that other action was needed. Since the typical minister earned \$1,300 annually in salary and received an additional \$400 annually for housing, plus \$100 for one-time moving expenses, all agreed that \$1,800 was needed to call a minister to the teaching position. An additional \$300 to \$1,000 would be needed for one-time moving expenses if this person came from the Netherlands. Such a large amount of money seemed beyond the means of the denomination, then totaling 23 local congregations, and some still unable to support their own pastors. To save as much as possible on transportation costs, the General Assembly decided to call someone already living in the United States.

On the first ballot to form a slate of three, four of the denomination's sixteen ministers received votes,

with 35 of the 39 going to Boer. When one of the four withdrew, the remaining trio of candidates was interviewed. With 33 votes on the second ballot, Boer received and accepted the call to leave the parish ministry in Grand Rapids and teach in the new theological school. The delegates stipulated that the curriculum would be the same as that of the school in Kampen.

The next matter was raising the \$1700 annually for salary and housing. It was decided that since the entire denomination would benefit from a larger pool of clergy, each congregation, according to size, would contribute a specified portion, or quota, of the total amount. Each family in the denomination was asked to regularly contribute to the salary of the docent. As a consequence, every family felt it had a direct investment, a direct interest, and a direct voice in the school and its operation. Popularly, it came to be

known as *Onze School* (Our School).

Obtaining \$1,700 through this quota system still seemed impossible, so the original decision was amended to lower the annually salary and housing allowance to \$1,400. Although the records do not indicate what specifically Boer had been promised as payment, he was present when the salary had been set at \$1,300 and housing at \$400. Now in a short space of time his payment had been reduced from \$1,700 to \$1,300. This awkward situation was resolved when the Grand Rapids delegates proposed contributing free housing plus \$400 toward the salary, if Boer were allowed to remain in Grand Rapids. This arrangement would permit Boer and the more advanced students to supply the now vacant Grand Rapids pulpit from time to time. Seeing no other means for raising the funds, the Assembly accepted the offer.

This decision also negated the previous stipulation that the school be located in Holland, Michigan. To house the school, Grand Rapids offered the upper floor of its one-year-old brick primary school building at the corner of Williams Street and Commerce Avenue for an annual rent of \$52. Its large room upstairs could be used as a lecture hall and the smaller room for tutorial instruction.

Because they saw themselves as part of the Dutch Reformed tradition, and "a historical continuation of the church in the Netherlands," they accepted the Kampen school as the model for the new theological school. It was decided that the governance structure, regulations for the students, and financial support system for students would all be modeled after the Dutch example.

The curriculum included a Literary sequence which prepared students for theological study. The Theological sequence, in turn, prepared students to become candidates for the ministry. The normal course



Classes were first held in the upper rooms of this school building on the corner of Williams Street and Commerce Avenue, which was rented from the city of Grand Rapids.



“Onze School” students in 1877. Front row, left to right: Johannes Vander Werp, Professor Geert Boer, Cornelius Bode, Cornelius Vorst; back row: Geert Hoeksema, Geert Broene, Hermanus Temple, Henry Doustra.

sequence was six years – four in literary and two in theological instruction. The four-year literary sequence included Dutch language and composition, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, an overview of general history and geography, logic and metaphysics, and “as much mythology as was necessary to understand history.” The two years in theological sequence encompassed Biblical history, including relevant Biblical geography and Jewish history, church history, exegesis, natural theology, revealed (positive, refutative, and practical) theology, pastoral (preaching, catechism, and the history and content of the Forms of Unity), liturgical writings, and church Order. All instruction was in Dutch, but students were obligated to apply themselves to learn the English language through private instruction. Proficiency in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, called the “old languages,” meant competence in

reading, translating, and analyzing a few lines in each language. Students of advanced age, generally older than 35, were exempted from studying the old languages. The six-year term could be shortened if the student had successfully completed formal instruction in the required literary subjects elsewhere. But to receive a diploma from *Onze School*, students had to take the entire two-year theological sequence. Aptitude or ability were never sufficient to exempt students from classes, and only successful completion of the final exam in a course merited promotion.

Boer was installed on March 15, 1876, and taught all the subjects. He began in the Fall of 1876 with the five students he had been teaching – Cornelius Bode, Geert Broene, Harm (Henry) Douwstra, Geert Hoeksema, and Cornelius Vorst – plus two new students, Hermanus Temple and Johannes Vander Werp. Five of these

students were married. Broene had four children. At 44, Boer was seven years younger than his oldest student, Vorst, and only one year older than Broene. Hoeksema and Bode were 34, while Temple and Vander Werp were the youngest, at 24.

The students were expected to devote all their energies to studying – they were not to work at jobs to support themselves or their families. Students with families sold their former means of livelihood, generally farms, farm animals, and agricultural equipment,

and lived on the proceeds from those sales while attending classes. At times, congregations or private benefactors contributed to the financial support of students. Single students, usually in their twenties, rented a room near the schools and drew financial support from private means or from the student aid fund. In the latter circumstance, a single student was expected to devote all his time and effort to studying and could date only with approval during the last half of the last year of study.

Classes were held in the afternoons, with the mornings and evenings devoted to study and memorization. Tuition was set at \$52 annually, due in advance at quarterly intervals. In addition, students in the literary curriculum paid \$5 when they took the end-of-year exams; theology students paid \$10 for these exams. The typical student completing the course in six years paid \$312 in tuition plus \$40 in exam fees. Later a

1876

1878

1879

1880

1881

March 15, Geert Boer is installed as the theological school's first professor.



\$10 graduation fee was added.

OUR SCHOOL

Needless to say, one person teaching 21 subjects did not allow for detailed focus in any single area. Subjects were taught concurrently, but on a schedule. Only in the case of the languages was there a fall-spring sequence. As a result, in neither the literary nor the theological sequences was it possible to have the subject matter of one class build upon that of another. Of course, the theological courses did build upon the literary courses.

Oversight of the curriculum, and decisions about admissions, promotions, and graduation fell to the Curatorium, a group of ministers from each classis in the denomination appointed by the General Assembly. A few years later, to meet statutory requirements, a separate Board of Trustees, also made up of ministers, was formed to hold ownership of the school's assets. Both the Curatorium and Board of Trustees began as committees appointed by the General Assembly which had created the school, and, because the local congregations provided for its support, the notion that the institution was *Onze School* grew among individual members of

the denomination. This sense of personal ownership translated into ready and abundant critique of the school by clergy and laity, a practice which continues to the present time.

Locating the theological school in Grand Rapids came at a time when the city was on the verge of dramatic economic growth resulting from the sudden expansion of its furniture industry. This expansion drew large numbers of Dutch immigrants to Grand Rapids, giving the city an ever-increasing numeric and resultant economic advantage over other cities with CRC congregations. Between 1879 and 1889, six new congregations organized in Grand Rapids.

As a result of this growth, the local congregations often asked Boer and students in the theological sequence to supply vacant pulpits. Preparing sermons, by teacher or student, took time away from instruction, leading to complaints from non-West Michigan congregations that money designated for instruction was not being properly spent. On the other hand, students did benefit from being able to hone pulpit skills in the local congregations. As a result, the Curatorium reluctantly granted permission for students to preach, as long as sermon preparation did not

intrude on class preparation and study time, and occurred no more than once every fourth week for Boer and the second-year theology students, and once every sixth week for the first-year theology students.

Although the school began to supply a small but steady flow of ministerial candidates to the denomination, this flow was not enough to meet the dramatic growth of the CRC. During the 1880s a simmering controversy about the membership of people belonging to secret, oath-bound organizations, such as the Freemasons, came to flash point within the RCA. The issue was whether people who swore secret oaths to non-Christian organizations could be fully committed to a Christian life. This question was particularly acute among Dutch immigrants, since Freemasonry in Europe at the time was actively anti-Christian. Churches in the Netherlands were firmly positioned against accepting such individuals into their membership. When the RCA synod did not take a similar stand, individual members and a number of entire congregations left the RCA for the CRC. Further, the churches in the Netherlands now began encouraging immigrants to join the CRC



Downtown Grand Rapids, c.1880. Dramatic growth in the city drew large numbers of Dutch immigrants to the area, demanding more services from Professor Boer and his students.

rather than the RCA. Because of the growth of the CRC that resulted, an ever-increasing number of candidates were expected to graduate from the school, a demand that a single instructor could not meet.

From the start, it also was clear to all that teaching 21 courses competently was beyond the ability of any single instructor. This situation became even more acute as student enrollment increased from seven in 1875 to fifteen in 1881. The following year the Curatorium proposed to the synod (formerly the General Assembly) that a second instructor be hired. Unable to fund a second position, synod instead approved the recommendation that a student be hired part-time to assist Boer. The Curatorium had a specific student in mind, 20-year-old Gerhardus Vos, whose father had come to pastor the Grand Rapids congregation in 1881.

A gifted student, Vos had graduated from the grammar school in Amsterdam with honors and, after moving to Grand Rapids with his family, immediately enrolled in the Theological School. Vos was hired to teach half-time and attend classes half-time, for which he received \$300 (compared to Boer's \$1,300 full-time salary), plus a one-half reduction in the \$52 tuition, which he chose not to accept. Later, as Vos was considering an offer from Princeton University, the Curatorium acknowledged that this had been very poor compensation for all that he did.

Although Boer and Vos accomplished much, they were still unable to provide adequate instruction in all 21 courses. A second full-time instructor was needed. Vos seemed the

“From the start, it also was clear to all that teaching 21 courses competently was beyond the ability of any single instructor.”

ideal candidate, even though he still had one year of theological study remaining. Although the 1883 synod agreed that Vos had done a fine job, he was considered too young for the full-time appointment. Instead, it authorized \$1,300 annually for a minister from the Netherlands to fill the position. Vos was to continue on a part-time basis until such a person arrived, and his salary was increased to \$600 for his half-time work. The effort to obtain a minister from the Netherlands failed, and when Vos graduated the next year, he declined the request to stay, since he wished to study at Princeton. He refused again when the salary offered for full-time work was raised \$800.

Until a second full-time teacher could be obtained to replace Vos's part-time service, a sharing arrangement was worked out with the Christian Reformed congregation in Vriesland, Michigan, located a few miles east of Zeeland. Vriesland's pastor, Gerrit K. Hemkes, would teach in Grand Rapids during the week and return to Vriesland on weekends to preach. The school would pay \$600 of his annual salary while the congregation would contribute \$400. The Vriesland elders and neighboring ministers filled in for Hemkes during the week. Well educated in the Neth-

erlands and with some experience teaching theological students in the parsonage while serving a congregation in Bunde, Germany, Hemkes proved a capable interim instructor. Meanwhile, the Curatorium unsuccessfully attempted to call a minister to the full-time teaching position. In response, the students suggested that the school hire Hemkes on a full-time basis, a suggestion the 1884 synod endorsed. Hemkes became the second full-time docent at the school.

Providing for this additional salary, which the school did not fully have in hand, was another matter. Rather than raising the amount assessed to each congregation, the synod authorized using surplus funds available in *De Wachter* account. To justify this use of funds, Hemkes was appointed the editor in addition to being a full-time teacher.

By the next synod, in 1886, another issue had developed in the church, an issue necessitating hiring a third faculty member. Church leaders saw that the adherence to using Dutch in all religious activity, particularly in worship, was alienating the youth, who otherwise lived in a fully English-speaking world. As a result, these young people began to attend English services offered by other denominations. To retain these young people, the denomination had to make provision for preaching in English. The decision to do this was controversial, with several leading ministers fervently arguing that the Reformed faith could be fully expressed only in Dutch. In spite of the opposition, the decision was made to proceed with some preaching in English for the young people.

Since all instruction at the theo-

1882

Gerhardus Vos, a young and gifted student, is hired part-time to assist Boer.



1884

Gerrit Hemkes is hired as the second full-time docent of the school.



1886

1887

logical school was in Dutch and the two faculty members felt insufficiently skilled to both teach English and teach in English, a third docent, proficient to teach and preach in English, was needed. Funds for this position came in part from the school budget, in part from *De Wachter* surplus, and the remainder from the mission fund. At the same time, in an effort to expose students to a larger body of scholarship, beginning in 1886 the students were also required to become proficient in reading German.

The trio of candidates selected for this position consisted of Vos, who was studying in Germany at the time, and two ministers in the English-speaking True Protestant Dutch Reformed church. This denomination, begun in 1822, had been talking about joining with the CRC since the 1860s and did so as Classis Hackensack in 1890. Through a series of ballots, Vos was selected to become the third full-time docent. Included in his duties were teaching English, teaching some of the literary courses in English, and preaching in English at least once every Sunday. This preaching was to be done primarily in Grand Rapids area churches, but might include other locations if the need developed. He was offered a salary of \$,1000 and housing allotment of \$300 annually. After being permitted to defer the start of his tenure until completing work on his Ph.D. at the University of Strassburg, Vos returned to Grand Rapids in 1888. He was ordained as a minister and began a very successful teaching career, although initially some students bridled at having to take instruction from him in English, a language they did not readily understand.

During the interim, the Curatorium sought a temporary substitute for Vos. Finding a person with the requisite training, ability for teaching, and facility in English was



Students and faculty in 1888. Increased enrollment necessitated the installation of additional faculty. Seated, left to right are Rev. DeBaun, Prof. Hemkes, Prof. Boer and Dr. Vos.

difficult. But in May 1887, a New York native, Rev. John Y. DeBaun, was installed as minister to the small LaGrave Avenue CRC, the first English-speaking congregation in the denomination. In addition to pastoring the LaGrave congregation, the 60-year-old DeBaun agreed to teach in the theological school until Vos completed his studies.

As the size of the faculty was increased, the Curatorium and synods addressed another pressing need – space. The second floor of the Williams Street school had become too small to house the necessary instruction and the growing library. Motions to move the school to Holland had failed at both the 1884 and 1886 synods. But persistent sentiment from some circles advocated the location of the school in Holland, the historic center of Dutch settlement in West Michigan. In 1889 the Curatorium decided to ask the synod for authorization to construct a new facility. The 1890 synod discussed this matter at length and concluded that, indeed, a new edifice was needed.

Because of ongoing suggestions to have the school located in Holland,

the first decision to be made was the location. Residents of both Holland and Zeeland presented offers of land and facilities. Of the two, the one in Holland by Mrs. Ellen vanden Berge of a house and lot was the more attractive, so the final decision was either Holland or Grand Rapids. As the railroad hub of West Michigan, with a rapidly growing home furniture industry, Grand Rapids was by 1890 the primary destination of Dutch immigrants. There were already seven CRC congregations in Grand Rapids. Because of this growing constituency base and the better transportation link, the decision was made to locate the school in Grand Rapids; selecting the specific site was left to the Curatorium. After considering several locations, several contiguous lots northwest of the intersection of Franklin Street (then known as Fifth Avenue) and Madison were chosen.

The next order of business was raising the \$5,000 necessary to pay for the land and whatever additional amount necessary to erect a facility. After discussing several options, the decision was made to call Rev. Jacob

Noordewier from the Fremont, Michigan, church to canvas the entire denomination for funds. It was thought he could visit all members in the 99 congregations from New York to Nebraska in a year. It took him two years, but when he was done he had collected \$20,000, above his expenses, against the \$27,000 needed for land acquisition and construction. When the facility was completed in the fall of 1892, the unsubscribed \$7,000 was borrowed. Well heated, lit, and ventilated, the facility featured more space than was needed and the assumption was that it would meet all needs for decades to come.

Other changes were also underway for the school during the 1890s. In 1889 the faculty decided that the rectorship (the office charged with the day-to-day affairs of the school on behalf of the Curatorium) should rotate among the faculty rather than always falling to Boer. In 1890 Hemkes held the position, and in 1891 Vos. That function continued to rotate among the seminary faculty for the next four decades until Louis Berkhof was selected as the seminary's first president in 1931.

Just as the new building was being completed in 1892, the Curatorium began to discuss adding a fourth faculty member. When efforts to call a minister failed, another promising student, Gerrit Berkhof (brother of Louis), was hired on a part-time basis. At the same time, Vos received but declined a call from Princeton University to their chair in Biblical Theology. The next year unsuccessful steps were again taken to call a fourth full-time faculty member. Vos again received the call from Princeton —

which he now accepted — reducing the faculty to two from the planned four. As a result, Berkhof was retained as a part-time instructor, and four area ministers, as well as Boer and Hemkes (in addition to their regular assignments), taught the courses previously taught by Vos. As a temporary measure, this worked well enough, but the Curatorium urged the synod to add two full-time faculty members.

Given the small size of the CRC in 1857 and the very limited economic means of its members, the beginnings of the school had been difficult. Much had changed during

the ensuing 37 years. A faculty was in place — a faculty soon to be enlarged — and a new facility had been opened. As the next chapter indicates, when the synod increased the size of the faculty, it also made a significant change in the direction of the school. Previous efforts had been directed toward building a Christian Reformed theological school. Instead of establishing a theological school, this labor proved to be the foundation work for not only a seminary but also a college that would bear John Calvin's name.



The first building, completed in 1892, was “well heated, lit, and ventilated” and was thought to have enough space to handle the school's needs for decades to come.

1888

Gerhardus Vos is hired full-time, becoming the third member of the school's faculty and the first English-speaking professor.

1889

Rev. Jacob Noordewier conducts a two-year tour to raise funds for the construction of a new facility.

1890

1891

1892

A new building is completed at the intersection of Franklin and Madison.

1893



A SEMINARY AND A COLLEGE

1894-1945

Harry Boonstra

As shown in the previous chapter, the only reason for establishing the Theological School was the preparation of ministers, and the courses offered were the ones that one would expect: Bible history, church history, exegesis, and preaching. However, in addition to those ministerial courses, the School also offered geography, Dutch language, and logic (initially all taught by the sole professor, Rev. Boer). Boer was among those who favored the student's exposure to mathematics, algebra and book-keeping. These subjects might not help the students in preaching the gospel, but such study helps the students "to think, to reason, and to discriminate."

AN EMERGING COLLEGE

In 1894 the general education courses became separated from the theological courses, when synod formally established a Theological Department and a Literary Department (the Literary Department was at times also designated as the Preparatory School or the Academy). Synod also made the significant decision to admit students who did not intend to become pastors. Although the incoming class the following year was all theological students, the pattern for a new kind of school had been established: "Our School" was no longer just a theological school, but also (to use a later term) a "liberal arts" school.

Another important milestone came in 1904, when synod designated the establishment of a junior

college; it was named John Calvin Junior College in 1906, and Calvin College in 1908. However, the college did not offer a full-fledged four-year program until 1920, with the first graduates receiving the B.A. degree in 1921.

Why did this struggling community of mostly farmers and working class people decide to start a college? The reasons varied. An early proponent wrote: "We need a school for our young people, a school to which we can confidently entrust our sons and daughters, so that they will not be drenched in the poison of all kinds of errors." (It is worth noting that although the school originally enrolled only sons, the daughters did come; the first women students were admitted in 1902). This desire for a safe education, coupled with a wish to have their children continue to identify with the Reformed, Dutch tradition (and find a suitable mate from that tradition), was similar to that of many other ethnic religious groups. Scandinavian Lutheran, German Reformed, and Mennonite groups all started colleges for the same reasons.

But from the beginning, Calvin College had an additional reason for being founded. The community had been the beneficiary of the teaching of Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), a renowned Dutch theologian and statesman, who also founded the Free University in Amsterdam. Part of the reason for establishing the Free University was Kuyper's conviction that the Reformed faith has implications for all of life, including



Abraham Kuyper

education. (This principle became known as the Reformed/Calvinistic "world and life view.") The Christian Reformed Church became imbued with this conviction, and it became foundational in the life of Calvin College and Seminary. The 1917-1918 *Year Book* summarized this principle as follows:

"According to the constitution all instruction given must be in harmony with reformed principles. The various branches of study, therefore, are considered from the standpoint of faith and in the light of Calvinism as a life and world view. The aim of the college is to give young people an education that is Christian, not merely in the sense that devotional exercises are appended to the ordinary work of a college, but in the larger and deeper sense that all class work, all the student's intellectual, emotional and imaginative activities shall be permeated with the spirit of the teaching of Christianity."

CHURCH CONTROL

Even though there was general agreement on the need for a Christian college, there was less unanimity on the question whether such a college ought to be owned by the Christian Reformed Church. Two questions came to the fore: "Should the church be responsible for education other than ministerial training?" and "Should all members of the church be expected to pay for this college education?" Both questions were asked repeatedly for the next one hundred years!

The issue of control of Calvin College was a matter of church polity. Is it appropriate for a church to "run a school" as Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches do? For the elementary schools the CRC had said, "No." These Christian schools were each under the supervision of a separate association and a board. Those opposed to church control of Calvin College argued that it was unscriptural for a church to be engaged in general education. They buttressed their view by appealing to Abraham Kuyper, who had taught that each "sphere" of society, such as the state, or church, or school, was to be independent (sovereign), and not governed by another sphere. The famous dictum of "sphere sovereignty" was appealed to over and over in the long CRC debate over control of the college and seminary.

The proponents of church control agreed that it was not essential for a church to control a school, but it was permissible. In the language of 1900, it might be more "pure" to have the college controlled by an association, but it was not wrong for the church to operate a college. Moreover, the

"There has been nothing more heartening to the administration at Calvin than the generosity with which the ordinary laymen, through the churches in which they have membership, have furnished financial support."

church control was to be *voorlopig*, that is, for the time being, until the people of the church were mature enough to assume control through an association. The *voorlopig* continued for a long time. Synod 1990 again said that "this is not the proper time to 'privatize' the college."

FINANCES

The related issue of funding also has a long history. Already in 1894 a writer protested: "It seems to me unreasonable to have the whole Church pay for an Institution from which the citizens in Grand Rapids will profit the most." This argument continued, especially because Calvin College and Seminary were supported by assessment from each congregation via the "quota" system. The question took on new urgency after 1955 when Dordt College and other regional colleges were established by Christian Reformed constituencies. Several synods resolved this problem by allowing areas with regional colleges to reduce their support for Calvin.

Even though church control and support were debated, the CRC sup-

ported (and continues to support) the schools in an exemplary manner. As Henry Ryskamp writes, "There has been nothing more heartening to the administration at Calvin than the generosity with which the ordinary laymen, through the churches in which they have membership, have furnished financial support...." The church has also remembered the schools with prayers and wisdom, and provided trustees, faculty, staff, and students. The founders of the Theological School could not have imagined the importance of Calvin College and Seminary in the life of the CRC and the crucial role of the church in the life of "Our School."

Of course, in spite of such generosity, the school often experienced great financial difficulty. During the Depression, especially, the school went from one financial crisis to another. President R. B. Kuiper wrote in his 1933 report to the Board: "To be sure, we are two months in arrears in the payment of salaries, but that is due to the fact that the Grand Rapids Savings Bank has not reopened since the banking holiday. Our impounded account is equal to what is owing on salaries. When, how, and whether this account will be released is very uncertain." One can only admire the professors who continued to teach faithfully without salaries—salaries which had already been reduced several times.

Another interesting financial sidelight was the difference between the salaries of the theological professors and the other professors. *De Wachter* (July 24, 1912, p. 3) notes, "as concerns the literary professors, some of them don't have the courage to get married, because they would not be

1894

Synod establishes separate Theological and Literary Departments.



A.J. Rooks, the first non-theologian is appointed to the faculty.

1898

Literary course extended to 5 years and opened to non pre-seminary students.



1902

The first women students are admitted. Hellen Poelstra was Calvin's first woman graduate.



Student Enrollment

	Preparatory	College	Theological	Total
1900-1901	55		17	72
1904-1905	131		16	147
1910-1911	61	33	31	125
1913-1914	220	67	26	313
1917-1918	268	64	34	336
1918-1919	283	80	42	366

able to maintain a household 'with God and honor.'" Rev. Henry Beets also came to the aid of the literary professors: "These brethern have all received an expensive education not inferior to that of others; they are working equally hard, and above all, not one of them is benefited by any of the emoluments the theological professors enjoy by means of their preaching..." In due time the clergy preferment disappeared and the history and chemistry professors received their due reward.

LOCATION AND BUILDINGS

It seemed only natural to many in the church that the Theological School should be located in western Michigan, since the greatest concentration of the CRC was found there. The first "campus" was in Grand

Rapids, at the Christian School on Williams Street, where the theological students shared the building with the elementary school children and the janitor. These cramped quarters soon became intolerable, and in 1890 synod decided that a new building was essential.

Land was purchased at the corner of Franklin and Madison, and a new building erected by 1892. The *Year Book* (catalog) of that year describes the school: "The school building is a modern structure of red brick, trimmed with gray stone, and is furnished with the latest conveniences. The recitation rooms are cheerful, well-lighted and ventilated." However, with the addition of non-theological students, the enrollment increased rapidly, as the chart above shows.

The 1908 synod conducted long discussions about future building needs. There was general agreement that expansion was necessary, but no unanimity about the future location. "The brethern from East and West pointed out rightly that Grand Rapids is increasingly no longer the center of our Church," and synod should therefore consider other locations as well. This competition for the school was evidently a serious issue, because the CRC constituents in Kalamazoo persuaded that city to offer the campus and building of the defunct Michigan Female Seminary, and the Chamber of Commerce in Muskegon offered ten acres, plus \$10,000. The Grand Rapids Board of Trade in turn came with an offer of \$10,000. Much to the relief of Grand Rapids folks, synod decided to keep the school in Grand Rapids, and to purchase ten acres for a new campus at the corner of Benjamin and Giddings. The main building was first occupied in September 1917. This campus (with the addition of many buildings) continued to be the home of Calvin College and Seminary until the move to the Knollcrest campus in the 1960s.

Although the number of students in the college began to surpass those in the Theological School in 1910, in



The cornerstone was laid in 1916 and the school's new building on Franklin Street was occupied in September of 1917.

many ways the theological training continued to be foremost. At this time the majority of the college students were still preparing for entrance to the Theological School, the study of Hebrew was begun in the college, and *De Krans* (The Circle) was one of the most important campus organizations, consisting of theological students of both college and seminary. (The designation "Seminary" came to be used interchangeably with "Theological School.") However, by 1920 the separate identity of the two schools became more pronounced. The college had become a four-year institution, the enrollment was twice that of the seminary, the liberal arts began to dominate the college curriculum, 16 of the 94 students were women, and the college became much more oriented to the "American world." Even though the one Board of Trustees continued to govern both institutions, the CRC continued to support and "own" both seminary and college, and the designation "our school" continued to encompass both institutions, after 1920 it is more appropriate to study their histories separately.

COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION

One aspect of the development of the college and its relation to the seminary was the administrative structure. In its beginning years the college was professor-governed. Virtually all decisions were made by the faculty as a whole, although at times the rector of the seminary tried to assert his authority. Such collegial government was workable when the faculty were few in number, but it became increasingly unwieldy. Besides,

if the college wanted to be American, it should have a president.

In 1919 the board appointed the first president, Rev. J. J. Hiemenga, a well-known and respected pastor, who had a reputation for "getting things done." One of the things he did was the phasing out of the Preparatory School, which was turned over to an association to become the Grand Rapids Christian High School — thus ending some forty years of providing secondary education for theological students. Hiemenga also undertook the task assigned to all American college presidents: raising funds. His main achievement was the collection of funds for a new dormitory-gymnasium, completed in 1924.

Hiemenga returned to the pulpit in 1925, and Johannes Broene, professor of psychology (who also taught six different education courses), was asked to become acting president for one year. He remained in the president's position until 1930. The faculty especially appreciated Broene's tenure. Whereas Hiemenga had tried to assume much of the authority previously held by the faculty, Broene again involved the professors in the governing process.

The board again turned to a popular preacher when they chose Rev. R. B. Kuiper as president; he served from 1930 to 1933. These were the first years of the Great Depression, and Kuiper was forced to institute drastic measures. The 1932 synod received eight overtures urging reduction of college and seminary expenses and, thus, a reduction in the quota assessments of the churches. Total expenses (including

salaries and pensions) were to be reduced by 20 percent; besides, faculty were to *return* a portion of their salaries. Among the positive developments was the approval of Calvin College and its curriculum by the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges.

The next president (1933-1939) again came from the professorial ranks: Professor Ralph Stob from the Greek department. Stob, as did the other professors, taught a daunting array of courses. The 1926-1927 *Year Book* lists fifteen courses, from New Testament Greek, to Plato (four courses), to Greek tragedy and comedy. A footnote adds: "It is likely that all courses in the department of Greek will be offered during the first semester of 1926-1927." Stob's teaching load was demanding, but the office of president even more so. His administration was a difficult one. The financial problems continued, and many in the church criticized both faculty teaching and student behavior. President Stob sought to shape the college into the mold demanded by the critics, but both students and faculty resented his authoritarian methods, and he resigned in 1939.

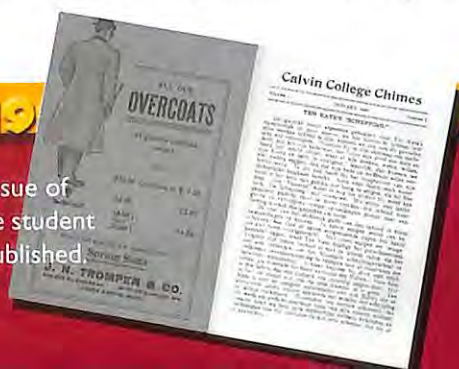
Johannes Broene was again prevailed upon to serve as acting president for one year. It was a troublesome year. Both synod and the board were seeking to answer the church critics and to fashion a "more truly Reformed college." Synod appointed a "Committee of Ten" with wide powers to scrutinize faculty teaching and to find a way to keep students away from the movies. The Committee of Ten even recommended their choice of the next president.

1906

Named "John Calvin Junior College."

1919

The first issue of *Chimes*, the student paper, is published.



1912

1914

J. Bouwsma, H. Heyns, and J. Vende Kieft were the first regular graduates to receive bachelor degrees.

1916



The college faculty in 1926. Seated, (l. to r.): R. Stob, J.G. Vanden Bosch, K. Schooland, J. Broene, H.J. Ryskamp; second row: J. Nieuwndorp, H.G. Dekker, A.E. Broene, S. Swets, J.P. Van Haitisma, J.R. Bos, H.J. Van Anandel; top row: H. Van Zyl, Wm. H. Jellema, P.G. Berkhout.

Even though their recommendation was procedurally incorrect, their suggestion for the next president was a popular one, and Rev. Henry Schultze was selected. He served as president of the college from 1939-1951, and served with distinction. Although the country was emerging from the troubles of the Depression, it soon faced the new problems of World War II. Again, the college was strongly affected, especially in the decrease of men students. The total enrollment was 520 in 1941, and declined to 420 in 1944. The opposite problem came very soon. When the service men returned from the war, many flocked to colleges and universities. Calvin's enrollment in 1946 skyrocketed to 1,245.

FACULTY

The summary in the preceding pages has tended to focus on the presidents who guided the college. Of course, in many ways the life of the college was determined even more by the faculty. In 1894 the Literary Department had two professors; by 1940 the number of college teachers had increased to 26, and the dramatic growth after the war, saw this number increase to 51 by 1947. As with all college faculties,

the teaching expertise covered the spectrum from mediocre to inspiring, but the dedication to the school, its students, and the constituency was remarkable. The teaching assignments were unusually heavy, committee work abounded, many professors also contributed generously to church leadership, wrote for church magazines, and spoke at Christian School conventions. It is no wonder that they had little time or energy left

for scholarly publications, but some professors began to make their mark in the broader academic world as well.

To find glimpses of the professors in these early years, one must read John Timmerman's *Promises to Keep* and Henry Ryskamp's *Offering Hearts, Shaping Lives*. Both of these authors attended Calvin, and their books contain marvelous snapshots of their professors. Allow me to quote two excerpts:

"Professor Henry Van Anandel, Professor of Dutch Language and Literature, teacher of organ and often chapel organist, voluminous writer for Calvinistically oriented journals, teacher of Dutch and medieval history, Dutch and Flemish Art, and classroom oracle on anything that diverted his mind from conjugations and declensions. A remarkable man, blessed with many talents, a most imaginative mind, and ardent spirit, and boundless kindness. His versatility overwhelmed him, but that he did so many things so well is memorable (Timmerman, p. 58)."

Ryskamp quotes an alumnus:

"During my 'prep' years I fell in



1920 Girls Glee Club. Musical groups were among the most important ambassadors for the college.

love with words, which I owe largely to Jakie Van den Bosch. Enjoyment in writing began with his own delight in figures of speech, which I admit rubbed off on me as gold on tin.

"I still owe a debt to 'Drooge' Albert Broene. Whenever there is occasion to speak some German, there is a memory of how he pronounced it in his classroom prayers. Thus, for example, he said 'Lebendigen,' not accented as 'levende' as in Dutch.

"The memories of Klaas Schoolland are sweet, for he was a continental Christian humanist; living his Greek, he had a piety becoming one possessing the best of two worlds. It is a safe wager that most of his students recall his quizzical humor (p. 61)."

STUDENT LIFE

The hundreds of students who walked Calvin's halls during these years were, of course, a diverse group. Most of them came from CRC homes, although in 1935 25 percent of the students were other-than-CRC. Again, Ryskamp and Timmerman have many memorable vignettes of students. Some of the most colorful (and capable) students attended in the 1930s. Well-known authors such as Frederick Manfred, Peter De Vries, and David De Jong wrote their early poems, stories, and essays at Calvin. Others, who later served church and school with distinction, were students in the early years; among the many were John De Vries, Peter Eldersveld, Trena Haan, Henry Stob, Johanna Timmer, and Henry Zylstra.

Clubs, organizations, and publications also became increasingly im-



Students in the early 1920s.

portant in the lives of the students. Certainly the student paper *Calvin Chimes* (first published in 1907) has been a very important and influential voice of Calvin College—at times speaking prophetically to church and school, at times scandalizing the constituency. The *Prism* has chronicled the life of Calvin since 1921. Musical groups became among the most important ambassadors for the college, especially through their country-wide tours. Intellectual stimulation and social interaction was promoted in the Plato Club, Thespians, the Knicker Klub, Phytozoon Club, various literary clubs, and many other organizations.

Although athletics and competitive sports were initially frowned upon by the faculty (in the 1920s Calvin-Hope basketball games were banished for two years because of student rowdiness), Calvin's sports program became increasingly impor-

tant to both students and alumni.

The most problematic issue in these years was the question of student attendance at movies (or "going to the show," as it was called). From 1925 to 1950 this problem appeared more frequently than any other student issue in the reports of presidents, trustees, and synodical committees. In 1928 the CRC synod published a 50-page report on "Worldly Amusements." Although the report also inveighed against card playing and dancing, it warned especially against the evil of movies, and virtually forbade all movie attendance. This report determined the parameters of the movie question in 40 years. Although the report became the semi-official policy of the denomination, it became increasingly difficult to enforce the policy or to find unanimity, especially with the arrival of *I Love Lucy* and *Andy Griffith* on television and *The Sound*

			
1918	1920	1924	1926
J. J. Hiemenga appointed first college president	The first Calvin-Hope basketball game is played, December, 1920.	Johannes Broene appointed college president	Johanna Timmer is the first woman to join Calvin's faculty and staff.

of Music in the theater.

This denominational issue became focused most pointedly at Calvin College. Since Calvin was "Our School," students were expected to abide by the church's strictures. But students, free from parental and church council supervision, often chose to test their freedom by attending movies—both the good ones and questionable ones. Such attendance was offensive to many in the denomination, but even more troublesome was the unwillingness of the faculty or its inability to control student movie attendance and to punish the offenders. In 1937 the Board of Trustees chastised the faculty for not being more vigilant in disciplining the students: "Our School is a church school and it is the 'West Point' of our denomination, the training camp for those who are to be our leaders. The faculty should unitedly hold high the moral ideals for which our church officially stands." The question of movie attendance became muted in the 1950s and was officially dealt with when synod 1966 published "The Film Arts and the Church."

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

Another way to measure the growth and change in the college is by comparing the course offerings between 1920 and 1945. In 1920 the curriculum was weighted heavily toward languages. Of the 140 courses offered, 48 were in foreign languages, including one course in Hebrew. All the science courses together numbered 22. By 1945 the number of language courses had increased by only one (Dutch had been reduced by two courses), but the sciences now numbered 59 courses, and education had increased from four to 24. There were no psychology courses in 1920; there were five in 1945.

Of course, many other changes and developments occurred in these

“What strikes one especially is the change from a very small ethnic school, mainly interested in the preservation of its community, its faith and its mores, to a dynamic institution of higher education finding its way in North American academia.”

years. What strikes one especially is the change from a very small ethnic school, mainly interested in the preservation of its community, its faith and its mores, to a dynamic institution of higher education finding its way in North American academia. Certainly the process of Americanization in the Dutch immigrant community, of determining how best to preserve its Dutch cultural heritage, while also becoming genuinely American, was often seen most clearly at Calvin College. And the decrease of Dutch language courses while adding engineering and psychology to the curriculum is a demonstration of that change.

At the same time, one sees much continuity. During these years the college remained clearly a CRC institution, and its religious orientation continued to be heavily indebted to theological developments in the Netherlands. What is more important, the vision of a Reformed, a Calvinistic education had not changed. At the end of this period the college

catalog still read: "All instruction given must be in harmony with Reformed truth. The various branches of study, therefore, are considered from the standpoint of faith and in light of Calvinism as a life and world view.... All the students' intellectual, emotional, and imaginative activities shall be permeated with the spirit and teaching of Christianity." And this emphasis was more than a *pro forma* confession; it was practiced in the classroom.

SEMINARY DEVELOPMENTS

In many ways Calvin College and Seminary continued as an undivided institution for many decades after 1920. College and seminary had a joint catalog until 1930, joint graduation exercises until 1963, a common Board of Trustees until 1990, when the seminary legally became a separate institution. However, in other ways a separate focus and identity came to expression much earlier. Ryskamp reports that separate faculty meetings were instituted in 1919, because the agendas for the two faculties were often very different, "...the Literary [college] faculty having to listen to disputes between the Seminary professors, and the latter being involved in the disciplinary and other administrative matters of the Literary department" (p. 39).

Finances also became problematic at times. In 1921 President Hiemenga of the college had launched a Million Dollar Endowment Fund. The seminary faculty soon became uneasy and addressed a letter to the Curatorium (Board of Trustees), which began: "The theological division of the Faculty of our School respectfully requests again



R. B. Kuiper appointed college president.

1930



Louis Berkhof named seminary president.

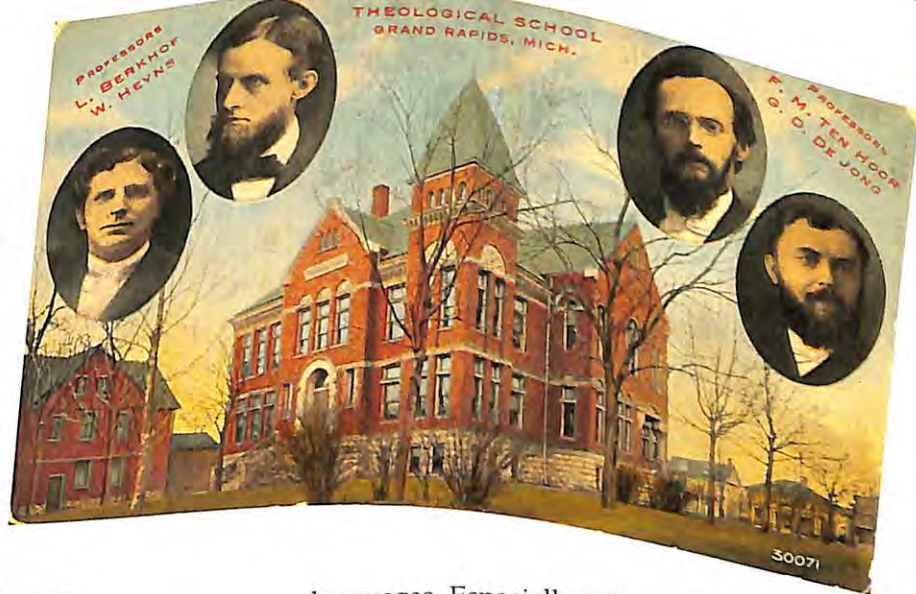


Ralph Stob named college president.

that the attention of the Curatorium be directed to the fact that thus far no decision has been made which stipulates whether and to what extent the 'Seminary' will share in the proceeds of the projected 'Million Dollar Endowment Fund.'" Besides the financial concern expressed here, the faculty also lamented that the two divisions were drifting apart: "...everything points to a separation of College and Seminary, and actually it has already come to the point that the unity of the two has to a large degree been severed." When the seminary published its first independent catalog in 1931, it noted that the college and the seminary were "two distinct schools."

An important milestone in the development of the seminary was the appointment of a president in 1931. Up to that point the chief administrative position had been held by a rector—a faculty member appointed (usually for one year) to carry out the necessary administrative duties. The first president was Louis Berkhof, who had joined the seminary faculty in 1906; he served as president until 1944. In his long tenure as both president and professor (he continued teaching throughout his presidency), Berkhof certainly set his stamp on Calvin Seminary. In his inaugural lecture, "Our Seminary and the Modern Spirit," Berkhof promised that Calvin Seminary would be different from other seminaries, especially those that had fallen prey to the modern spirit. Calvin was to continue with a strong emphasis on dogmatic theology, avoidance of the pitfalls of the social gospel, the maintenance of denominational distinctiveness, and curbing

An early postcard shows some of the seminary's most influential faculty.



the emphasis on practical training. (The address was printed in *The Banner*, September 11, 1931, pp.791-2, 806). That manifesto is an accurate description of Calvin Seminary during Berkhof's presidency and beyond.

FACULTY

The professors who taught at the seminary during these years tended to have long tenures. For example, Berkhof served for 39 years, William Heyns and Foppe Ten Hoor both 24 years, Samuel Volbeda 39 years, and Martin Wyngaarden 38. Thus, their influence on future ministers and on the CRC was vast. We cannot do justice to the careers of each professor in this publication, but a few observations are possible. In terms of influence both in the CRC and beyond, Louis Berkhof must be counted as the most significant. Teaching first in Biblical studies and then in systematic theology, he shaped the life of theological education as no other. His theological treatises were published in many versions, climaxing in his *Systematic Theology*. This work has continued to be in print and is used in many circles outside the CRC, including through translation in other

languages. Especially influential in the earlier years were Foppe Ten Hoor in his dogmatic writings (he was at times best known for his disagreements with Abraham Kuyper) and William Heyns through teaching practical theology; his *Liturgiek* (1903) was among the earliest writings on worship in the CRC. Samuel Volbeda's impact on CRC ministry came especially in his courses on preaching. One of the most brilliant professors was Clarence Bouma, who taught systematic theology from 1924-1952. Sadly, his career was cut short by mental illness.

Some professors became known especially for their departures from accepted CRC teaching. Dietrich Kromminga faithfully taught church history for 20 years, but today is remembered mostly for his pre-millennial views (which he did not discuss in any significant way, except towards the end of his life). The colorful B.K.Kuiper was long remembered as the professor who was released from his seminary position because he had attended the theater. Even his three-hour defense did not sway the synod.

In some ways the best-known

1936

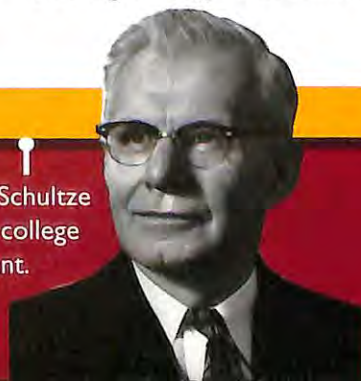
1938

1942

1944

1946

Henry Schultze named college president.



professor during this time was the one associated with the “Janssen-case.” Ralph Janssen had studied in Germany (which conservatives in the church often considered a dangerous place to study theology) and soon after his appointment to the seminary in 1914, his views became suspect. In 1919 four of Janssen’s seminary colleagues brought charges of heresy against him to the Curatorium. Janssen held that some miracles recounted in Scripture might have had natural causes, he tended to stress the human rather than the divine origin of Scripture, and he was often sympathetic to the methods of “higher criticism.” When the Curatorium refused to censure Janssen, the charges were laid before the 1920 synod. Again, synod did not sustain the opponents. However, by 1922 the controversy had blossomed into a full-blown heresy trial, and Janssen was found guilty and dismissed from the faculty.

STUDENTS

In the years under discussion the student body increased gradually. Nearly all students came from the Christian Reformed constituency and became ministers in that denomination. The growth can be traced as follows:

1895	21	1930	51
1900	23	1940	45
1910	31	1945	56
1920	44		

The most significant decline came during the Depression; in 1937 only 29 students were registered. Unlike the college, the seminary did not experience a great loss of students during World War II. The retention of students was due largely to the government’s stipulation that theological students could be exempted from the military draft. The Seminary used this law to the fullest. The Board of Trustees

noted: “Would it not be well that the rule that Candidates may not be called [to a church] until a month after they are declared candidates be suspended for the duration? Else such young men, should they have to wait some time for a call, might still be inducted. The Board recommends that this rule be suspended for the duration.”

The student body no doubt contained the full spectrum of students, from mediocre to brilliant, but one outside evaluation of the students came from an important source—Princeton Seminary. “Our four candidates who attended Princeton last year to take a post-graduate course, have all passed ‘Cum laude,’ and the professors there have all testified that of all the students...ours were the best prepared” (Acts of Synod, 1912, p. 65). Such intelligence and diligence is not to say that the students always appreciated their studies. In 1931 the faculty noted “in view of the repeated complaints of the students about the heavy burden which they must bear in the seminary,” the faculty agreed that they would consult among each other about the timing of their assignments (Board of Trustees Minutes, May 26, 1931, Art. 103).

The remarks above about the Americanization of the college can also be applied to the seminary. As the CRC and the Dutch immigrant community tried to find the best ways to honor their ethnic tradition and especially their faith tradition, this search was often focused most critically at Calvin College and Seminary. Again, we cannot here explore all the dynamics of this development, but we can note that the seminary retained its ties with the Netherlands much longer than the college, especially in its contacts with and reliance on Dutch (Reformed) theology and the Dutch churches. For example, in 1900 one-half of the textbooks used were

written in Dutch, and all of Professor Ten Hoor’s writings (through 1923) were in Dutch. Virtually all theological books written in the Netherlands were reviewed by the seminary professors.

One gauge of the shift from a Dutch to an American milieu can be found in the requirement that all seminary students be able to read and preach in Dutch. In the beginning of the Theological School such ability could be taken for granted (indeed—there was much more concern about the students’ ability to read and speak English!), but by the 1930s the requirement became much more difficult to enforce. A discussion at the 1934 synod summed up the complexity well:

The faculties of College and Seminary are coping with an exceedingly difficult problem because many of our students upon entering our school lack the old Dutch background and atmosphere. As a result an English Grammar must be used in the study of the Dutch language in the pre-seminary course, and the Dutch language can no longer be used as the general medium of instruction in the Seminary. Many of our students could not derive full benefit from such instruction and a few could not understand it at all.

By 1945 this concern had become much more acute, and the problem of requiring all seminary students to be able to read Dutch continued for many years. This issue was part of the larger question about the Americanization of a Dutch emigrant community and church. The question remained, “How can we be true to our heritage and how can we best serve the Lord in these North American countries?” (The increasing number of Canadian students after 1950 added a new dimension to this question.) The following chapters will chart this continuing journey of the seminary and college.

GROWING AND CHANGING

THE SEMINARY AND THE COLLEGE 1945-1972

James A. De Jong

With the conclusion of the Second World War, Calvin College and Seminary entered an era of remarkable growth. In September 1945 the college registered 503 students taught by 45 faculty members; the seminary, still meeting on its accelerated, year-round wartime schedule, had seven faculty and 57 students. By 1972, when the transition from the Franklin Street campus to Knollcrest was complete, the college's enrollment had mushroomed to 3,185 (down from 3,575 four years earlier) and the seminary's to 154; the schools had faculties of 168 and fourteen members respectively. Their combined annual budget had grown from \$175,000 to \$5,500,000 in 27 years. The entire academic community fit snugly but comfortably on two rectangular city blocks in 1945; by 1972 it occupied the spacious, 166-acre Knollcrest campus and held, in reserve, land across Burton Street.

But change was more than numerical or geographic. It was guided by a visionary board, supported by a generous if sometimes skeptical constituency, and led by an expanding and increasingly specialized and professional administration. The standards of academic excellence had always been high, but with growth came faculty specialization and en-

hanced faculty and student achievements. The era also saw the emergence of two regional colleges in the U.S. constituency and two on the drawing board in Canada. Along with the birth of a graduate studies institute in Toronto, they indicated that the decades of Calvin's monolithic hold on the Christian higher education market in the Christian Reformed Church was passing and the process of regionalization had begun. The appearance of generous state and federal aid programs redefined the economics of college education, increasingly governed students' choices of schools, and opened the college to a more diverse population. The seminary's economic base remained secure, provided almost entirely by denominational quotas and augmented by only token tuition fees.

One thing did not change appreciably. The schools remained Christian Reformed in their faculty and student compositions. In 1972 virtually 90 percent of the college student body and 100 percent of the seminary population, a handful of international students excepted, were still members of the Christian Reformed Church.

ADMINISTRATION

Henry Schultze was at the midpoint in his college presidency as the

period began. His leadership was even-handed and steady. Suffering a slight stroke in 1948, he relinquished substantial responsibilities. Anticipating a change, the college faculty in 1950 crafted appointment procedures giving them a major role in all appointment matters, including those of naming a president. The board approved, signaling acceptance of greater faculty initiative in designing institutional policy. Schultze's resignation in the spring of 1951 led to the search committee's presentation of several names, which the board augmented with the name of William Spoelhof. The faculty countered with additional suggestions, and eventually a nomination of William Spoelhof of the history department and Henry Stob of the philosophy department was presented to synod. Synod elected Spoelhof.

At the seminary Dr. Samuel T. Volbeda had served for 30 years as professor of practical theology when he was named in 1944 to succeed Louis Berkhof as president. While his presidency was relatively brief, extending to 1951, it was characterized by several notable changes. The shift from a small to a substantial student body imposed heavier demands on his time. So did personnel changes and issues affecting the faculty. The transition from a wartime to a peace-

1944

1945

1946

1947

1948



Samuel T. Volbeda
appointed president
of the seminary.

College enrollment is
503 students; seminary
enrollment is 57

Due to the vets returning from
World War II, college enrollment
jumps from 503 to 1245 in one year.

time routine and the influx into the student body of numerous war veterans changed the dynamics of the school. Volbeda continued his teaching with outside assistance and was renowned in the denomination as an excellent preacher.

Dr. William Spoelhof came to his position with graduate training at the University of Michigan and wartime experience in naval intelligence. The new president's administration of Calvin College extended to 1976, when he retired. It was characterized by vision, initiative, and professional attention to all aspects of the college's life. Spoelhof had the ability to select competent people and to create an effective, motivated team of leaders. As the school grew, offices were added. Committee mandates were clarified. Record keeping was centralized, and the flow of information coordinated.

The crowning and most visible achievement of the Spoelhof years was the move to Knollcrest. The move occupied an enormous amount of the president's time and attention, from shepherding the decision to make the transition through synod to the sale of the old campus. Finding a suitable site, creating a master plan, prioritizing construction projects, overseeing building design, raising revenues to complete each structure, superintending the logistics of a split campus, and dealing with the unanticipated issues that arose in any one of these responsibilities would be more than a full-time effort. President Spoelhof managed all of this while simultaneously attending effectively to all the normal business of a dynamic, expanding college. When the engine was turned off on the last shuttle-bus run between Franklin and Burton Streets, Calvin College and Seminary were located on a beautiful new campus widely regarded as a model in the higher education community. By then the president was only a few years shy of retirement.

“When the engine was turned off on the last shuttle-bus run between Franklin and Burton Streets, Calvin College and Seminary were located on a beautiful new campus widely regarded as a model in the higher education community.”

The main administration building was eventually and appropriately named The Spoelhof Center in recognition of his enormous contributions.

When Dr. R.B. Kuiper announced his retirement from Westminster Theological Seminary, the synod of the Christian Reformed Church tapped him to succeed Volbeda. He accepted a one-year appointment as Calvin Seminary's interim president, which was then renewed as a regular appointment. Having served briefly as president of the college in the early 1930s, he was charged with stabilizing the school and guiding the selection of a new faculty. Known as an ardent defender of the Reformed faith, Kuiper served until 1956.

Kuiper's successor was Dr. John H. Kromminga. When appointed as professor of church history at the seminary in 1952, he was pastor in Grand Haven, Michigan, his third charge. He had completed his doctoral studies at Princeton Theological Seminary while serving the Christian Reformed Church in Newton, New Jersey. After four years on the faculty, he was chosen president. In that capacity he participated actively in the design of the new campus and in the transition to Knollcrest. Churchmanship and theological leadership were his strong suits. For years he ably served on the interchurch relations committee and gave guidance to synod and its committees in ecumenical relations, often

representing the denomination at ecumenical gatherings. His vision for social justice, particularly in race relations, and for developing multicultural pastors and congregations characterized the last phase of his presidency. Kromminga worked compatibly with the college president, to whom he deferred on major campus decisions.

The administrations of the college and the seminary functioned effectively, thanks to many dedicated and able leaders during this era of unusual growth. Throughout the period many of the services required to support the two schools were shared, such as the financial office, building and grounds, advancement, the alumni office, and health services. Publications such as the *Calvin Spark*, the *Calvin Forum*, and *Calvinalia* reflected the life and thought of both college and seminary. Each school had its own officers only for administering their respective academic programs and student bodies. The system was efficient and cost-effective.

The internal matters at the seminary were assigned to faculty members who devoted a portion of their time to administrative details. Dr. Fred Klooster functioned for a number of years as registrar. Dr. Henry Stob, noted for his meticulous formulation of faculty minutes, was faculty secretary. In 1965 the faculty created the positions of academic dean and dean of students, which were filled by professors Harold Dekker and Anthony J. Hoekema, respectively. When the faculty commenced publication of *The Calvin Theological Journal* in 1965, it was edited by a faculty committee of three. Faculty advisors handled personal issues in the student body, relying on their pastoral experience and expertise. Henry Venema, a recent graduate, became registrar in 1965; he was the first non-faculty member to assume administrative responsibility. His successors also

handled the field education program.

In the college Dean Henry J. Ryskamp was named to his administrative duties in 1941, after two decades of teaching. He held the post until 1964, when he was succeeded by Dr. John Vanden Berg. These men gave effective academic leadership when a multitude of new faculty appointments were made, new programs were crafted, curriculum requirements and changes were considered, and accreditation standards became increasingly demanding. Recently Dean Ryskamp's manuscript history of the college was edited and published as *Offering Hearts, Shaping Lives: A History of Calvin College 1876-1966*. It presents a detailed, invaluable perspective from an insider's vantage point.

Student services was a growth industry at Calvin College. With a large influx of new students, particularly more mature veterans who chafed at constraints designed for younger people, student personnel were added. Succeeding others, Miss Catherine Van Opynen held the position of dean of women from 1947 to 1968, and from 1955 to when Philip Lucasse was the college's first dean of men. Rev. Bernard Pekelder inaugurated the position of college chaplain in 1962.

Financial administration was competently handled through most of the period by Henry De Wit, assisted by Lester Ippel as comptroller. The irrepressible Sidney Youngsma provided the leadership in financial advancement.

THE MOVE TO KNOLLCREST

By the end of the war, it became obvious that the schools would soon



The great influx of students created a pressing need for additional space, addressed with the purchase of the 130-acre Knollcrest Farm, to the east of the city of Grand Rapids, in 1956.

be pressed for space. Samuel Volbeda's next several reports to the board complained that the solitude of the seminary building was being disrupted by the college classes now being scheduled there. The administration gained temporary breathing room by acquiring a large army-surplus quonset building for use by the natural sciences. In 1948 seven-and-a-half acres were purchased a block-and-a-half east of campus for future expansion; in the meantime the property relieved parking problems and became the preferred site for intramural football games. The library was expanded in 1950. Funds were raised to erect a large new science building, also dedicated that year. A student commons was added in 1953. Even these major efforts became mere stop-gap adjustments;

students came in relentlessly increasing numbers. Major alternatives were seriously considered, and in 1956 the synod of the Christian Reformed Church paused, deliberated, drew a deep fiscal breath, and approved the purchase of Knollcrest farm. It was acquired for the munificent, though some thought extravagant, sum of \$400,000.

The farm lay on the two-lane gravel extension of Burton Street, where it intersected with a secondary state highway later known as the East Beltline. It was in the country, beyond several functioning farms and halfway to the village of Cascade from downtown Grand Rapids. J.C. Miller, an industrialist, was happy to sell the estate to Calvin on condition that the Knollcrest name be retained and the property not be subdivided. His opu-

1949

Library expanded and a science building dedicated.



1951

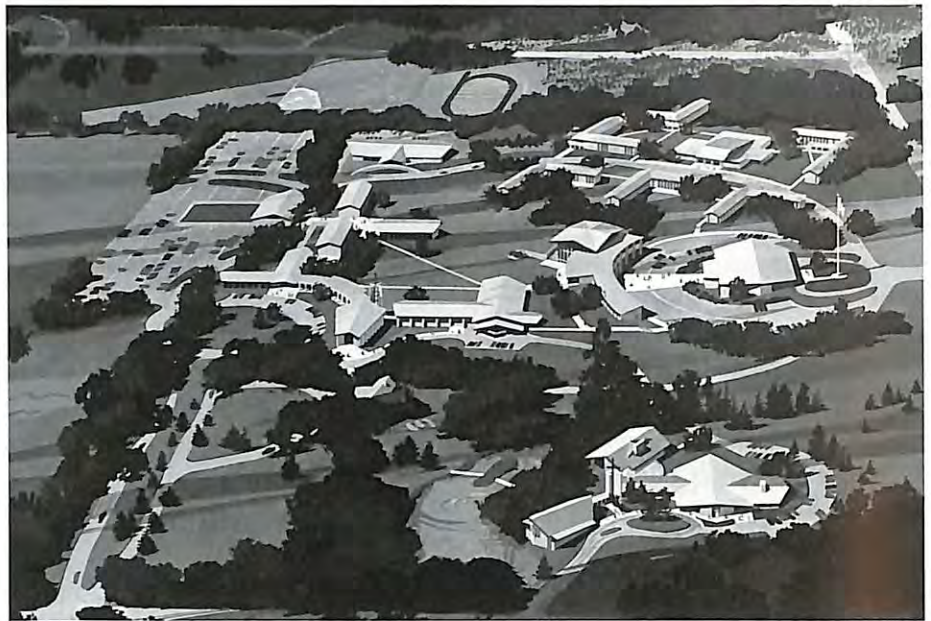
R.B. Kuiper, left, begins brief tenure as seminary president and William Spoelhof, right, named college president.



1953



Architect William Fyfe, from the Chicago architectural firm of Perkins and Will, prepared Calvin's master plan which guided building construction on campus well into the 1990s. Below, right shows the campus as it was in 1967 with a completed seminary and college buildings well under way.



lent home became the Manor House, the site of many social gatherings and fund-raising teas as well as the guest house for visiting dignitaries. The master plan of the campus was carefully developed by William Fyfe, who belonged to the leading Chicago architectural firm of Perkins and Will. The goal was to build aesthetically outstanding structures "that will last 200 years." Building commenced with the seminary, which was completed and occupied in 1960. The initial stage of the library-classroom building, two residence halls, and a commons were ready by 1962, when freshman classes were first held on the new campus. Heritage Hall, which housed denominational and

Calvin archives, was a wing on the library and included a fine lecture hall. The physical education building, long discussed as a need for the old campus, was undertaken soon after and completed in 1965. The following year the sophomore class was transferred to Knollcrest, and waiting to receive the influx of students were additional new residence halls. The Fine Arts Center also opened in 1966, the science building in 1968. The fully developed library and adjoining classroom facility named Hieminga Hall were completed by 1970.

One of the more nettlesome issues in the move to Knollcrest was the library. What portion to retain on the Franklin campus and what portion to move and when required careful planning. Two years after the seminary moved, a major portion of the theological collection followed it. But basic theological books and reference works remained to serve the college students still taking courses on the old campus. The staff devised an efficient courier service that moved books from one campus to the other quickly. As upper-level col-

lege courses or departments were moved, so were those portions of the library that supported them. Early on the seminary faculty advocated for its own library. The matter was studied and discussed at some length before a compromise was reached. Noting the economies to be gained by retaining a single library for both schools, the administration approved the appointment of a theological librarian who would simultaneously serve as assistant director of the library for seminary matters. Peter De Klerk received that appointment in 1969. Library policy was placed in the hands of a joint college and seminary committee.

The cost of constructing an entirely new campus seemed daunting. But enthusiasm for the undertaking ran high. A series of campaigns was mounted under the leadership of Sidney Youngsma and Henry De Wit. They had a model in the "Forward in Faith Campaign," launched by their predecessors in 1947 to raise funds for post-World War II projects on the Franklin campus. In 1951 synod approved a new campaign called "Needs of Today." It was administered by these two men and a visionary team of staff and volunteers. Most of the money for the new campus was raised within the Christian Reformed denomination, supplemented by foundation grants and large, low-interest government loans. At the time the campus was under its most vigorous development, federal funding for higher education was spurred by fears that Russia was overtaking the United States in the domain of science. A substantial piece of the science building was built with an outright federal grant.

"The cost of constructing an entirely new campus seemed daunting. But enthusiasm for the undertaking ran high."

The loans built the residence halls and portions of the academic buildings, and these loans were amortized long-term. The seminary building was another matter; it was christened the Centennial Memorial Seminary, and the denomination's 100th anniversary became the occasion for rallying synodical funding for it. For a time members of the denomination participated in campus expansion by sending their monthly contributions in envelopes provided. It was a familiar system; Christian Reformed people were accustomed to dropping their weekly budget envelopes into church offering plates. "The Campus Development Campaign" began in 1962. The need to raise money for the new buildings being erected one after another, sometimes simultaneously, was unrelenting. But under the stewardly guidance of De Wit and motivated by the enthusiasm and energy of Youngsma, the schools' alumni and supporters celebrated the dedication of one building after another. It was cause for pride and an occasion for thanksgiving to see the new campus take shape.

THE MEASURE OF EXCELLENCE

Administrative competence and fine facilities are but means to a

higher end. The final measure of excellence is the quality of the faith-based education embodied in a school's faculty and students. During this period of rapid growth, Calvin College and Seminary excelled in this regard.

The faculty which had carried the schools into the modern period were generalists. Many of them were one-person departments. Some taught in several disciplines. That they taught with distinction and maintained high expectations is a tribute to their dedication. With growth came larger departments at the college, and the opportunity for younger appointees to excel in specialized areas. This happened. Such fine teachers as William H. Jellema, John De Vries, Henry Zylstra, and Henry Meeter at the college and D.H. Kromminga at the seminary were joined by younger people like Nicholas Wolterstorff, Ann Janssen, George Marsden, David Holwerda, M. Howard Rienstra, Louis B. Smedes, Edgar Boeve, Baastian Van Elderen, and Stanley Wiersma—to take only a sampling. Many of them were pressed into service without having completed their doctoral programs, so urgent was the need for instructors. In time many of them were distinguished by their publications, service to the Christian school movement, their churches, and their community. Several served in local or state government; Paul Henry and Vernon Ehlers were eventually elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Later, several received prestigious appointments at major universities or seminaries. Meanwhile, the college and seminary students were challenged and inspired by their scholarship and



1954

The Calvin Spark, an alumni quarterly magazine, begins publication.

1955

1956

John Kromminga becomes president of the seminary.



1957

Knollcrest campus purchased from industrialist J.C. Miller.

1958

teaching. Excellence in teaching and personal interaction with their students were core values on the faculties, and those attributes produced motivated and bright students.

The 1945 catalog listed 23 major and six pre-professional programs at Calvin college. By 1972 it advertised 26 major and 10 pre-professional programs. In the meantime more programs were added and departmental status was enhanced. A five-year nursing program was introduced in 1945 and continued until in 1963, when stiffer professional standards made it impossible for the college to provide the specialized curriculum required. The mathematics and biology departments participated in National Science Foundation programs. The education department received full accreditation for its teacher education program in 1964. Periodically the Association of Theological Schools reviewed the seminary and the North Central Association the college, and the accreditation of both was renewed with a number of commendations. Both schools added scholarship programs and honors convocations to stimulate and rec-

ognize academic achievement.

An idea long in gestation gave birth to The Calvin Foundation in 1948. Faculty and alumni eager to bring distinguished lecturers to campus had formed a committee through the alumni association. A generous gift by William B. Eerdmans, Sr., enabled it to launch a program of visiting scholars who addressed Calvinism and contemporary issues. Their published and circulated lectures demonstrated the seriousness with which Calvin took its religious calling in the 1950s and 1960s.

The demise of the *Calvin Forum* in early 1956 was a substantial loss. For 21 years it had been the face of Calvin College and Seminary to the world. Its articles demonstrated the seriousness, the rigor, and sometimes the risk with which faculty members scrutinized all fields of human endeavor. As anyone who read it carefully and consistently understood, it reflected an academic community striving to understand and to give religious direction to its readers. It did not shy away from new or controversial subjects. And it was comprehensive, a tangible exhibit of the credo that "all of life is religious." But the

project was demanding. Clarence Bouma of the seminary carried the weight of producing it monthly until he was incapacitated. Cecil De Boer became the paper's next editor. With his untimely death the magazine was discontinued. The Reformed faith community lost a valuable expression of contemporary Calvinism.

Restiveness with the classical liberal arts curriculum in place surfaced on two counts. In 1958 Professor Jellema published a paper in which he contended that the curriculum was not adequately achieving what it should. It was not preparing Christian minds capable of informed, antithetical engagement with non-Christian and secular realities. Simultaneously the faculties of the two schools tackled the rigid and language-dominated pre-seminary program. But it was not until younger faculty members pressed harder that a study entitled *Christian Liberal Arts Education* appeared in 1965. It proposed a curriculum that integrated on an explicitly Reformed basis the best of the classical liberal arts with professional and pre-professional competencies. Thoroughly discussed and debated for two years, it yielded a revised curriculum marked by the 4-1-4 calendar and a creative interdisciplinary course named *Christian Perspectives on Learning*. The changes were implemented in 1967. They included allowance for a diversity of majors in the pre-seminary program rather than the requirement that all seminary applicants have a major in classical languages. Curricular overhaul moved the college closer to the Reformed ideal of integrating faith, thought, and practice in effective service to Christ.

In *Promises to Keep: A Centennial History of Calvin College*, John J. Timmerman cites a reliable study from 1953 ranking Calvin College 45th nationally for the percentage of graduates awarded Ph.D. degrees. Writing in 1975, he observes that he



Louis B. Smedes and David Holwerda (seminary) and Stanley Wiersma and Mary Ann Walters (college) were a few of the excellent faculty members hired as departments grew and opportunities for more specialized instruction increased.

has no reason to believe that the ranking has gone down. By the end of the period under review, a significant number of graduates of both schools had received Fulbright scholarships and several college graduates had been awarded Danforth and Woodrow Wilson fellowships. Graduates of the seminary were recipients of the Diamond Jubilee and the Centennial Missions scholarships and used them to pursue studies in several European and American graduate programs. Calvin alumni were accepted at leading graduate schools and held significant positions of leadership in national organizations. As the period closed, Dr. Roger Heyns was chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley. Dr. James Wyngaarden was teaching at the Duke University medical school and would go on to serve as director of the National Institutes of Health during the Reagan administration. Dr. Lawrence Den Besten was a leader on the medical faculty of the University of Iowa and would go on to become provost of Fuller Theological Seminary. And the trend continued, as people educated at Calvin College and Seminary between 1945 and 1972 received positions of responsibility and leadership in society.

STUDENT EXPERIENCES

Students reflect the attitudes and values of the homes and communities that form them. This is true in a general, and not absolute, way. Some seize their new freedom from parental supervision at college to test what they have been taught. When the values were those of a relatively monolithic subculture, as they were

“As the student body became more diverse and insulation from the wider culture thinner, the standards and practices of the student population grew more disparate.”

at the outset of the period, college expectations of student beliefs and behavior were readily defined. Synod's definition of worldliness was fresh, clear, and dinned into Christian Reformed adolescents by pastors and by mothers who argued, echoing the editor of the church paper, that to go to movies was to support with hard-earned Dutch money the devil's kingdom, and to dance socially was to stoke the furnace of sexual passion. Such opinions ached to be tested. And they were—at least enough to keep the administration vigilant and the discipline committee in session.

As the student body became more diverse and insulation from the wider culture thinner, the standards and practices of the student population grew more disparate. Not all homes insisted on attending church twice on the Lord's Day and napping on Sunday afternoon. The administration admonished more than one offender against spending the afternoon on Ottawa Beach or competing in area drag races. It fell to the dean of men and the dean of women to enforce required chapel attendance and anti-drinking regulations, and to

supervise residence life—all duties from which the faculty was only too happy to be delivered. Enterprising students, collars turned up to avoid identification by Lucasse's chapel checkers, hired out as surrogates to occupy others' assigned seats. Some devised ploys for hiding contraband beverages from detection during unannounced housing checks. Enforced policies and extreme remedies occasionally imposed by the discipline committee invited discussion. Opinion pieces in the *Chimes* challenged the assumption of *in loco parentis*. Enforcement of mores became more difficult, and more tentative. But when it happened, it was understood by most and respected as the necessary cost of maintaining a defined community.

Through responsible struggle with issues of student life, the campus did retain a wholesomely Christian tone. Chapel services were often good, sometimes inspiring. And when Rev. Bernard Pekelder was named chaplain and built thoughtful meditations around his imaginary character “Fog” (for “Feet On Ground”), they became intriguing. Early morning classes were opened with prayer, often with the reading of a few well-chosen verses of Scripture and the professor's reflections. The spiritual care of students included requiring them to take out student memberships at local churches. Many local councils periodically visited with student members about their spiritual needs and development. Congregations welcomed out-of-town students into their homes for meals; Calvin students became part of a wider fellowship and often were involved in church activities. Bible studies and



1960
Calvin Seminary building completed on the Knollcrest campus.

1962
First college classes held at Knollcrest campus.



The Calvin College Radio Choir furnished the Back to God Hour with music for its broadcasts and often conducted tours for a grateful constituency.



informal religious discussions, sometimes quite vigorous, were a regular part of student life. The system of student memberships was replaced only when student worship services, properly supervised by consistory representatives, began to be held on the Knollcrest campus. In the new residence halls more thoroughly trained student directors led devotions with their charges and met as a staff to discuss special situations. The campus was an obviously Christian community, where fellowship, service, and the faith were modeled daily.

Wholesome experiences predominated. Calvin's athletic program grew and teams consistently won conference honors. Individual athletes received national recognition. Thespians produced major plays that ran for several nights in the fall and the spring. The Plato Club and later the Groen Club engaged in deep discussions on weighty matters. The Radio Choir furnished the Back to God Hour with music for its broadcasts, and the concert band and concert choir conducted successful tours through a grateful constituency. Student publications were marked by quality. The outlets for student activity and creativity were there for those who chose to participate.

ISSUES

Schools deal in ideas. Ideas sometimes conflict. Thoughtful professors and students explore and test the validity of human knowledge. In such a context intellectual skirmishes are daily fare and when handled civilly create vitality and stimulate learning. But in the context of a confessionally Reformed academy, one seriously intent on integrating faith and science, perceptions of straying beyond biblical boundaries sometimes emerge. Thoughts on where the boundaries in fact lie also surface from time to time. When sufficient numbers of deeply interested students or constituents perceive problems in this regard, controversy and suspicion and often distortion can follow. Calvin College and Theological Seminary experienced a number of such episodes following the Second World War. That it handled them wisely and weathered them well is a tribute to the leadership both in the schools and the church.

In August of 1950, three years after joining the college faculty, a young Lester De Koster wrote a letter to "Voices in the Church," a column in *The Banner*. His letter lamented the National Association of

Evangelicals' endorsement of John T. Flynn's *The Road Ahead*. The book condemned the cultural shift toward socialism and communism, and it heralded the ideal of personal freedom. De Koster found the book flawed on many counts, not the least of which was that it committed logical fallacies and was racist. The Christian Reformed Church, which had joined the organization at its inception several years earlier, should be embarrassed, De Koster observed, since membership is implicated in the endorsement. He appealed for social critique characterized by "rigorous thinking, thorough demonstration, and objective consideration of any issue." Flynn's analysis was deficient on all three counts; ours should be "worthy of our intellectual standards, moral principles, and fine tradition." He suggested that the church should resign from the NAE.

The editor of the church's weekly magazine, *The Banner*, Rev. H.J. Kuiper, took strenuous exception to De Koster's letter in the following issue. He commended the book to his readers, defended the denomination's leadership in the

NAE, warned against creeping socialism, and wondered whether the professor “is in sympathy with the socialistic trend in this country.” In mid-September eighteen college and seminary professors sent a short letter in reaction to the editorial. They stated their concern that readers would think that “the Flynn line of thought is the Reformed line of contemporary economic-political thought.” The editor used the occasion to ask whether the faculties were decisively Reformed in their evaluation of contemporary trends and suggested that the people in the church had a right to know where their professors stood on substantial issues. He wondered whether the board of trustees was on top of the situation. His tone was taunting. He succeeded in riling the church. The trustees responded in defense of the schools. But the discussion of socialism stretched into the next year. It was the era of the McCarthy hearings, and De Koster’s letter had appeared only weeks after North Korea invaded the South.

The controversy rippled through the student body and the church. In May 1951, seven students (known as “the sacred seven” since they were pre-seminary students) presented the Calvin board with a fifteen-page assault on the competence and the allegedly unreformed convictions of six college faculty members. Copies of the document were given to the accused and the administration after the fact. Sensitive to an unsettled constituency and dealing with an aroused editor of the church weekly, the board appointed a committee which met at length with the professors and the students. Patience and

diplomacy prevailed, and in the end the status of both the students and the professors involved was upheld. Their reputations were not as readily repaired. By the following May the faculty adopted an explicit appeal process for dealing responsibly with grievances. And the college faculty served the board and the constituency with a written affirmation of their fidelity to Scripture and to the Reformed confessional standards. They also stated their dedication to the integration of faith and science, while acknowledging the difficulty of that work and asking for support in this endeavor. It was signed by faculty members individually.

What came to be known as “the seminary situation” culminated in 1952. The “situation” had been building for several years. Differences of faculty opinion about the seminary’s readiness to introduce a doctoral program in theology played a role. So did pedagogical style. In the fall of 1951 the faculty divided rather sharply on the handling of charges against a student sermon preached in a Grand Rapids church. That incident reinforced the judgment of a majority that among certain students an unhealthy level of interest in modern, unReformed theology prevailed. They meant to hold the line on orthodoxy. The alternative position was that theological inquiry is to be welcomed, and that the student in question had been denied due process. The faculty minority meant to hold the line on justice and academic integrity. That fall the seven student critics of college faculty members matriculated as first-year seminarians, which heightened sensitivities on

the issues at stake. By mid-year an investigating committee was hard at work. Apprehensive about the outcome, *The Banner* editor stoked the flames of unrest with an inappropriate letter to every classis in the denomination offering unsolicited counsel on proper remedies. The church became embroiled and unsettled about the seminary as well as the college. Synod took drastic measures that June by terminating four faculty members. Samuel Volbeda retired that year as president by reason of age, and Clarence Bouma was emeritated for health

“The church became embroiled and unsettled about the seminary as well as the college.”

reasons. Only Henry Schultze, himself in fragile health after laying down his responsibilities as college president a year earlier, and Martin Wyngaarden, continued to serve. The board began rebuilding the seminary faculty by issuing everyone single year appointments. R.B. Kuiper returned to campus to teach practical theology and to guide the school through the crisis as interim president.

The seminary was later at the center of two doctrinal controversies before the period under review ended. The first was precipitated by three articles on the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. Written by seminarians Marvin and John Hoogland and published in the stu-

1964

1965

1966

1967

1968



Fine Arts Center is completed.

The 4-1-4 curriculum, as detailed in the *Christian Liberal Arts Education (CLAE)* booklet, recommended in 1965, is implemented.



The seminary choir traveled to the White House, an event that sparked some demonstration back at home (left). Other students demonstrations occurred as well. College students march on Moratorium Day, October 15, 1969 (below).



dent magazine *Stromata*, the pieces analyzed the position presented by the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in its 1958 report. They questioned whether the standards of truth and error used in the report were defensible, pointed out factual discrepancies in Scripture when those standards were applied, and suggested ways of reading different genres of biblical literature without falling into fundamentalistic traps. When the articles were criticized by Rev. John Vander Ploeg, recently appointed editor of *The Banner*, as undermining the infallibility of Scripture, President John Kromminga responded. His attempts to explain the dimensions of the problem and his defense of student probing of theological problems, while noting that he did not necessarily adopt all of their thinking, appeared in a *Banner* article in the spring of 1959. The article immediately shifted attention from the students to Kromminga. His orthodoxy was assailed, particularly his allowance for factual discrepancies in the “periphery” of Scripture, or in details not germane to the Spirit’s purpose. Some saw in this creeping liberalism and an undercutting of the trustworthiness and reliability of the Bible. That his colleague Martin

Wynngaarden registered concerns with the board and synod added gravity to the situation. Synod appointed a study committee. The committee met with Kromminga. Kromminga clarified his position. The committee produced a lengthy report in 1961 and concerns ebbed.

The second controversy involved Professor Harold Dekker. In an article in the December 1963 issue of the *Reformed Journal* he posited that the doctrine of limited atonement as commonly understood in the church inhibited evangelism. His plea was that the church be freed to announce to everyone, “God loves you.” This change in attitude would, he contended, yield a far more effective missionary approach and a greater gospel harvest. His article and those that followed were immediately taken as an attack on

the core of Reformed doctrine. Here was another indication of campus efforts to dismantle the tradition and another cause for concern about the schools. This matter also went to synod. Several years and a study committee later, Dekker received an admonition to express himself with greater care and clarity and turned his primary attention back to his teaching.

By the time “the love of God controversy” had been handled, the United States was mired in Vietnamese rice paddies. Lyndon Johnson and the military-industrial complex were under withering attack in the media and on campuses. Johnson declared that he would not seek reelection as president. Students on the Calvin campus had never left the issues of the day solely to professorial attention. Their faith included

an ethic of engagement. Writers in the *Chimes* had challenged the nuclear arms contest, brinkmanship, racism, segregation, and Southern lynchings. They had applauded integration of the schools in Little Rock, Fidel Castro's revolution against the corrupt Batista regime, and facets of the Great Society. They were usually informed and always intolerant of campus lethargy.

Some students demonstrated at the Civic Auditorium when Rev. Carl McIntyre brought his right-wing roadshow to town. They were incensed that on the national airwaves he had attacked the Calvin community's faith and civic integrity. A handful picketed the 1964 sessions of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, meeting just off campus; they demanded that the assembly censure its South African members for their nation's *apartheid* policy and for the Sharpeville massacre. A few participated in the civil rights marches and sit-ins. Their younger brothers and sisters even held a demonstration against the seminary when its choir accepted an invitation in the early 1970s to sing at the Nixon White House. But the mounting opposition to the Vietnam War was the most sustained and angry expression of student feelings. The more radical, still temperate by national standards, adopted unconventional dress and hairstyles in a display of dissent. They sought conscientious objector status, considered dodging the draft in Canada, and—it is rumored—some even pursued ministerial deferment by enrolling in the seminary. Seared or merely singed, their souls lost faith in the establishment.

“The most infamous student display of disaffection for the establishment was The Bananer. It was the Chimes staff's parting shot in May 1970. Bitingly witty, it lampooned Christian Reformed institutions, attitudes, and practices.”

The most infamous student display of disaffection for the establishment was *The Bananer*. It was *The Chimes* staff's parting shot in May 1970. Bitingly witty, it lampooned Christian Reformed institutions, attitudes, and practices. “Warp College” took several hits, but the bull's eye was *The Banner* editor. He reacted with the predictable and fervently desired indignation. In the name of all that was sacred, he took the case to the people in his editorials. The student paper was Exhibit A of how religiously awry matters were at Calvin College and Seminary. His free advertisement immediately made the rogue paper a coveted item, and a few originals have been secured in safety deposit boxes ever since. The furor naturally gave President Spoelhof the largest public relations problem of his administration. He devoted long days and late nights to soothing and reassuring constituents and to convincing them that the college had not gone counter-cultural or lost its religious moorings.

What often gets lost in times of controversy is a sense of proportion. These institutional episodes are noteworthy because they were unusual and irregular. Most of the students and professors most of the time attended dutifully and effectively to routine responsibilities. The faith that undergirded their work was solid and exemplary. Those who became identified with a specific issue or activity were sometimes misrepresented, sometimes misunderstood, and, yes, sometimes wrong. In the latter instances, the mechanisms for counsel and correction that governed the campus community were invoked. Dedicated and discerning peers and colleagues restored balance and perspective. In this regard the campus was no different from any other social organization. Calvin College and Seminary were, however, governed by the communal norms of the Reformed faith.

REFORMED PRINCIPLES

When the period ended, Calvin College and Theological Seminary were situated on a scenic new campus in handsome buildings. The setting had changed but the substance had not. The schools were as determined as they ever had been to provide Christian higher education that made a transforming difference in the lives of their graduates, and through them in society and culture. Life was to be lived to the glory of God, hearts were to be offered to Christ “promptly and sincerely.” The mission of the schools was to prepare committed Christians for servant leadership in God's kingdom.



1969

Doris Zuidema, a member of the Physical Education department, was a pioneer in women's athletics at Calvin and beyond.

1970

1971

The Bananer, a spoof publication, rocks the denomination.



1973

COMING OF AGE

THE SEMINARY AND COLLEGE 1972–1991

Joan Huyser-Honig

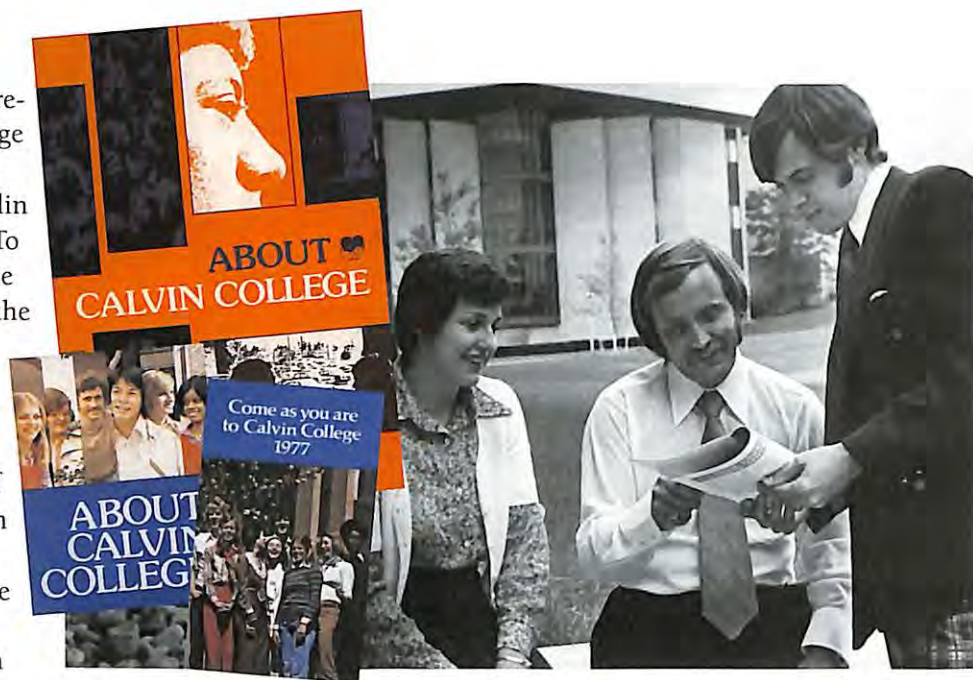
On September 1, 1972, representatives of Calvin College and Seminary pried open the 1916 cornerstone of the Franklin campus Administration Building. To mark Calvin's official transfer to the Knollcrest campus, they removed the box containing historical documents. A new era had begun.

Calvin's 1972 student body was remarkably similar to those of the 1950s and 1960s. In 1972, most of the college students were Christian Reformed (94 percent) and white. Most seminary students were white and male, recent Calvin College graduates aiming to be ordained in the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). As it had for decades, Calvin still depended mainly on denominational quotas and tuition for its operating budget.

After moving to Knollcrest, however, both college and seminary began to broaden their visions and clarify their missions. Meanwhile, changing demographics affected each institution, sending them further along separate paths to maturity. By 1991 it made sense to split Calvin College and Seminary into Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary—two schools, two boards, two denominational quotas.

THE COLLEGE REACHES OUT

The seeds for change in the college had been planted before the move to Knollcrest was completed on December 28, 1973. In 1970 the faculty voted to "broaden the appeal to Christian students beyond denominational lines," seeking out in particular



Efforts to reach out to broaden the appeal to Christian students beyond denominational lines began in the early 70s. Pictured here, along with some early requirement brochures, are admissions counselors Debra Woldring, Peter Harkema, and Mark Van Beveren, Jr.

students from evangelical denominations, including those from "minority and disadvantaged groups...who may be attracted by the... Reformed character of the academic program" (*Report of College President to Board*, May 1970, p. 15). In 1973 the professional programs committee proposed criteria for new professional programs beyond the pre-seminary and teacher education programs that Calvin had always offered. Known as PECLAC (*Professional Education and the Christian Liberal Arts College*), the consciously Kuyperian report reasoned that, since the entire world belongs to Christ, then Calvin should prepare students for service in more disciplines and more careers.

Declining enrollment pushed the college from resolution to action.

Though freshman enrollment began dropping in 1966, total enrollment rose to 3,575 in 1968 — then sank to 3,185 in 1972. "We'd been forced out of our other campus, because there was no room for 3,000 students. All of a sudden, at fall mid-term, as we were starting to fully occupy Knollcrest, we dropped a great number of students. This alerted us to a serious situation," President William Spoelhof said. The architect had to reduce plans for the College Center from three to two floors and cut out a west bay.

"We'd never had a scientific way to gauge enrollment. We based our projections on Christian Reformed baptisms and assumed that, 18 years later, a certain amount would come to Calvin," Spoelhof said. "We hadn't

recruited students, period. After the faculty decision and enrollment dip, we cranked up the admissions process and started advertising. Until then, the administrative council had never agreed on an ad. One rejected ad – before my time – targeted parents worried about drugs: ‘Calvin College: One College That Is Not Going To Pot,’” said Peter Vande Guchte, who was the college registrar before becoming vice president for student personnel services (1971), then vice president for college advancement (1976).

Vande Guchte pulled together a team to host and attend college nights, visit public schools, and invite prospective students on campus for Fridays at Calvin. The team got quick, if mixed, results in recruiting students from Reformed-related, evangelical, and mainline churches. “We thought the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) would be really big because of their doctrinal affinity with us. But the PCA is mostly in the South, and those students thought of Michigan as the North Pole,” Vande Guchte said.

Admissions staff found that phrases such as “distinctively Reformed” or “integrating faith and learning” had little meaning to evangelicals, according to Peter Harkema, who moved from admissions counselor (1974) to director of admissions development (1979) and vice president of external relations (1991). “Evangelicals wanted to know whether our faculty really believed the Bible. They were easy to reach through ads in *Campus Life*. Mainline churches were more socially engaged. We wanted to help those kids understand that we renew

“From 1972 to 1976, Calvin boosted its enrollment from 3,185 to 3,915 and increased the percentage of its students from other denominations from 6.6 to 19.”

creation not because it’s ‘a good thing,’ but because it belongs to Christ. There was no central way to reach that group,” Harkema said.

From 1972 to 1976, Calvin boosted its enrollment from 3,185 to 3,915 and increased the percentage of its students from other denominations from 6.6 to 19. Among these students in 1976, 23 percent were from Reformed or conservative Presbyterian churches, and 22 percent were Baptists.

The college also began moving beyond the CRC for funds. “Our guaranteed quota system was like a living endowment. Other than J.J. Hiemenga’s drive in the 1920s, we had never had fund raising campaigns. People thought of Calvin as *onze school* (our school). The sentiment was that a campaign would draw on support away from the CRC. But in the early 1970s, Syd Youngsma invented the Calvin telethon. It was so successful that many CRC agencies copied the idea,” Spoelhof said.

“We needed to catch up with our size, so we reorganized the faculty into divisions, established full-fledged departments, and adopted rank and salary schedules and policies on tenure and leaves of ab-

sence,” Spoelhof said. Calvin expanded course and career options, adding astronomy and geology courses, several interims abroad, Career Days, and a Broene Center counselor to address career resource needs.

Calvin’s course expansion stopped short of graduate degrees that would transform it into a university; the university idea had been fermenting since B.K. Kuiper proposed it in the 1920s. In his last report to the Board (February 1976, pp. 30-35), Spoelhof noted that though one of his first assignments as president had been on the graduate studies committee, the college faculty “was never really enthusiastic about a formal advanced-degree scheme, and said so.” His final report outlined a plan for a program of special studies and research “arising out of our concrete needs and ... integrated with our whole academic effort.... The program should include a serious address to problems in our church and in society at large.” The Board agreed and asked incoming President Anthony Diekema to create what became the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship.

SEMINARY STEERS STEADY COURSE

When the seminary completed its move to Knollcrest, President John H. Kromminga and his faculty saw their core mission as training Christian Reformed men to become ministers. The seminary offered a Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) degree and a Master of Theology (Th.M.) degree, a graduate degree that required either a B.D. or Master of Divinity (M.Div.). Yet they willingly adapted to real-world needs by acknowledging

1972

The mandatory chapel rule is dropped.

1973

Move from Franklin to Knollcrest Campus completed.

1974

1975

greater demands on pastors, adding new degree programs, and accommodating students who were not Christian Reformed. They pursued these goals despite critics who saw the seminary as either abandoning the historic Reformed faith or shackled by tradition.

By the 1970s, congregations wanted pastors who could counsel troubled people and get young people involved in church life – as well as preach theologically sound sermons. It was too much for a seminary to learn in a classroom, so the seminary's *Biennial Catalog 1973-75* introduced seminary's new M.Div. program as "the preferred program for preparation for the professional ministry." The M.Div. required basically the same three years of coursework as the B.D., plus 45 units of field education.

Some seminarians wanted to work as practitioners, not pastors, in Christian agencies or churches or to teach in Bible schools or seminaries. The seminary added a Master of Church Education in 1975 and, soon after, a Master of Theological Studies, an academic degree for those needing Greek and Hebrew to enter a Ph.D. program in theology. The faculty also developed courses in missiology, pastoral counseling, and church administration.

These innovations attracted students from other denominations in Western Michigan. The seminary's head count increased from 153 in 1972 to 220 in 1976. "Simultaneously, in the late 1970s, we started seeing substantial increase in students coming to the seminary as a second career. Local people from other denominations chose us for geographical convenience. Some CRC people interested in ministry were choosing more accessible seminaries, rather than importing their families to Grand Rapids. This trend was not unique to the CRC," said Dr. James De Jong, who became seminary president in 1983.



The seminary reached out to instruct beyond the classroom. Here, Professor Marion "Spud" Snapper is filmed during an episode of "Covenant Keeping."

Kromminga's reports to the Board, both in 1976, note "problems relative to students who transfer to Calvin Seminary from other seminaries...and then seek to qualify for ministerial candidacy by one year spent at Calvin" and "considerable upturn in requests for student housing." They also mention working with Home Missions to develop continuing education for home missionaries; with the Synodical Committee on Race Relations to improve education for minority groups; and with committees raising funds to sponsor foreign students.

Meanwhile, doctrinal controversy beset the seminary. The percentage of women students remained below 10 percent through 1991. Strong voices called on the faculty to accept the concept of women in church office, and equally strong voices denied concept. Both sides based their appeal on a Reformed understanding

of scripture, an understanding that the landmark *Report 44: Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority* attempted to define. It dealt with both hermeneutics (principles of biblical interpretation) and the nature of church office and ordination.

Report 44 was presented first to the 1972 Synod, which returned it to the study committee for refining, then again to the 1973 Synod. It ignited debates throughout the CRC and produced two major consequences for the seminary in the early 1980s. "The issue with Dr. John Stek was an aftershock of Report 44, based on unfounded allegations by a student who thought Stek was not interpreting early Genesis chapters as biblically or as literally as this student thought was Reformed. The faculty, Board, and Synod all looked into it and gave Stek a clean bill of health," De Jong said. The issue, however, dragged on for over three years.

During the Stek ordeal, a group of CRC pastors and lay leaders met at Chicago's O'Hare Airport in April 1981 and decided to establish an alternative seminary. Their rationale, included in Kromminga's Board report (May 1981, App. D.), charged that the "adoption of Report 44 by the Synod of 1972 (signed by three seminary professors and two college professors of the department of reli-

“... the seminary's *Biennial Catalog 1973-75* introduced seminary's new M.Div. program as 'the preferred program for preparation for the professional ministry.'”

gion and theology) and the adoption of Report 44 (on the nature of office and ordination) by the Synod of 1973 (signed by two seminary professors and four college professors of the department of religion and theology) have done immeasurable harm to the church and have laid the groundwork for many deviations from the truth....Calvin Seminary no longer enjoys the confidence of the church....The education given at Calvin Seminary is no longer geared to the purpose for which it was founded more than a hundred years ago." The dissidents claimed that the seminary cared more about theological graduate studies than preparing ministers of the Word.

In September 1982, Mid-America Reformed Seminary (MARS) opened in Orange City, Iowa. "The birth of MARS was unnerving, unprecedented. Seminary faculty dispatched themselves to different parts of the nation to dialogue with churches," De Jong said. Yet MARS didn't seem to depress Calvin Seminary's full-time enrollment, which was 179 in 1982 and 201 by 1983. The 1982 student body reflected the trend toward students from many denominations, including one each from American Baptist, Methodist, and Roman Catholic churches; two from the United Church of Christ; eight United Presbyterians; and 35 classified as inter- or non-denominational.

In his final Board report in 1983, Kromminga referred to "vast social changes which have swirled around the church" and "doctrinal controversies...[that] siphon off so much energy which could have been channeled in more profitable directions." Nevertheless, he concluded



The Hope-Calvin nursing program was one of the program initiatives of the early '80s. Here nursing students observe Lynn Van Hofwegen assess a premature infant at a clinic in San Jose, Costa Rica.

that "the seminary staff has held the school steadily on course in obedience to its mandate to serve the church with a theological education program which is faithful to the past heritage and responsive to the demands of the present."

KUYPERIAN VISION EXPANDED

Calvin College had already begun offering its Reformed worldview to students from other traditions. President Anthony Diekema affirmed this direction in his March 1976 inaugural address, "Unchanging Mission and Expanding Scope." He challenged Calvin to be a leader in Christian scholarship and service, not just to the CRC, but to other colleges and to society. "It is a role that will turn Calvin outward — less isolated, less protectionist, less self-serving — toward new horizons and avenues of service in the world," he said.

Diekema echoed the Kuyperian view that since every square inch of creation belongs to God it is an arena for exploration and service. During Diekema's two decades as president, Calvin added nearly 50 programs and majors, including Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship (1976), Career Placement Office (1978), recreation program (1979), computer science major (1979), H. H. Meeter Center for Calvin Studies (1982), engineering major (1982), mass communications major (1983), Hope-Calvin nursing degree (1983), and criminal justice program (1984).

Enrollment topped 4,000 for the first time in October 1977. "New programs attracted more students. The tuition from rising enrollment gave us economies of scale and helped launch more programs and fund faculty research. Fundraising was easy, because donors could see that more students meant we needed

1976

Anthony Diekema assumes Calvin College presidency



1977

College enrollment tops 4,000 for the first time.

1978

Office of Career Placement is created.

1979

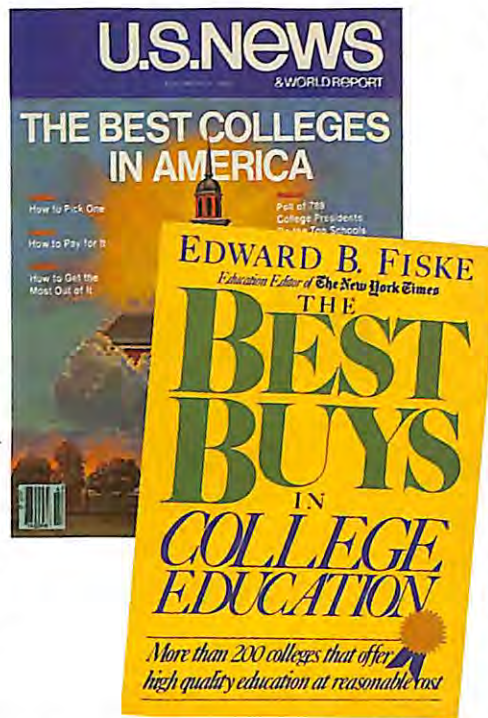
more buildings," Diekema said. Calvin expanded the Commons (1977) and Hiemenga Hall (1978); built the East Beltline underpass (1978), Timmer Hall (1980), Science Building North Hall (1985), and Calvin Chapel (1989); established the Ecosystem Preserve (1985); and bought 130 acres across the East Beltline (1987).

Calvin also expanded its package of student scholarships, grants, loans, and on-campus jobs — all administered by Wayne Hubers, director of financial aid. In 1985, a *U.S. News & World Report* story listed Calvin among the best colleges in America, and Edward B. Fiske cited Calvin in his book *The Best Buys in College Education*.

Calvin's increased visibility introduced an ever-broader spectrum to its Reformed worldview. Yet following the implications of an "all of life" Kuyperian ideal sometimes pushed the college past comfort. Liberal arts professors watched majors in their disciplines decrease, while, from 1980 to 1985, professional program majors rose: computer science and mathematics, 222 percent; communication arts and sciences, 147 percent; nursing, 65 percent; engineering, 27 percent. By 1985 career counseling accounted for 55 percent of Broene Center cases. By the late 1980s, more students graduated with professional rather than liberal arts degrees.

The entire faculty adjusted to growth in the student affairs division, which defined its work as a "co-curricular" redeeming of life outside the classroom. "Indeed, a lovely paradox is the genuine concern that many of the student affairs staff have for 'the whole person,' a clear echo of the Kuyperian notions of the faculty who sometimes look dourly on their doings," said Drs. James Bratt and Ronald Wells in their 1996 essay "Piety and Progress: A History of Calvin College."

The whole college adapted as its



In 1985 Calvin is recognized as one of the best educational institutions nationally.

share of students from other denominations grew from 19 percent in 1976 to 26 percent in 1981 and 37 percent in 1991. "Faculty could no longer use insider language. They'd refer in class to *The Banner* or *Acts of Synod* and get puzzled looks," said Peter Vande Guchte.

"Since the infusion of a variety of religious traditions, we've come closer to what Wesley longed for when he said, 'Oh, to unite those so long disjointed—knowledge and a vital piety.' The old Calvinist piety was one of awe and wonder. These new people have helped us become freer in expressing piety," said Rev. Dale Cooper, who was appointed college chaplain in 1979. His appointment coincided with a shift in the center of campus religious life.

When Rev. Bernard Pekelder was appointed chaplain in 1962, students were required to attend chapel three times a week (reduced to twice a week in 1967). "Pek" spoke at chapel at least once a week, and students came to him with their problems. Chapel attendance dropped

after becoming voluntary in 1972. Knollcrest worship services, administered by four area CRCs, replaced chapel as the student worship community. As more students chose to live on campus, dorms began sponsoring Bible studies, prayer groups, and spiritual retreats.

Calvin was learning to receive from—as well as give to—students from other religious traditions. It also tried harder to become multicultural. Since 1977, Diekema had appointed committees to recruit students and faculty of color. His 1983 convocation address challenged faculty and students to be world citizens. "We are Christians who stand under a solemn covenant to be aware and informed. If we fail, ethnocentrism will capture us," he said.

In 1984 Diekema mandated a task force to write and implement a comprehensive plan for making Calvin College a "genuinely multicultural Christian academic community." He explained that diversity would help Calvin promote community around a common faith and common mission, rather than around ethnocentrism.

"We teach a world-and-life perspective, so we must reflect that world and encounter it as it is. In 1985, the CRC was already five percent ethnic minority members, more than the college — which should reflect its mother church. We as an institution needed to change, not ask minorities to accommodate to us. We challenged ourselves to set goals that would require us to stretch," said Dr. Rodger Rice, who chaired the committee while teaching sociology and serving as an academic dean. The comprehensive plan, adopted in 1986, describes how to recruit and retain ethnic minority faculty and students; develop a multicultural community and curriculum; and reach out to the broader Christian community.

“I was passionate about trying to bring more students of color to Calvin. You can’t be an excellent institution unless students gain a better understanding of diversity in the world. How can you talk about claiming every square inch or redeeming societal structures if your context is predominantly white?” said Peter Harkema, who, with education professor Steve Timmermans, developed Entrada, a summer program to introduce ethnic minority high schoolers to life at Calvin.

One ad helped change public perceptions about Calvin. Headlined “Put yourself in these shoes?” the ad pictured white (but not Dutch-surnamed), black, and Vietnamese students wearing wooden shoes. “Some

“You don’t have to be Dutch to attend Calvin College.... What you do have to be is a concerned student who believes that higher education and the Christian faith are not mutually exclusive.”
— admissions brochure”

people didn’t pick up on the question mark, even though the copy began: ‘You don’t have to be Dutch to attend Calvin College. Or Christian Reformed, for that matter. What you do have to be is a concerned student who believes that higher education and the Christian faith are not mutually exclusive.’ The ad was bold, controversial, but, in the long run, successful,” Harkema said.

Calvin began recording ethnic minority enrollment in 1973. The group now known as AHANA, North American students identifying themselves as African-, Hispanic-, Asian-, or Native-American, wavered from 1.84 percent in 1973, to 1.03 percent in 1981, then up to 4 percent in 1991, roughly where it has stayed since. International student enrollment grew from 0.6 percent in 1973 to 2.7 percent in 1991. Canadian enrollment rose from 4.7 percent in 1972 to 7 percent in 1991.

Calvin’s CRC quota percentage dropped as its enrollment from other denominations rose. “The dollar amount didn’t decrease, but projected quota as a percentage of budget dropped steadily from 23.9 percent in the 1972-73 fiscal year to 20 percent (1977-78); 17.4 percent (1982-83); 13.1 percent (1987-88); 8.2 percent (1991-92),” said Jim Quist, director of business operations. The college helped pay for its higher budgets by boosting special endowments – for student financial aid, faculty research and scholarship, and new academic program development – from \$750,000 to more than \$7,400,000 during the 1980s.

PURSuing ULTIMATE TRUTH

“Excellence in scholarship” was one of Diekema’s favorite themes. In 1976 he established the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship (CCCS) “to promote rigorous, creative and articulate Christian scholarship that addresses important theoretical and practical issues.” Each year a team of four to seven scholars – including at least two from off campus, and chaired by a



A few of the first Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship publications.

Calvin professor – studied together to produce a book. CCCS topics included Christian stewardship and natural resources, public justice and education equity, economic theory, gender relations, and medical practice. In 1991 the CCCS board reorganized to support smaller groups of scholars for more flexible periods. Their goal remained: to produce interdisciplinary Christian scholarship of benefit to a wide community.

During the 1980s, Calvin also increased faculty scholarship and research through the H. H. Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, the Calvin Research Fellowship program, the Calvin Faculty Development Seminars, and an expanded sabbatical leave program. It worked to recruit and retain faculty committed to a Reformed understanding of historic Christianity and the highest standards of scholarship. In the 1983 convocation address Diekema reminded the college: “The pursuit of excellence means thinking new things and thinking things anew. It requires a lifelong commitment to the pursuit of ultimate truth.”

1980

1981

1982

1983



James A. De Jong becomes the president of the seminary.

This pursuit of scholarship boosted Calvin into new leadership roles. Calvin was still the college of the CRC, and direct service to the CRC remained a high priority. Yet in 1988 Diekema said its growing “reputation as one of the leading Christian colleges of North America...calls the college increasingly to new leadership both within and beyond the Christian Reformed Church...to the handicapped, the gifted, women, minorities, older students....”

In his September 1989 convocation address, Diekema reaffirmed his Kuyperian vision for Calvin. As to how Calvin should relate to the world around it, he said, “Some among us have viewed the world as Christ’s, and we are urged to reclaim the territory that is rightfully his. Others have emphasized the ‘antithesis’ which sees the world as alien and forbidding, a constant source of ‘worldly temptation’ and distress. Such differences and debate continue to this day, occasionally boiling over into ‘holy wars’—wars that are, of course, not holy at all.”

One such “holy war” resulted from Dr. Howard Van Till’s book *The Fourth Day: What the Bible and the Heavens are telling us about the Creation*. Van Till taught physics and astronomy, and, as he explained in his preface, his goals were “a coherent perspective that is both biblically sound and intellectually honest...[and] praise to the Creator, whose glory the heavens are telling.” Van Till’s book collected countless accolades from most readers—and vituperative criticism from some. “Two issues the vocal minority found most disturbing were, first, my call to recognize the human element in the biblical text, and, second, my willingness to use the word ‘evolution’ as an acceptable description of the character of the universe’s formational history,” Van Till said. He attributed this opinion to the CRC’s historic “Kuyperian/pietistic

“Most importantly, the case ended with academic freedom and institutional integrity solidly intact...”

divide. The Kuyperian contingent is generally more willing to explore ideas in the confidence that following sound thinking wherever it goes is bound to bring rewards; it’s the sort of thing that a Reformed Christian ought to be eager to do.”

His critics replied that Van Till should be removed from the faculty and his writings censored. They took out full-page newspaper ads against Van Till, Diekema, and others. Settling the painful matter within the college and the CRC Synod “took almost six years (1986-1991), too long, but prudence prevailed over a ‘rush to judgment.’ Most importantly, the case ended with academic freedom and institutional integrity solidly intact....Professor Van Till was named a recipient of the coveted Calvin Alumni Association’s 1999 ‘Faith and Learning Award’...a wonderfully reassuring vote of confidence... from thousands of his former students, and a public affirmation of academic freedom for the college,” Diekema wrote in *Academic Freedom and Christian Scholarship* (p.32).

In an interview with the author, Diekema described academic freedom for Calvin faculty as “a logical extension of Christian freedom as we understand it in a Reformed biblical perspective. It integrates freedom, service, and responsibility. It means compatibility between a faculty member’s personal Christian worldview and Calvin’s worldview. Faculty members are free to explore their arena of expertise to the ultimate, because they are doing it as a

service to the kingdom. It’s the responsibility of both faculty members and the institution to protect that freedom from outside attack.”

Though constituents feared controversy would harm Calvin’s economic health, Diekema said quotas, general and capital campaign gifts, and enrollments remained high. “Some churches gave more, because they knew others were withholding quotas. The loudest critics never did support Calvin much anyhow,” Diekema said.

The Board focused less on economics than on worldview and on maintaining Calvin’s historic relationship with the CRC. “Heightened tensions between college and denomination were predictable. The populist CRC worldview shifted toward evangelicalism and fundamentalism, while Calvin was gaining strength, confidence, and maturity in taking the Kuyperian worldview very seriously,” Diekema said.

SERVANT PARTNERSHIPS

Enrollment hit 4,505 in 1988, but Calvin knew it would level off or decline after that. National experts predicted lower enrollment for most colleges. Calvin’s share of CRC students had been dropping since 1972, as the pool of CRC 18-year-olds decreased and more CRC students chose less-expensive public institutions or other CRC-related colleges, such as Dordt, Trinity, Redeemer, and King’s. The years of easy expansion and financial flexibility, funded by rising enrollment, were over.

In 1988, the Board mandated the college to seek financial contributions and leadership from its entire constituency. The Board expressed concern that the operating budget depended mainly on tuition revenue (86 percent), which would drop with enrollment, and quotas (8.6 percent), which, as a percent of budget, had been dropping for decades. It encouraged the college administration to



Calvin College Board of Trustees, 1992. The Board was restructured in 1991 to a 31-person governing board with 16 persons coming from Christian Reformed Church classes; 12 “at-large” trustees; and 3 “alumni trustees,” nominated by the Alumni Association.

“pursue alternative forms of funding.”

“We took a hard look at how we could make the Kuyperian worldview a blueprint for our future. How could we call on our total constituency to become true working partners in financial contributions and leadership development? How could we give the college more stability, with less dependence on tuition?” Diekema said. The result was a document called “Servant Partnerships: To Multiply The Talents,” which led Calvin to redefine its relationship with the CRC, college constituents, and seminary, as well as launch a major comprehensive campaign (1991-1996).

Though Calvin College was owned and operated by the CRC, it had for decades described its mission as serving Christ’s kingdom, not merely one denomination. The North Central accrediting team spoke of Calvin’s ties with the CRC “as the root of Calvin’s tradition and strength” (BOT, February 1988, p.

79). The team asked whether it was wise, though, for Calvin to aim its financial appeals mainly at the CRC and draw all its trustees from the CRC—given that 35 percent of Calvin’s students came from other denominations.

“We have developed the art of asking our [non-CRC] brothers and sisters in Christ for their children, but not their partnerships. Calvin will always look to the Christian Reformed Church as its first line of support. But Calvin may not demand more than its fair share,” Diekema said. Because more local and denominational ministries were appealing to generous CRC donors, he argued that “to seek additional gifts of leadership and finance in Calvin’s broadening constituency is both fair and just” (BOT, February 1988, p. 81).

The beyond-the-CRC third of the constituency included experts in legal, business, political, ethnic minority, and third world issues. “Colleges were becoming big businesses. Our

board was great, very supportive, but we weren’t getting the expertise we knew was in our constituency – simply because of the way the board was structured,” Diekema said. Only CRC members could become trustees. The board met twice a year for a week at a time, so most of those free to serve were ministers, schoolteachers, or retirees. Most of those chosen from this pool were “plugged into the church structure,” active at classis or Synod.

What “Servant Partnerships” proposed was “unequivocally a Kuyperian vision—the sovereignty of God calling us to the task of reformation and transformation of culture in all of its dimensions. It is based on God’s holy Word and is guided in life and faith by the historic Reformed creeds.” It called Calvin to “assume broader kingdom leadership” and invite “other leaders in the kingdom” to contribute gifts. “Despite reasonable reservations about reaching beyond our tradition for leadership contribu-

1984

The college’s “Comprehensive Plan,” mapping out multicultural initiatives, is adopted.

1985

Jeannette Bult De Jong is appointed Vice President for Student Life; the first woman to hold a Vice Presidential position.

1986

1987



tions, we declare our desire to do so, seeking our strength not in isolation but in kingdom service.”

This proposal also called for splitting the college and seminary into two boards, each to make its own appeals for quota increases. The split took effect in 1991. The new Calvin College Board included 16 members appointed by the Christian Reformed Church, 12 at-large Board-selected members, and three members representing the Calvin Alumni Association.

SEMINARY DEVELOPS OWN PATH

While the college expanded its Kuyperian vision, the seminary worked on simultaneously meeting global needs and strengthening relationships with local CRCs. It did so by expanding programs, supporting new kinds of students, reaching out to the CRC in new ways, and planning well for faculty transition.

“When I interviewed for the presidency, I articulated that we needed to broaden our vision by training people to do evangelism and lead churches in the Third World. Young seminarians in those countries could not keep up with the pace of church growth,” said Dr. James De Jong, who became seminary president in 1983.

Full-time enrollment in the Master of Theology (Th.M.) program almost doubled between 1983 and 1991. The Th.M. proved especially attractive to Koreans from conservative Presbyterian churches. De Jong said that Koreans often comprised 75 percent of Th.M. enrollment after the seminary committed itself to training Third World leaders. From 1983 to 1991, the seminary also doubled its enrollment in the Master of Church Education and Master of Theological Studies programs. During these years, full-time enrollment varied within a range of 180 to 201 students, for an annual average of 193. The M.Div. program remained the seminary’s major program, but as enrollment rose for other

degrees, the M.Div. majority dropped from 73 percent of full-time students in 1983 to 59 percent of full-time students in 1991.

In 1988 the seminary faculty decided to add a Ph.D. program. In 1990 the Board and Synod approved the idea, and the seminary began raising money, hiring professors, and recruiting students. “We intentionally designed the Ph.D. program to draw half of its students from North America and half from other countries. The international students would go back to their countries to be church bureaucrats or teach in Bible schools and seminaries,” De Jong said.

“As the seminary recruited students from a broad international arena, it tried to tailor its programs to accommodate these new students’ constraints. The seminary tried to make programs shorter, bring the education to where students were, and cut costs,” said Dr. Daniel Vander Ark, who served on the board from 1986-1993 and was board secretary from 1988-1993.

The seminary had to develop new ways to support its rapidly changing student population. In 1972, most seminary students were white and male, recent college graduates aiming to be ordained in the CRC. Many were single or married but childless. As CRC members, they could get financial aid from their local CRC classis. Tuition was fairly low, because quotas paid for most of the seminary operating budget—accounting for 90 percent in 1980, according to De Jong.

“The quota system is a very neat, efficient way for a denomination to support a college and seminary. There’s less overhead than hiring a development staff to raise funds. Until 1990, Calvin College and Seminary received a single quota, but we always took care of the seminary. We’d look at the seminary’s total budget, subtract tuition income,

then make up the difference with quotas. The college took what was left,” said Jim Quist, director of business operations.

Already in the 1970s, older students began enrolling in seminary to train for a second career. Many had families, and some of these chose the seminary because it was more geographically convenient than their own denominational seminary. The 1986 professional program enrollment included four Southern Baptists; two Methodists; 11 Presbyterian USA members; four Roman Catholics; one United Church of Christ member; and 56 students listed as inter- or non-denominational. International student enrollment rose as well, so that by 1992, students from other denominations accounted for 35 percent of seminary enrollment.

Adding new courses, degree programs, and staff to support new kinds of students boosted the seminary’s operating costs. The seminary couldn’t fund its budget boosts through tuition, because enrollment remained steady. Paying tuition was more difficult for students from other denominations, because they weren’t eligible for CRC classical aid. Students with families needed affordable housing. Meanwhile, CRC support for quotas was eroding. Synod would set quotas for each classis, but classes didn’t necessarily pay their entire share. “As more churches went to multi-staff ministries, our quotas were diverted,” De Jong said.

The seminary responded by building student apartments and seeking endowed scholarships. It built eight apartments in 1985, added more in the late 1980s, then acquired 18 apartments when the college and seminary split, for a 1991 total of 42 apartments. All were in Knollcrest East. “Real assistance and support occur in that context [seminary housing] because of the familial na-

ture of the seminary residences,” wrote De Jong in his 1991 report to the Board of Trustees.

“We introduced endowments to support the Ph.D. program, because we did not want it dependent on quotas,” De Jong said. His February 1990 report to the Board describes a five-year, nine-million-dollar capital campaign called “Keeping the Heritage, Advancing the Gospel” to fund “doctoral chairs, a seminary wing, student housing, endowed fellowships and other forms of student assistance, an outreach and church renewal institute, and faculty development” (p. 14). The seminary endowment grew from \$700,000 in 1989 to \$1.6 million in 1991, the same year it hired Dr. Richard Eppinga as assistant to the president for advancement.

The seminary focused on reaching out to the CRC in new ways. In 1983 De Jong began the seminary’s first newsletter. He said *Calvin Seminary in Focus*, mailed to CRC consistories, “got a great response.” It kept pastors and lay leaders informed on professors’ latest publications; important on-campus lectures; and seminary news. Communicating the seminary’s take on issues was vital during this era, as churches debated issues such as women in office and the role of Mid-America Reformed Seminary (MARS).

“Synod received several overtures asking that MARS be eligible for quotas and that students be allowed to do their final year at MARS to become eligible for CRC ministry. Synod never agreed. In the early 1990s, this problem melted away, because whole churches or parts of churches left the denomination,” De Jong said.

The seminary also reached out to the CRC by developing courses and conferences, mainly for pastors, and being sensitive to the “CRC pulse” when hiring new faculty. “Faculty transition was a major concern. By 1992 we’d replaced 85 percent of the faculty, mostly because of retirement,” De Jong said.

“I remember the need to hire professors who were thoroughly Reformed, experienced in academia beyond the Reformed community, and excellent teachers. I remember the interview questions to Richard Muller and Ronald Feenstra were particularly pointed in these areas,” Vander Ark said. After Synod enthusiastically approved Muller and Feenstra, the seminary sent each man a T-shirt. Captioned “I attended the Synod of Dordt, 1991,” the shirt bore a stencil of the 1618-1619 gathering.

Churchmanship, defined as ministerial experience and a love for and commitment to the CRC and Reformed faith, was another key criterion in hiring new professors, according to De Jong. The seminary asked some new faculty members to serve short-term pastorates to gain ministerial experience.

Given the theological controversies alive in the CRC, the “seminary thought it would be best served by trying to find a middle road. It hired persons who seemed to not rock the boat. New professors helped build the seminary’s national and international acclaim for academic excellence in theology,” said Dr. Willis Van Groningen, who became a board member in 1987 and served on the college board after the 1991 separation.

TIME TO PART

“Clearly the promise of better programs, wider service, closer and better relations with the churches, and fine appointments fosters anticipation of good things for the school and those it serves. As Calvin Seminary enters the last phase of faculty transition, it enters a new decade with the programs and personnel to meet the future in the confidence of God’s leading,” De Jong wrote in 1990.

As the college and seminary expanded their visions, board members acknowledged practical and philosophical reasons to separate. “Board members couldn’t learn everything they needed to know about both institutions,” Vander Ark said.

De Jong and Diekema, denominational representatives, and legal counsel joined in “a high-powered committee that studied this issue for two-and-a-half years. The college had become so big, that its issues dominated the board. In the late 1980s, the college was under a lot of economic strain. They and we thought it would be favorable if the denomination developed separate quotas for each. Also, the college was gaining so many grads from other denominations, that it wanted to broaden its board and faculty beyond the CRC. The seminary said, ‘Look. We are a CRC seminary. That’s who we are. A non-CRC board is not workable for us.’

“Splitting into two boards made sense, because it allowed each school to focus. Historically, we had operated as one corporate entity. But it became time to acknowledge that each school had developed its own path to maturity,” De Jong said.

1988

College enrollment hits a record 4,505.

1989

1990

Synod approves seminary Ph.D. program which is implemented in 1998.

1991

Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary become two distinct institutions.

SERVING A GLOBAL CHURCH

CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY 1991 TO THE PRESENT

James A. De Jong

SEPARATE BOARDS

A century after non-theological students were first admitted to the seminary's preparatory program, the Calvin board reached a historic decision. A blue-ribbon committee recommended that the college and the seminary become separate legal corporations, each governed by its own board of trustees. The board agreed. So did the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in June, 1991.

The committee, led by Mr. Jack De Korne, chairman of the board, consisted of the two presidents, the vice-president for administration and finance, the Calvin attorney, several members of synod's interim committee, additional trustees, and denominational leaders. A major consideration in the decision was the growing complexity of each school. Separate governance, it was believed, would allow each board to concentrate on its own school and to select trustees with appropriate expertise. Another matter which weighed heavily in the decision was the college's desire to include non-Christian Reformed alumni and supporters on its board, whereas the seminary's identity as the training center for Christian Reformed ministers needed a Christian Reformed board, at least half of whose members were pastors in the denomination. The committee crafted separate but closely parallel constitutions and by-laws for the college and the seminary, which were subsequently approved. These documents protected the accountability of both boards to synod and guaranteed joint use of all

“Separate governance, it was believed, would allow each board to concentrate on its own school and to select trustees with appropriate expertise.”

campus facilities, because these had been created for both when they existed as one corporation.

At its first meeting, the seminary board appointed a special committee to review board structure and the trustees' handbook. This work was facilitated by a modest grant for trustee development from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. Board orientation, a trustee resource center, and a network of former trustees was instituted in order to broaden and deepen effective governance of the seminary. The board began holding annual planning and fellowship sessions with the faculty. It also chose to function as a committee of the whole rather than to create permanent subcommittees, thus assuring that all trustees would be fully engaged in all phases of their work. At their February meetings the board continued to deal with policies, finances, and faculty appointments and reappointments. At their May meetings each year trustees were primarily involved with interviewing and recommending candidates for Christian Reformed ministry and with interviewing students for licen-

sure to conduct worship services as part of their field education programs.

Reorganization worked well during the following decade. Students and campus visitors could detect little if any change in the day-to-day rhythm of campus life. Installations like the Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, Heritage Hall and its archives, and the Hekman Library continued to be governed by joint college and seminary committees and were funded by both schools on a prorated basis. Events like the annual Stob Lectures and some scholarships remained cooperative efforts, and some social events continued to be jointly held. College services such as the buildings and grounds department, campus health services, the computer center, the special events office, the personnel office, and the food service continued to be used by the seminary as well as the college. Other administrative responsibilities, however, were in time assumed entirely by the seminary. Growth, efficiency, and the complexity of computer technology contributed to the gradual changes. As the seminary increased its student housing to more than one hundred apartments by the end of the 1990s, it appointed its own housing director and its own properties manager. Similarly, seminary financial services and record keeping were assumed by a new office housed in the seminary building. With the growing demands for student services, it became necessary to appoint a full-time dean of students by the end of the decade.

Despite legal separation and subsequent administrative adjustments, Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary continued to operate at many levels as one organization. The basis was a commonly understood and shared view of Reformed higher education. Frequent consultation was held between respective administrators and faculty members on matters of mutual interest. Interchanges in classrooms, personal friendships, joint projects, and the employment of college professors to teach seminary courses and to serve on thesis committees continued. Each school was regularly stimulated and strengthened by the other, as the board of trustees and synod in 1991 had hoped would be the case.



Greater numbers of ethnic minority students, international students, second career people, women, and non-Christian Reformed students were enrolling, changing the face of Calvin Theological Seminary.

A CHANGING STUDENT BODY

If students could detect little change functionally between the schools after separation, the seminary faculty noticed significant changes in the seminary student body. The student population was becoming increasingly diverse. Greater numbers of ethnic minority students, international students, second-career people, women, and non-Christian Reformed students were enrolling. The diversity reflected changing patterns in the church as well as in American seminaries generally. It made classes livelier and more interesting. It also brought new challenges inside and outside the classroom.

By 1991 the literature on theo-

logical education was concerned with the second-career phenomenon in North American seminaries. Calvin Seminary fit the pattern. An increasing percentage of its student body was older than the students of half a generation before. The average age of the Calvin seminarian between 1991 and 2000 held steady between 32 and 34 years old. With an older student body came unique challenges. Since most students were married with children, their domestic responsibilities added enormous pressures on their time and financial resources. R.B. Kuiper's opinion, expressed in 1954, that theological education "should require practically



all of a man's waking hours," was unworkable 40 years later. Not only were more than 20 percent of the students women, but most second-career students struggled to apportion their time and energies between their families, some gainful employment, and their academic commitments. Some extended their program by a year or two. Some incurred unmanageable debt, despite cautionary

1990

1991

1992

1993

Seminary and College Boards split; the two schools are officially separated.

advice against it. As a result, seminary community often centered in seminary housing rather than in the seminary building. Here students offered encouragement and creative support to one another. Very few second-career students were in a position to consider graduate theological education, although a number of them showed great aptitude for it. These people had come to seminary with a passion for ministry. Many had served effectively as church volunteers or office-bearers during their first careers. Not a few for a time resisted the call to ministry. Once they enrolled, they were eager to receive a degree and ordination.

Marked by rich spiritual experience and dedication, they enlivened class discussions and expected to be treated as the adult learners they were. Their presence in the student body was a blessing.

A second group of students that increased during the 80s and 90s was the international student community, exclusive of Canadians. In the fall of 1990, 30 international students enrolled, a jump from 13 in 1980. By the fall of 2000, 55 had registered for courses. These students injected an ethnic and cultural diversity into the seminary classroom and into seminary housing that was stimulating and at times challenging. Uncommon cooking odors, varying patterns of childcare, more formal ways of relating to professors, and lack of familiarity with American research methods marked an increasingly diverse community. If patience and wisdom and humor were often required, more necessary were attitudes of genuine interest and appreciation for one another. As the community stretched, it also increased in



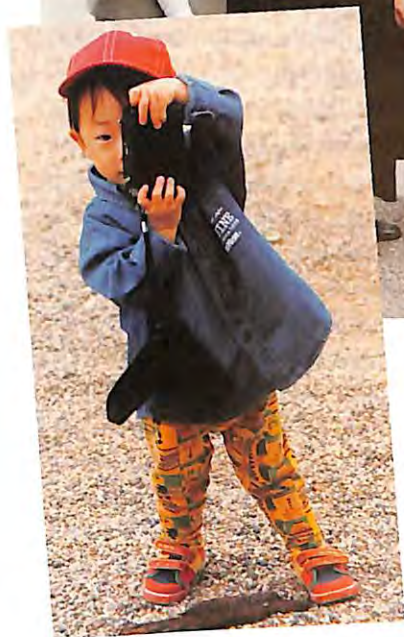
Indonesian students, many from Chinese ethnic backgrounds, constitute one of the seminary's fastest growing international groups.

its realization of the global impact Calvin Seminary was having. The vision of rapidly growing churches in Asia, Africa, and Latin America gave urgency to preparing those who would return to train pastors and evangelists in their countries.

For 20 years select international students were served by the Committee for Educational Assistance to Churches Abroad. This denominational committee was composed primarily of seminary professors, their spouses, and veteran missionaries. Receiving a modest synodical quota, it awarded full scholarships and living expenses to five or six international students each year. Committee members also became counselors to these students, welcoming them upon their arrival and befriending them during their stay. But with a greater influx of international students, CEACA's limited resources were augmented by the creation of an international student committee and the appointment of part-time assistants to the dean of students and to the president to handle the

growing volume and complexity of international student matters. By the mid-90s synod decided to divide CEACA's work and modest endowment between the seminary and Christian Reformed World Missions, which continued to cooperate in their work with international students.

The largest contingent of international students came from Korea, followed by students from Indonesia and Nigeria. By the end of the decade between 20 and 30 nationalities were represented each year in the student body. Most of these students were in graduate programs, although many enrolled in two-year programs in either missions or church education. The Korean contingent grew from several in the early 1980s to almost 40 in the late 1990s. This group formed their own social activities, created an association with officers, and assisted one another with finding housing and adjusting to their new surroundings. For years they met every Friday night in the seminary coffee shop with their



Koreans are the largest international contingent at the seminary. Many students came with their families, presenting housing challenges for the administration.

families, enjoyed a potluck supper of Korean dishes, and concluded with moving worship and prayer services in the school's auditorium or chapel.

Similarly, Indonesian students, many of them from Chinese ethnic backgrounds, formed fellowship with college students from their country. In time several of the international students were elected to the student senate, served on seminary committees, were employed in the work-study program, and as graduate students even taught courses. The growing number of Chinese stu-

dents found fellowship in a local Chinese church, where several served on council. Occasionally a group of international students led chapels dressed in their native costumes and using indigenous music and instruments. On several occasions graduation and seminary dinners included the music of a superb Korean choir composed of students and their spouses. This involvement demonstrates that international students, whose numbers by 2000 approached a quarter of the student body, had become a vibrant and integral part of seminary life. Their presence made Calvin Seminary a strategic component of the missionary

outreach of the Christian Reformed Church.

Another growing segment of the student body was its women students. In 1980 no more than 12 women were enrolled. By 1990 the number had risen to 29. At the turn of the millennium 61 women were registered in all the seminary's degree programs and represented 23 percent of the student body. The controversy over women's ordination, which peaked in the denomination between 1990 and 1995, curtailed their numbers in the Master of Divinity program. These were unsettling years for women who felt the call to ordained ministry. Some enrolled in other seminaries, waiting to see how the church would resolve the issue. Others enrolled at Calvin Seminary and watched synodical proceedings anxiously. One or two applied for candidacy in those years, and while packed synodical galleries witnessed debates on the subject, they quietly endured the pain and disappointment of not being approved as candidates for ordination. When the synod of 1995 made a decision allowing classes or regional churches that so decided to call women, the seminary board for the first time felt the freedom to recommend women as candidates along with their male counterparts. Ms. Ruth Hoffman was the first, in 1996, and she accepted a call to serve the Toronto CRC. Several others followed her, and the impact of the 1995 decision was that the number of women entering the M.Div. program increased. The spiritual integrity of these students was exemplary and made an impact on the faculty and student body. They had enrolled

1994

1995

1996

1997

Ruth Hoffman becomes the first woman candidate ordained in the Christian Reformed Church.



Women are an important segment of the seminary student body. At the turn of the millennium 61 women were registered in all seminary degree programs and represented 23 percent of the student body.

after many inner struggles over whether to put themselves and their families in such a controversial position. Compelled by inner conviction that the Lord had called them to serve, however, they pursued their training in the faith that the matter was in God's hands and that he would provide opportunities for them to serve in some capacity. Most were not disappointed, although calls to lead congregations were not frequent. A number found positions in education or chaplaincy. The decade witnessed decreasing resistance to their presence in seminary by those male students who remained convinced that the Bible does not sanction the ordination of women. And a number of women served ably in student government and on seminary committees. It had been a decade of transition, weathered with significantly less disruption in

Calvin Seminary than in the church at large.

The disruption felt by Calvin Seminary over issues in the church came in another form. A significant number of Christian Reformed students unhappy with developments in the denomination chose to attend alternative seminaries. Coming from more conservative homes and churches, they felt called to Christian Reformed ordination, but they believed they could receive an education more compatible with their convictions at another school. They chose one of several. One difficulty they faced was the synodical requirement that they spend their last, candidacy year of preparation at Calvin Seminary. Another was that licensure to exhort as part of their practical training could, by synod's regulations, be granted only by the Calvin Seminary board of trustees. Chal-

lenges to these regulations were not sustained; synod felt more persuaded than ever that the seminary board provided the most experienced, objective, and even-handed way of assessing a person's suitedness for ministry. All candidates were thereby subject to the same faculty evaluations, the same interviews, and the same application procedures. The same body of people evaluated all candidacy applicants. Many of the students at other seminaries resisted this process and these expectations. After receiving licensure, a significant number served summer assignments and yearlong internships in Christian Reformed churches, then refused to complete their year of required residency. Several contributed to division within the churches they were serving as students, then upon graduation from an alternative seminary were ordained as non-Christian Reformed pastors to serve groups which had left those same churches. The Calvin Seminary board countered with a policy that students in the Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy, as the program for students attending other seminaries was called, had to complete their residency year *before* serving their required, year-long internship. This curbed disruption, and by the mid-90s the situation quieted. By then the most deeply concerned were members of independent congregations or of the newly formed United Reformed Church. Throughout the decade a number of SPMC students did enroll for a year of residency and for fieldwork. Some of these students were pleasantly surprised by their hospitable reception and by the faculty's solidly Reformed teaching. They went on to complete the program and were ordained as Christian Reformed pastors. Some were ordained, then left the denomination after entering ministry. Others began but did not complete the program. While the group of concerned stu-

dents was often troubled by trends in the church, they were seldom disruptive or confrontational. More often they engaged professors in thoughtful, reflective conversation about their concerns as they sorted through issues and searched for God's will for their lives.

Other SPMC students had chosen an alternative seminary for completely different reasons. Some desired a broader evangelical exposure. Some were second-career students who found it very difficult to uproot families and move them to Grand Rapids. Some were serving on church staffs part-time and taking a local seminary program on the side. Eventually most of these students completed the required residency and became candidates. This group represented the trend of regionalization that marked most seminaries in this period. It was a trend with still unknown ecumenical consequences.

If greater numbers of Christian Reformed students attended other seminaries, students of other denominations in increasing numbers enrolled at Calvin Seminary. Denominational identity was a less important factor in choosing a seminary than it had been a generation before. Personal considerations weighed more heavily. By the end of the decade 50 denominations were represented in the student body. Thirty-eight percent of the student body was non-Christian Reformed.

The one degree program that remained almost exclusively Christian Reformed was the M.Div. program. This four-year program, which prepares people for ordained ministry, was designed with denominational ministry in mind. Fully one-half of

the student body throughout the period was enrolled in it. It was the seminary's defining program, the one for which the school had been founded. Students in all programs were dedicated to their work, supportive of one another, and generally appreciative of their education. The decade passed without serious student incident or disruption.

PROFILE OF THE FACULTY

Historically seminary faculty members were chosen because they were seasoned pastors with advanced education and unusual ability. A seminary appointment was regarded as the culmination of a life of service to the denomination. Professors did not resign or take other positions, unless occasionally it was to return to the pastorate. They were entrusted with the great responsibility of shaping and screening the next generation of those who would lead God's people. They were also charged with advising the churches and their assemblies and with defending and promoting the Reformed faith. Obviously, it was expected that they be ordained, and for the first half of its history the Christian Reformed church, as had John Calvin, regarded the theological professor as a fourth office in the church.

Those ideals remained substantially in place during the nineties. Professors Carl Bosma (1990), Calvin Van Reken (1991), and Dean Deppe (1998) joined the faculty directly from pastorates or missionary service, as did director of field education Donald Byker (1999), theological librarian Lugene Schemper (2000), and dean of students Rich-

ard Systma (2000). Professors Arie Leder (1990), Sidney Greidanus (1990), Richard Muller (1992), Jeffrey Weima (1992), Gary Bekker (1995), and Ronald Nydam (1998) had had previous pastoral experience or acceptable equivalents. Professors Ronald Feenstra (1992), Michael Williams (1997), and Lyle Bierma (1999) received ministry experience after they were appointed, and only then were they ordained as ministers of the Word with teaching assignment at Calvin Seminary. The synodical interviews which Calvin Seminary professors have before their appointments are approved demonstrate the church's continuing interest in appointing people who are spiritual leaders as well as competent theologians.

Some changes in attitude are suggested by faculty transitions during this period, however. Professors Richard Gamble and Craig Van Gelder, both of whom did not have Christian Reformed backgrounds but who became Christian Reformed ministers during their tenures, accepted teaching positions elsewhere. Professor David Engelhard was appointed as general secretary of the denomination, and Professor Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. left to become dean of the chapel at Calvin College. At this writing, he has been appointed as the new seminary president. Only with the appointment of Dr. Ruth Tucker (2000) as professor of missions was the pattern of ordination and pastoral experience broken, as it had been only on a few previous occasions in Calvin Seminary's 125-year history. She became the first woman to hold a regular, full-time appointment, although the seminary had been using

1998

Ph.D. program implemented.

1999

Ruth Tucker is hired as professor of missions, the first woman to hold a regular full-time appointment.

2000

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. is named president of Calvin Theological Seminary

2001



part-time and adjunct women instructors for almost 40 years.

The faculty continued to take seriously its duty of defending and promoting the Reformed faith for the church generally. In the mid-60s it had commenced publication of *The Calvin Theological Journal*. Appearing semi-annually, it was written for the reflective pastor and was mailed free of charge to all alumni. The newer faculty felt, however, that another instrument was needed to reach the denomination's council rooms with insight on modern issues. Using revenues from an endowment created by the successful financial campaign in the early nineties, it developed *The Calvin Seminary Forum*. Three times a year, in an attractive 8-page format, multiple copies of this magazine were mailed to every church in the denomination and to seminary donors to the annual fund. Response to the treatment of such issues as contemporary worship, what it means to be Reformed today, children at the Lord's supper, Promise-Keepers, and dispensationalism was positive and enthusiastic. The seminary also regularly published a series of addresses for circulation in the denomination. And in the context of the discussions on women's ordination, seminary booklets by Dr. John Cooper, entitled *Cause for Division?*, and President James A. De Jong, called *Freeing the Conscience*, appeared as tempering contributions. Professor Henry De Moor and others were regularly consulted on complex issues faced in the churches.

With greater than half its members appointed in the 90s, the faculty set its face to the future. Meeting together in February, 1996, the faculty and the trustees identified six major goals and developed plans to achieve them. The first goal was that the seminary reach a growingly diverse market via off-site and technologically-based courses and that it de-



Dr. John T. Kim was hired to direct a Korean Ministry program.

velop a solid continuing education program for those already in ministry. The seminary next aimed at contributing to the church's sense of Reformed identity in the contemporary context, at increasing gender and cultural diversity on the faculty, and at reassessing administrative organization. The plan also called for working closely with denominational agencies in the recruitment and training of spiritually strong leaders for the 21st century. It envisioned integration of the seminary's plan with that of the denominational agencies. Enrollment goals were set, with a planned review of the adequacy of seminary facilities. Finally, the plan addressed fiscal priorities and goals for a changing situation. The board approved the final version of the plan in May, 1997. While much of the content was already being addressed, the document gave faculty and administrative work clearer focus and priorities. The plan was reviewed and adjusted annually in the following years.

Providentially, about the time the plan was being implemented, the seminary received a large foundation grant for using computer technology in teaching. A computer specialist was hired to assist in the effort. Under the initiative of the academic dean, a number of courses each quarter were designated for technology-compatible development, and professors found new resources and ways of enriching their courses with modern technology. This work laid the basis for eventually offering courses on-line, although the task proved more complex than originally envisioned. The faculty sent to synod a proposal for continuing education by the seminary and other agencies; it was modified, then approved in 2000.

Each time a faculty opening occurred, search committees actively sought ethnic minority candidates. It granted preliminary interviews to several, but in each case it recommended significantly stronger candidates to the board. Between 1995 and 1998 it retained the services of Dr. John T. Kim, a Christian Reformed pastor with a degree in the field of missions, to direct and teach in a new Th.M. program, Korean Ministry in the North American Context. The program was designed to give an advanced degree to Korean pastors who served in North America, but who had been trained in Korea. Courses were offered in Los Angeles as well as in Grand Rapids with Dr. Kim translating the materials into Korean. Approximately 35 people enrolled and almost 20 completed this one-time program. By the end of the decade the faculty, encouraged by the synod of 2000 with the promise of additional funding, was again searching for an ethnic minority faculty member.

A noticeable increase in faculty publication marked the decade under review. Books by several professors were adopted as textbooks in other seminaries.

PROGRAMS AND CURRICULUM

Calvin Seminary has experimented with a number of ethnic minority programs in recent years. Since the mid-eighties it had offered extension courses for Native Americans in Classis Red Mesa. Four Navajo students eventually completed a residency program in Grand Rapids, graduated, and were ordained as pastors before the program ran its course. A similar approach was taken toward Hispanic students in Chicago, with similar results. For a decade the seminary cooperated with the International Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Professors were regularly "loaned" to this new school in its initial years. The thinking was that Christian Reformed Koreans would take two years there and complete their final two years at Calvin Seminary. Most Korean-American students intending to enter Christian Reformed ministry chose to come directly to Calvin Seminary, or they selected another West Coast seminary and subsequently completed their year of residency in the SPMC program before becoming ordained. By the end of the decade Christian Reformed Korean-American students no longer had much difficulty with the English language. Most had immigrated as little children or had been born in North America, were educated in North American schools and universities, and were thoroughly Americanized. After graduation, a number of them accepted calls to traditional Christian Reformed churches; they found that they were more suited to ministry in them than in the Korean immigrant churches in which they had been raised.

One experimental degree program



Professors Richard Muller and Henry Zwandstra award one of the first Ph.D. recipients his academic regalia.

was ruled out of bounds by the seminary's accrediting body in the early 90s. The Master of Ministry program was designed as a two-year program with reduced requirements that would qualify certain ethnic minority students to be ordained after two years of training. The accrediting body insisted that ordination required four years of preparation, and the program was terminated. In its place the faculty instituted an "adjusted" M.Div. program that relents on some language requirements and shortens the residency requirements for qualifying ethnic minority graduates from other seminaries.

These programs demonstrated that very early in the denominational discussions Calvin Seminary took seriously achieving ethnic diversity in the Christian Reformed Church. Since its inception in the early 80s, "All Nations Heritage Sunday/Week" was jointly sponsored by the semi-

nary and the committee on race relations. Collections went in part to provide scholarships for ethnic minority students at the seminary. By the late 90s the student body, including international students, was 40 percent non-Caucasian. Calvin Seminary had become the most culturally and ethnically diverse educational institution and agency in the Christian Reformed world.

If ethnic minority initiatives lacked the visibility they deserved in the churches, the Ph.D. program did not. It was approved by synod in 1989, following animated observations by a minority of delegates that Christian Reformed pastors would benefit more from the D.Min. degree. The doctor of ministry degree is a non-academic doctorate for ministry practitioners which enhances their effectiveness as pastors. The faculty had weighed this option carefully, and it argued that many evangelical seminaries offered

D.Min. degrees. Our pastors could find these programs in almost any major city in the U.S. and Canada. The faculty pointed out that fewer than half-a-dozen confessional and evangelical seminaries offered Ph.D. programs, which equip people to teach theology in North American and overseas seminaries. What the world needed, it was argued, was a program that would train those who teach pastors and evangelists. The faculty and board viewpoint prevailed, and in 1992 Calvin Seminary admitted its first class of Ph.D. students. Professors Feenstra and Muller, both of whom had taught in Ph.D. programs elsewhere, were appointed to carry the major portion of the new program. All costs of the program were met by endowments created by generous constituents; none would ever be borne by the churches through their ministry-share gifts. Roughly half the students admitted to this new program are North Americans, most of them from non-Christian Reformed backgrounds; the other half are overseas students. Rev. Jean de Dieu Rajaonaravony of Madagascar was the first Ph.D. graduate. He returned home to serve as president of the largest Protestant seminary in his country.

But the seminary was interested not only in training theologians. It turned its attention to attracting greater numbers of the very best high school students into Christian Reformed ministry. In 1999 it introduced the "Facing Your Future" program, which was funded by a three-year grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. High school juniors and seniors who were active in their churches and showed unusual interest in and aptitude for pastoral ministry could be nominated by local religious leaders. In response to the invitation, these leaders nominated 240 students for 35 openings in the summer of 1999. The program ran for a month. Students were introduced to various

[The Seminary] turned its attention to attracting greater numbers of the very best high school students into Christian Reformed ministry.

kinds of ministries, grappled with current issues theologically, led devotions, kept spiritual journals, and enjoyed fellowship with one another and the faculty. After three intense weeks on campus, they spent eight days in Israel learning about the setting of "the greatest story ever told." Many completed the program committed to ministry, and the seminary established follow-up contact with them through their college years. The program was equally successful the second year. When the Lilly staff convened representatives from 30 seminaries conducting programs for high school youth which it had funded, it showcased the Calvin Seminary "Facing Your Future" program as a model of success. The faculty had found a mechanism for dealing with a problem faced by all seminaries: How do we encourage the churches to challenge their most spiritually promising young people to enter ordained ministry?

In other program developments the seminary introduced a ministry-readiness program for first-year students, strengthened its concurrent field education program, introduced a required urban ministry exposure for all M.Div. and M.A. students, began a voluntary stewardship training program in cooperation with the Barnabas Foundation, and concluded its membership in the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education (SCUPE). It also reviewed all core courses to determine how adequately

they address specific ministry responsibilities. A similar exercise was conducted concerning the field education program at the end of the decade, and specific ministry experiences were defined as required during the student's internship experience. The faculty initiated a candidacy committee, which included trustee representation, to review progress toward candidacy every year during the M.Div. student's program. The requirements in church history were reduced and those in pastoral care increased. And the M.A. program was retooled to make it more responsive to needs in church education and in new church development.

Through continuous scrutiny of its programs the seminary made adjustments that were designed to equip graduates for dramatically changing ministry situations. Wholesale curriculum revision had been studied in the late 70s and early 80s. Restive students had called for it, and a major committee that included graduates and constituents discussed the matter for several years before the faculty affirmed what it had in place. During the late 80s and the 90s nothing as threatening as wholesale overhaul was considered, but the changes were cumulatively significant. Student complaints subsided, due in part to the work which Dr. Kenneth Kuiper of the Calvin College English department did with every faculty member on course design and effective teaching strategies.

The seminary entered the new millennium with significantly different programs from the ones with which it had begun the previous decade. The M.Div. and M.A. programs had been strengthened. A successful Ph.D. program had been added. Field education had been given clearer definition and goals. Membership in SCUPE had been traded for a required urban exposure for every M.Div. and M.A. student. Off-

site courses for ethnic minorities had been replaced with an adjusted M.Div. distance education, continuing education, and a D.Min. program were under consideration. And the school had a vibrant program with high school youth. Indications were that the changes had been good and were appreciated.

NEW RESOURCES

With changes in governance, students, faculty, and programs came new administrative pressures. But one of the most significant changes was external to the seminary, and it had as much of an impact on the school as the internal developments. That change was the relationship of the church to the seminary.

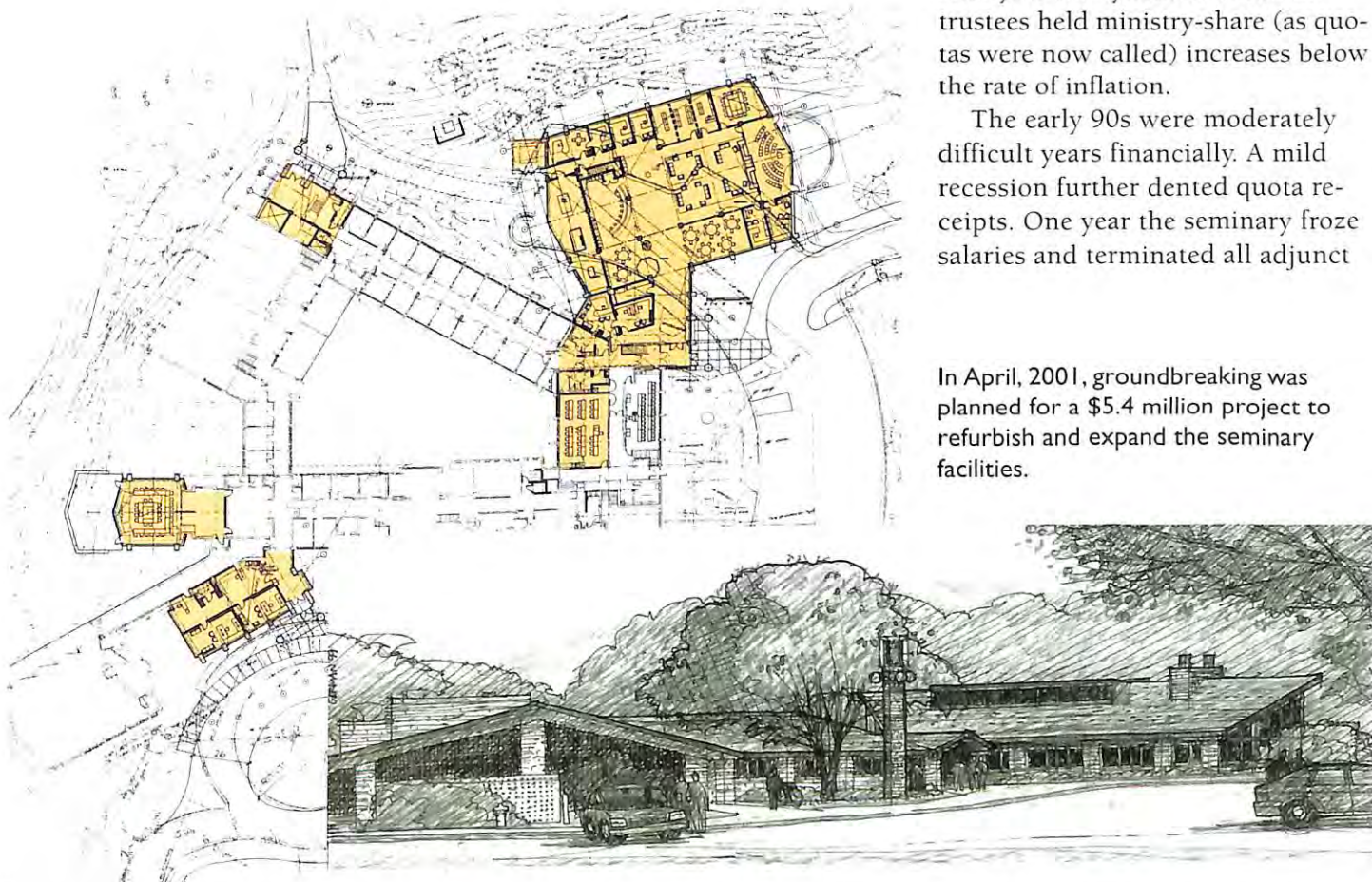
Historically the church's attitude toward the seminary was one of possessiveness and scrutiny. The school belonged to the church. That issue had been settled in an intense debate

in the first decade of the 20th-century. Young Professor Foppe Ten Hoor had successfully fended off the extreme Kuyperians, who believed that theology as a science belonged in the sphere of academic institutions and not that of the church. Synod agreed with Ten Hoor and continued its pattern, stated in the confessions, of paying the full costs of "Our School" (*Onze School*). As late as 1980 synodical quotas met 90 percent of the seminary's operating budget; the balance was paid by modest but rapidly rising tuition. That level of support was the tangible test of ownership! And the church had always been possessive of the seminary to the point of rigorous scrutiny. It scrutinized faculty appointments and rumors of theological deviance in the church papers. It also honored and recognized its faculty, usually in the end deferring to their spiritual and theological judgment.

The 80s witnessed a notable waning of interest in denominational identities and a corresponding increase in local ministry. Fiscal priorities were reshuffled, and denominational commitments went to the middle or bottom of the deck in some places. The shift was abetted by a quota insurrection. It was mounted by some who were angry that synods and denominational leaders did not put a clear and decisive end to debates on evolution and women's ordination. At the college a demographic trough caused an enrollment decline. The related economic pressures forced the board and administrations to review the distribution of the single Calvin College and Seminary quota between the two schools. For some this became a consideration in separating the two schools into two corporations. Meanwhile the synodical interim committee was urging quota restraint on all agencies, and year after year the synodical board of trustees held ministry-share (as quotas were now called) increases below the rate of inflation.

The early 90s were moderately difficult years financially. A mild recession further dented quota receipts. One year the seminary froze salaries and terminated all adjunct

In April, 2001, groundbreaking was planned for a \$5.4 million project to refurbish and expand the seminary facilities.



or part-time instructors, and the faculty volunteered to take up the slack. The seminary board asked the synodical board to create a line of credit so synod could borrow, if necessary, to meet its ministry-share commitments to the seminary. However, it was an expedient not used, due to the generosity of early donors to an annual fund added mid-decade. Even the officers of synod that year, all alumni, donated their modest honoraria to the seminary in a deeply appreciated demonstration of support. As early as 1991 the seminary board asked synod to add responsibility for advancement and fund-raising to President De Jong's job description. Synod complied, and shortly thereafter Dr. Richard Eppinga became the president's assistant for advancement. By the end of the decade the seminary was balancing the budget, thanks to the generosity of people sending direct contributions and a healthy economy. But the seminary had joined the ranks of those who ask! It was new territory. Over the next several years supporters generously included the seminary in their estate plans, added 60 named scholarships, and enabled the school to double its student housing to 106 apartment units.

Two years before forming separate boards, the Calvin trustees had authorized the president and the faculty to conduct a \$7.9 million campaign. Entitled "Keeping the Heritage, Facing the Future," it aimed to endow two professorships for the Ph.D. program, create the Faculty Heritage endowment to support faculty research and service to the churches, increase seminary housing, add faculty offices, establish a missions institute, and increase the size of the John H. Kromminga endowment for multi-ethnic scholarships. The effort was mounted without the help of campaign consultants, but by enlisting

the part-time help of Mr. Norman De Graaf, a Grand Rapids leader who had previously served as board secretary. The president, aided by various faculty members, held 60 dinners around the U.S. and Canada and visited personally with many Christian Reformed constituents. The effort achieved all goals except the endowment of the missions' institute, which was annually funded by Mr. and Mrs. Jay Van Andel in succeeding years. By the time the campaign closed, the advancement office had been created. The final amount given exceeded nine million dollars, with another three million committed in deferred and estate gifts. As important as the financial success was the presence of Calvin Seminary in many sectors of the constituency. The seminary now had faces. Its vision and needs were shared. The response was encouraging.

Providing the resources needed for successful operation of the seminary included adding competent new staff. In addition to the advancement office staff, a full-time director of recruitment and financial aid, a director of housing, a director of properties, and financial services personnel were added. These people served a larger student population and a more complex organization. The seminary in the 90s also added some part-time student and non-student personnel and made the dean of students a full-time position. With a larger staff and student body came the need for expanded facilities. And in 1999 the board authorized the development of plans to refurbish and expand the seminary building. This \$5.4 million project was tied to a denomination-wide celebration of the school's 125th anniversary.

LOOKING AHEAD

As the seminary looks forward, it recognizes the importance of main-

taining and strengthening its ties to its alumni and to the Christian Reformed Church. Cooperative planning with other denominational agencies and expanded service through distance education and continuing education will serve that purpose.

Of vital importance to all seminaries, Calvin included, is the need to attract students with the gifts of spiritual leadership. A more complex and more demanding age requires the very best students for training as ministers and church workers that the church can provide. This is not first of all the seminary's responsibility, but that of the homes and councils and ministers of the denomination. But the seminary must be a partner in this endeavor. To achieve this the seminary needs to provide theological training that is true to the heritage, grounded in Scripture, intellectually inquisitive and stimulating, practically competent and polished, and relevant to the issues of the day. The people of God need unusual leadership in our times.

The international community of believers will look increasingly to Calvin Seminary for counsel, encouragement, and the training of its leadership. As a mature and well-resourced and respected school in the Reformed tradition, it will play an increasingly important role for younger churches and seminaries. Accepted with grace and humility, this responsibility will enhance the Christian Reformed Church's witness and significance far beyond the denomination.

Faithful to its calling, Calvin Theological Seminary will be a blessing in ways that have marked its first 125 years and in ways that exceed its past achievements. But even our faithfulness, which needs daily renewing, depends on the Lord. May he use the school to his glory and for his purposes.

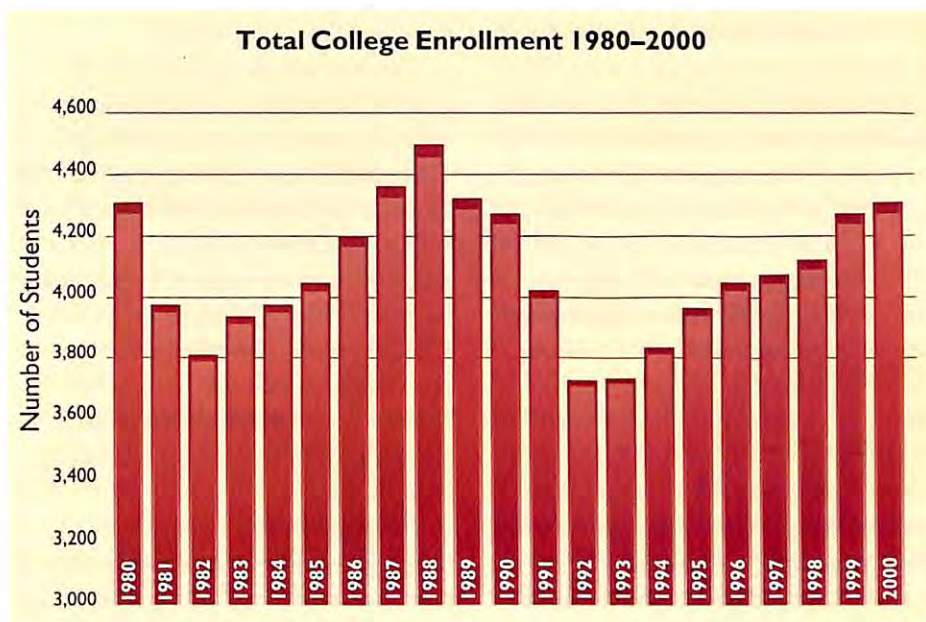
RECOGNIZED NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

CALVIN COLLEGE 1991 TO THE PRESENT

Lynn Bolt Rosendale

A portion of the decision to separate the Calvin College and Seminary Board of Trustees was based on President Anthony Diekema's concept of "Servant Partnerships." This initiative, developed in the early 1990s, sought major changes in the college's relationship with all of its major constituencies. "At the core, the purpose of Servant Partnerships is to solicit and integrate contributions of leadership, finance, expertise and influence from the entire constituency for Calvin College. It expands opportunities for meaningful involvement by individuals and organizations in the life of the college," Diekema wrote in a proposal to the Calvin College and Seminary Board of Trustees in 1990.

The proposal related to the decision to develop two separate boards because the new Calvin College Board of Trustees would now include 12 at-large members (in addition to 16 regional trustees selected by Christian Reformed Church classes and three Calvin Alumni Association members) who would be chosen for their interest in Calvin College, but not necessarily because of their ties to the Christian Reformed Church. "Calvin is attempting to provide a variety of meaningful leadership roles, including board membership, to new and welcome partners," said Diekema, at the time of the decision.



"Such increasing inclusiveness to those who, while not members of the Christian Reformed Church, share a similar perspective on Christ-centered academics can only strengthen both the college and the church in years to come."

But the concept of Servant Partnerships went beyond the decision regarding the structure of the Board of Trustees. In fact, it permeated the atmosphere at the college in many different ways over the next decade. "In the early 1990s we looked at all of the dimensions of the college and where the college was headed in the future," said Diekema. "When we reviewed the 5-Year Plan for 1987-

92, we knew that enrollment was not going in the direction that was projected. With this we acknowledged that it would take a total effort to expand outward to new communities and new partners."

In fact, enrollment dropped each year from a record high of 4,505 in 1988 to match a mid-1970s level of 3,725 in 1992. Some critics pointed to the creation/science controversy as the cause of Calvin's enrollment decline. However, admissions cited two other central reasons for the college's population dip: private school cost and a smaller pool of high-school graduates.

"Obviously the negative publicity

1990



"The Campaign for Calvin College" begins.

1992

College wins first of the national NCAA Division III athletic championships.



we received during that whole controversy didn't help," said Diekema. "But in 1991 when Synod concluded that Howard Van Till's beliefs fell within the guidelines expected of all faculty members by the Christian Reformed Church, it was finally put to rest. At that point the nasty writings about Howard and the rest of us involved stopped. The whole thing just died and people stopped talking about it."

Enrollment, however, didn't see a significant upswing again until 1994. Because of the continued low enrollment, 40 college faculty and staff positions were terminated in the fall of 1991. It was the first and only time that such large-scale downsizing had ever been done at Calvin.

While terminating positions was a somber event, any decline in morale was quickly turned around as a result of the Servant Partnerships initiative taking place at the same time, said Diekema. The Calvin community was excited about the prospect of looking outward to partner with both individuals and organizations.

THE FIRST CAMPAIGN

In early 1992, earnest plans were underway for The Campaign for Calvin College—another outgrowth

of the Servant Partnerships initiative. "Nothing like this had ever been attempted at Calvin before," said Diekema. "The most encouraging part of the campaign was the response of partners who had always been out there but had never been asked to support Calvin in this way before. When they were told of the needs of the institution they responded very generously."

The emeriti, faculty and staff began the first phase of the campaign with the goal of raising \$400,000. That mark was easily eclipsed as the amount pledged, \$1.2 million, tripled all expectations. This first phase was an indicator of what was to come when the initial goal of \$35 million for the campaign, as suggested by consultants, was raised to \$50 million midway through the campaign and actual pledges totaled more than \$58 million.

"I firmly believe that one of the things that made the campaign so successful was Leo Peters' attack on Calvin College and the Christian/science issue," said Bob Berkhof, vice president for development. "One side became very public and one side remained purposely silent. I think the side that remained silent showed their support with their

pocketbook. They made a point of demonstrating that they didn't believe all of the negative things that had been said about Calvin and didn't approve of the way the college had been bashed."

While the five-year campaign sought out new partners for the college, the effort also was a reaction to what college administrators feared would be a loss in partnership by the year 2000. "There was an underlying fear in the late 1980s that by the year 2000 we would no longer have support or we would have minimal support from the Christian Reformed Church," said Berkhof. "At that time the CRC was supporting the college with \$2.7 million in what was then called quotas. That represented [income from] \$45-50 million in endowment. We figured that with considerably less support to maintain the same level of academic excellence we would need a \$40 million endowment and we were at about \$7 or \$8 million."

This resulted in a feasibility study sent out to major donors; a second study was sent out to 800 alumni. The consultants concluded that a goal of \$25-35 million was possible. The Calvin Cabinet for Future Needs decided to stretch the



Setting the tone for the first-ever Campaign for Calvin College, emeriti, faculty, and staff kicked off the campaign by tripling the expected faculty-staff goal of \$400,000.

goal to at \$35 million. As noted, even this was exceeded. The effort of The Campaign for Calvin College also launched The William Spoelhof Chair, the Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics, the Kuiper Seminar, the Mellema Western Studies program, the Presidential Award for Exemplary Teaching, the Dean of the Chapel position, the Spoelhof Family Institute for Christian Leadership in Business, the Doc DeVries Science Equipment Fund and the addition of the fifth floor of the library.

“The real superstar of the campaign, which continues today, was the Named Scholarship program,” said Berkhof. “That program has caught on and in each year since the campaign we’ve established more of those than we did in any one year of the campaign.” Under this program donors are invited to establish a student scholarship in the name of someone who has uniquely touched their lives—whether that be a family member, friend, professor—whom-ever the donor chooses. This program provides thousands of dollars of financial aid to students each year.

In addition to the campaign’s success, there was the added benefit that the support of the Christian Reformed Church did not decrease as expected, and in 2000 the sum of the ministry shares (formerly known as quotas) to the college was \$2.9 million.

While enthusiasm grew about the campaign and the support it was generating, other events heightened the level of excitement on the campus. In 1992 the men’s basketball team won the first national championship in Calvin sports history. That

“The most encouraging part of the campaign was the response of partners... they responded very generously.”

season Calvin won its 20th MIAA title, posted a 31-1 record, and earned the country’s top rating during the final five weeks of the regular season. The season ended with a 62-49 victory over Rochester in the title game held at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio.

TECHNOLOGY EXPLOSION

The early 1990s saw other noticeable changes. In 1991, the college began buying desktop computers, and by 1992 numerous faculty and staff members had purchased their own computers. By 1993, all faculty and staff members had access to e-mail, and it became available to students campus-wide in the fall of 1994.

“Calvin has always been at the forefront of using technology,” said Henry DeVries, who became vice president for information services in 1997. “Keeping up with it in the early 1990s was difficult because so many things were happening at once.” For instance, in 1993 the college started replacing the old copper wire campus network with fiber optic cable to build a new network backbone, and in the fall of that year four residence halls were equipped with computer labs. The rest of the

residence halls were updated with like technology in 1994. Also in 1993, Calvin introduced internet access on a campus-wide basis, and the World Wide Web, the largest group of servers available via the internet, was added in 1994. In an effort to provide users with the best support service possible, Microsoft Windows software became the product of choice for most on-campus users in 1995. With the technology arena changing so rapidly during Gaylen Byker’s presidency, updating technology became a more important goal for the central campus than previously.

Further, in conjunction with Diekema’s Servant Partnerships concept, new collaborative community efforts began to take hold at the college in the early 1990s. For example, Streetfest was introduced in 1993. This volunteer undertaking, which flourished throughout the remaining years of the decade, was designed to help integrate incoming students into the Grand Rapids community and into a mindset of service. As a part of orientation, first-year students were offered the opportunity to volunteer for a service project with other first-year students and a Calvin faculty or staff mentor. In its first year more than 700 students took to the streets of Grand Rapids for a few days serving food, doing yard work, visiting the elderly and cleaning up streets. In all, projects were undertaken at 25 sites with 1,500 volunteer hours contributed by the students. This tradition continues at Calvin each fall; in 2000 more than 1,000 first-year students participated in the eighth annual Streetfest.

1994

Technology advances: email and the world-wide web become available to students campus wide.



1995

Gaylen Byker is appointed president.

1996



1997

Henry De Vries is appointed the new Vice President of Information Technology.



Streetfest was designed to help integrate new students into the Grand Rapids community and underscore Calvin's service mandate. As a part of orientation, first-year students were offered the opportunity to volunteer for a service project with other first-year students and a Calvin faculty or staff mentor.

Internships was another area where Calvin looked to place students in the community. Prior to the 1990's, business internships were probably the most common, while other fields had only an occasional student learning in a workplace environment. In business alone the number of internships grew from 17 in 1991 to 43 in 1994. In 1999, the total number of business interns was 167. Other departments—engineering, social work, recreation and communication arts and sciences—also began placing interns much more frequently.

To meet the growing demand in this area, two staff members were hired to coordinate this program. Student and employer matches are now available in almost any field. "This is a great way for employers to learn about Calvin and what great students we have here," said Andy DeVries, one of the program's coordinators. "This opportunity gets our students out into the community and displays their work ethic and their great problem-solving skills. It also helps employers who need a person with some education for a particular project, but are unable to hire long-term for that position."

A DIVERSE STUDENT BODY

All of these efforts, and others, led

to increasing enrollment levels beginning in 1994. Yet the percentage of students from the Christian Reformed Church began to decline. "This was directly related to our spreading the nets; we were purposely appealing to a broader base of evangelical students," said Diekema. Following the enrollment declines of the late 80s and early 90s, the enrollment offices of the college increased the effort to expand the reach of Calvin College beyond the boundaries of the traditional constituencies of the Christian Reformed Church and the Christian School International circles, according to Tom McWhertor, vice president for enrollment and external relations. "Ad efforts targeted students across the denominational divide. Admissions counselors visited an ever-growing number of public high schools and represented Calvin at college fairs throughout the Midwest. Direct marketing allowed students within 200 miles to learn about Calvin, almost without distinction with regard to denominational orientation," he said.

And this effort was well-received. Once the college made itself visible beyond its previous constituencies, the college experienced a steady growth in the enrollment of more denominationally diverse students. These students brought their own

traditions to Calvin creating a dynamic spiritual life on campus as their diversity met the vibrant Reformed tradition at Calvin. With the percentage of students from denominations other than Christian Reformed approaching 49 percent in 2000, up from 36 percent in 1991, the spiritual dynamics on campus shifted throughout the 1990s to reflect this shift. "The Calvin College



Rangeela is a Hindi word that means colorful. And so it is an apt name for the combination of dance, music and drama put on each year by international students at Calvin College.

tradition has tended to major in loving God with its mind and has shown less expression with emotions,” said Calvin Chaplain Dale Cooper. “A decade or two ago and going further back, we never talked about ourselves and our personal faith. This, I think, reflects the tradition from which we started.” Today on campus there is a much greater openness to talk about God and faith issues. For example, students give their testimonies during chapel.

“Students have the belief that if God means anything at all, then he should mean something in my life,” said Cooper. “I think this belief has been supported by the infusion of a wider variety of Christians who are willing to give a testimony—to talk about God and his dealings with us.”

Another dimension of student life during the past decade and continuing on into the 2000s is a keener desire for fellowship. “Young people today are longing to be connected with one another,” said Cooper. “They want to mean something to one another.” The combination of these two issues prompted some dramatic changes in spiritual life on campus in the 1990s. “A number of us sensed that if people are longing to be connected to God and to know that their story matters to him and they are longing to be connected to one another, then the place we need to meet these needs is at home, which while at Calvin is in the residence halls.”

In the late 1980s a volunteer spiritual activities coordinator was designated in each residence hall, to develop, provide and oversee spiritual opportunities within each residence hall. In 2000, spiritual growth



On Sunday evenings, students experience a contemporary worship service with a sense of history and tradition at the “LOFT (Living Our Faith Together).”

opportunities in each residence hall include Bible studies, a Wednesday night worship, Late Night – a four-night-a-week brief devotional – and outreach/service projects in the name of Christ.

Another dramatic change at Calvin happened in regards to Sunday worship on campus in 1995. “When Calvin came to the Knollcrest campus in 1963, Burton Street and the East Beltline were not very developed,” said Cooper. “You have to understand that this place was really way out in the sticks.” At that time many students couldn’t get to church, so their only worship option was on campus, through the Knollcrest Worship Service.

“That was a good thing, but all good things tend to atrophy after a while,” said Cooper. “Not much had changed in that service over the years, but a lot had changed in the make-up and complexity of Grand Rapids and in the make-up of our student body.”

The traditional Christian Re-

formed Church service was not well attended in the morning, and the evening service was drawing even fewer students. In 1995 several offices on campus agreed to attempt a two-fold push. First, to encourage students to attend church off-campus in the morning by bringing in buses and vans and highly publicizing all of the available options, including attending Woodlawn Christian Reformed Church, which worshipped in the college chapel. And, second, to develop a contemporary on-campus worship service in the evening.

“We received the blessing of the president, and the Board of Trustees held their breath while we attempted to try this new creation of a contemporary worship service with a sense of history and tradition,” said Cooper. “I know that two very charismatic seminarians – Gregg DeMey and Greg Kett – were instruments used by God to help get this thing off the ground. It’s unthinkable without these two guys.”

1998



1999

John “Doc” De Vries
Hall of Science is dedicated.

2000



Jacquelyn Nickerson, Class of '55
is the first African-American to
be named a “Distinguished Alum.”

2001

What was started in the fall of 1995 by DeMey and Kett was the evening LOFT (Living Our Faith Together) service, which drew standing-room-only crowds from its inception. "It absolutely took the campus by storm and continues to draw very, very well," said Cooper. The LOFT features contemporary music accompanied by a band, a sermon tailored to the joys, concerns and struggles of 18-21 year olds, scripture readings and prayer.

BYKER BECOMES PRESIDENT

The style of worship on campus was not the only thing to change in the fall of 1995. President Diekema retired after 20 years of strong leadership, and Gaylen Byker was inaugurated as the eighth president of Calvin College. When asked in 1995 why he accepted the offer to become president, Byker said, "I believe Calvin is uniquely suited to make a difference in this world. I believe that the Reformed tradition and liberal arts education fit together especially well. In most instances, this type of Christian education can have a more important influence on our society than political solutions." With this belief in Calvin College, Byker, who had practiced law and banking in Philadelphia and New York before moving to Houston in 1992 as a principal in the Offshore Energy Development Corporation, became the leader of the then 119-year old institution.

With the change in leadership, the transition for the college continued. A strategic plan had been produced in 1991 and reexamined in 1997. This resulted in the development and release of an additional campus master plan in 1998. Said Byker: "The 1990s was a transition for Calvin from adolescence to adulthood. Calvin was a small place until about 1945. Until then it was a place mostly for pastors and teachers. Calvin then went into its childhood

"I believe Calvin is uniquely suited to make a difference in this world. I believe that the Reformed tradition and liberal arts education fit together especially well.

— President Gaylen Byker

phase from 1945-65 when it just kept growing, and then a 30-year adolescent phase. I think now we're into adulthood. We know what we're going to look like when we're matured. I think the mid-1990s was a critical juncture for the college because we were really coming into our own. When a lot of colleges came to the point of being as large and as good as we are, they started to become less and less Christian. Our goal has been to be more intentional—to remain being Christian and Reformed while all of these other things are happening. We are trying to do something that hasn't been done or that has rarely been tried before."

The steadily increasing enrollment, which began in 1994 during Diekema's presidency, began to demonstrate the space limitations of the campus. This need and a greatly increasing technology program called for some new construction and space reorganization in 1997. A third floor added to Hiemenga Hall created a new home for the history department. This, in addition, created available space for the fast-growing information technology department, which then took over the lower level of the library.

At the same time a new position—vice president for information services—was created. Henry DeVries came on board in that new role, in March of 1997. "Gaylen commissioned a study on the whole

issue of technology, and as a result of that its position was elevated at the college," said DeVries. "It really became a top priority." When DeVries took over, several technology issues were pressing, which had developed without an eye to coordinated planning and interaction. "At that time we still had some people on 486s, and we were in the process of getting everyone switched over to Pentiums," said DeVries. "We had different hardware, different processing software, and no uniform package for e-mail." Standardizing each of these areas became a major focus of the information technology department. In the spring of 1998 the Board of Trustees recognized the importance of increased technology by allocating 1.9 percent of tuition for this purpose. "We had 25-year-old technology in our phone systems, and we also needed the money to build the campus' infrastructure," said DeVries.

In response, the phone system was updated in the summer of 1999, and ten hubs were established in buildings as a major point for transfer of data, voice systems, and cable television signals. All of the residence halls are now wired for internet connection, a feature that students have come to expect upon arrival at college.

Another internal change in leadership that occurred during the later 1990s was in the office of the provost. Joel Carpenter was named the successor to Gordon Van Harn, who had served in that post for 11 years. After being appointed, Carpenter said of his alma mater, "The take out there is that Calvin has extraordinary resources, extraordinary people, extraordinary levels of achievement, but that it has kind of hidden its light under a bushel. I think Calvin needs to let its light shine a bit more broadly."

In an effort to do that, Calvin continued to seek partnerships throughout the 1990s. One of those partner-



A third floor added to Hiemenga Hall and space reorganization created room for the fast-growing information technology department which took over the the lower floor of the Hekman Library, its headquarters, along with a state-of-the-art computer lab.

ships resulted in the building of the \$22 million John “Doc” DeVries Hall of Science, which opened in the fall of 1999. The need for this building resulted from inadequate ventilation, particularly in laboratories, in the science building completed in 1968; expanded student and faculty research activity; an increase in instrumentation and technology; an inadequate animal care facility; and a growing science program which included 25 percent of the student body.

A portion of the funding for the building was provided by Blodgett Memorial Medical Center (now Spectrum Health East) and Butterworth Hospital (now Spectrum Health Downtown), under the auspices of the Grand Rapids Area Medical Education Consortium. This joint en-

deavor came about in response to a need by Calvin to improve its outdated facility and a community need for increased space and updated facilities for animal research. The collaborative project benefits both the community and the college—the community has access to a state-of-the-art facility while students are given the opportunity to work on cutting-edge research projects.

At the same time, the college went ahead with plans to build the Prince Engineering Design Center and the Vermeer Engineering Project Center — both entities contained in a single facility. This building houses the ongoing research projects of professors as well as students’ senior projects, required in each of the engineering divisions.

In addition to increasing on-campus facilities and opportunities, Calvin also sought to offer more off-campus opportunities to students. In 1991, Calvin was offering semester-long programs for students in Spain and Britain. By the year 2000, Hungary, New Mexico, Washington D.C., France, China and Honduras (development studies) had also been added with a semester in Honduras (language studies). Ghana has been approved for 2001. “We have discovered that overseas study broadens the horizons of the students tremendously,” said Frank Roberts, Calvin’s director of off-campus programs. “God’s world is very diverse especially if you can see it from more than just a textbook.” Calvin also regularly offers about 20 interna-



Calvin celebrated back-to-back NCAA Division III championships for the women's cross country team in 1998 and 1999. The men's basketball and cross country teams earned NCAA Division III championship titles in 2000.

tional interim programs to such diverse places as Australia, Ireland, Egypt, Brazil and the Galapagos Islands.

A NATIONAL LEADER

In 1999 and 2000, two prestigious publications—*Atlantic Monthly* and *Commonweal Magazine*—referenced Calvin College in articles about the evangelical mind. The 15-page *Atlantic Monthly* cover story spoke of “The Opening of the Evangelical Mind,” while *Commonweal* noted Calvin in “Something to Be Reckoned With: The Evangelical Mind Awakens.” In both cases, Calvin was portrayed as a national center of Christian thought and scholarship.

Alan Wolfe, author of the *Atlantic Monthly* piece, noted that there is “a

determined effort by evangelical-Christian institutions to create a life of the mind.” He praised Calvin as a place where “evangelical scholars are writing the books, publishing the journals, teaching the students, and sustaining the networks necessary to establish a presence in American academic life.”

Wolfe also had high praise for the Christian Reformed Church, calling it “the other source of strength in conservative-Protestant circles.” He complimented Abraham Kuyper who, he said, “believed that one of God’s greatest creations was the human mind” and he called Calvin one of Kuyper’s American legacies.

Likewise, James Turner, author of the *Commonweal* article, had high praise for Calvin. “Calvin is a small

institution with a history of having featured on its faculty a surprising number of rather distinguished scholars, especially philosophers and historians.”

Calvin provost Joel Carpenter, who was liberally quoted in Wolfe’s story, believes Wolfe was right to note Calvin’s impact on the North American evangelical academic scene.

“Calvin College represents a religious tradition that has a passion for education,” he said. “Calvinists’ theological emphasis on God’s acts of creating and sustaining the universe lead quite naturally to a mandate to value the natural world and study it carefully. The Reformed also see the world as the arena for God’s plan of salvation, which involves society, nature and indeed the entire cosmos. This world matters, then, and learning about it honors its creator and redeemer. People whom God has redeemed are called to be agents of the divine plan of redemption. Such work in the world takes much knowledge, much learning. So the Calvinist theological tradition gives a very strong mandate for education.

“Calvin,” he said, “has emerged as an intellectual leader among Christian colleges and universities.”

ATHLETIC ACCOLADES

The end of the 1990s and the year 2000 brought further national attention to the college athletics programs with Calvin teams winning four more NCAA Division III national championships. The women’s cross country team, which had dominated the local scene the entire decade of the 1990s, claimed national honors in 1998, the first women’s team to earn such recognition in Calvin’s history. This championship followed on the heels of five top-four national finishes in the 1990s. The team repeated the championship in 1999; the coach, Nancy Meyer, was named National Coach of the Year both years.

The men’s basketball team, with a



On January 10, 2000, Calvin hosted a national Republican Presidential Debate. Left, Calvin President Gaylen Byker, Congressman (and Calvin alumnus) Vern Ehlers, and future U.S. President George W. Bush confer after the debate.

30-2 season record, topped Wisconsin-Eau Claire 79-74 in the title game of the 2000 NCAA Division III National Championship at the Salem Civic Center in Virginia to give Calvin its second national championship in men's basketball. While the championship was the climax of a great season, fourth-year coach Kevin VandeStreek, named 2000 National Coach of the Year, added that the wins were "the icing on the cake. The culmination for me was having this group of guys," he said. "They are outstanding Christian young men. They have lived it on the floor, off the floor, in relationships with people they have met. That to me is what a Christian institution basketball team is supposed to be all about."

Rounding out the quartet of national championships in 24 months was the men's cross country team, which placed five runners in the top 35 at the 2000 National Championship held in Spokane, Washington. Five members of that team were all named All-Americans making it only the fifth time in NCAA Division III history to have five All-Americans, from one team in a single year.

Coaches Brian Diemer and Al Hoekstra were named National Coaches of the Year. "This season would have been a success without winning the national championship though," said Diemer. "I think these guys understand that the Lord has brought us together for a bigger purpose."

A PROMISING FUTURE

All of these achievements are part of Calvin College's mission of engaging in vigorous liberal arts education that promotes lifelong Christian service. That is certainly something that Calvin has kept central to its vision throughout the decades and will continue to do in the future. "The key to a Calvin education is the integration of faith, learning and life," said Byker. "We try and address all aspects of this." For Calvin that has meant becoming a more integral part of the community.

Calvin has also started drawing a large number of people to campus from the community through such programs as Calvin Academy for Lifelong Learning (CALL), a continuing education program for people who are retired or semi-retired but com-

mitted to furthering and expanding their knowledge; the *January Series*, whose daily attendance has grown from 50 to about 1,400, and has been named the Best College Lecture Series for three years; and other unique events such as hosting one of the Republican Presidential debates during the primary campaign in 2000. All this was in addition to the contributions made by alumni as educators, legislators, business people, and heads of non-profits.

Calvin intends to continue to be a community provider, with the planned addition of the new DeVos Communication Center and Prince Conference Center on the east side of the campus. Work on these facilities is scheduled to begin in 2001 with construction on a \$3.2 million East Beltline overpass to connect the projected buildings to the main campus. The DeVos Communication Center will significantly enhance the already strong communication arts and sciences department. "It will draw students who want to study communication from a Christian perspective and will position the college for a major leadership role in important new communications fields. It will also

The theme text for the 125th anniversary year comes from Ephesians 3: 14-21, part of which reads: "To Him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine..."

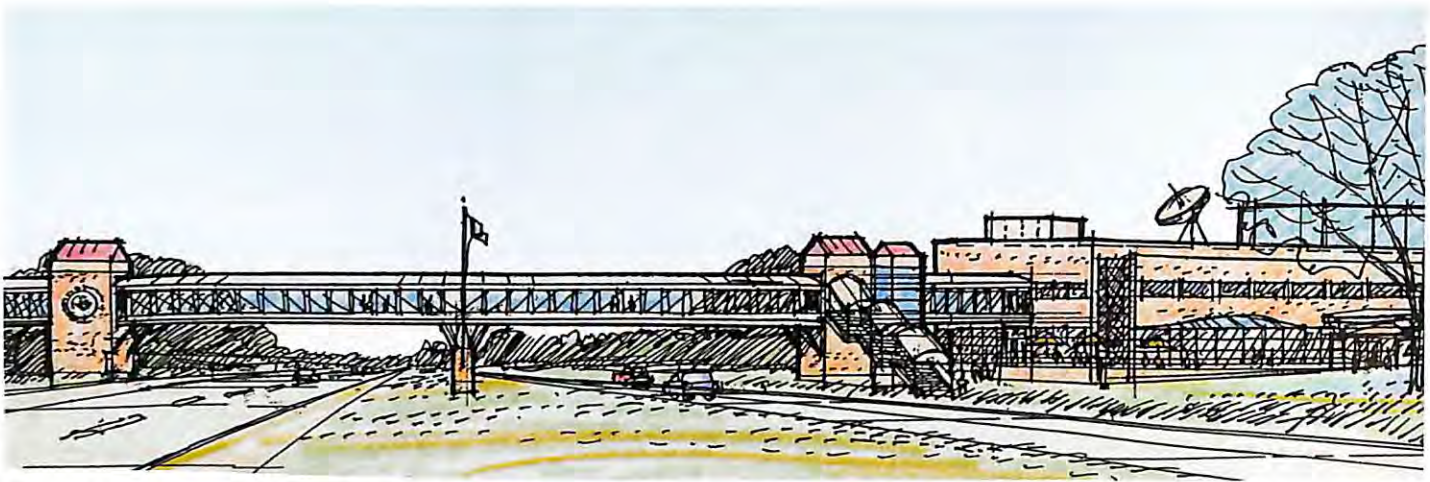
The Calvin community praises God for His faithfulness and with both modesty and exultation intends to honor Him in all of the anniversary events.

We praise Him for the small but significant role Calvin has been allowed to play in the building of His Kingdom as part of His worldwide church.

"My heart I offer to you Lord, promptly and sincerely."



125
YEARS



Construction was scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2001 on an East Beltline overpass, the DeVos Communication Center, and the Prince Conference Center. These facilities will be the first to incorporate academic buildings east of the main Knollcrest campus.

attract Christians from around the world for scholarly and practical experience with various media," said Byker. Similarly, the Prince Conference Center will draw scholars from across the country and around the world to academic conferences involving Christian scholarship and Christians in various professions.

Another community partnership project planned for the immediate future is the development of the Gainey Athletic Fields, on the east side of the campus. Calvin's land along East Paris Avenue is being leased to the Grand Rapids Christian School Association (GRSCA) for the development of baseball, softball and soccer fields, tennis courts, and a cross-country course to be used by GRSCA. The 15-year agreement provides GRSCA with a convenient location for these facilities but, allows the college use of the new facilities as well.

Calvin also continues its partnership with Woodlawn Christian Reformed Church, which worships in the college chapel, encourages the involvement of students, and supports the college through scholarships to students. In addition to providing an opportunity for on-campus worship for students, the congregation has annually provided a scholarship for a minority student since the early 1980s. Currently, discussion is

underway between the congregation and college about the location of a ministry center.

Another major change about to go into effect is a revised core curriculum replacing the core model established in the late 1960s. The revised core proposes "a stronger link, a more direct connection, between the ultimate goal of Christian education and the core curriculum, by suggesting that the primary aim of core courses in the disciplines should not be a general introduction to the disciplines, but an introduction — from the vantage points of the disciplines — to the world in which our students are called to serve, taught in ways that foster both the commitment and the ability to serve."

As Calvin College celebrates its 125th Anniversary this year, there are still key challenges facing the college in the years ahead. The strategic plan for 1997-2002 calls for an optimal enrollment of 3,900-4,100 full-time equivalent traditional undergraduate students. With enrollment climbing throughout the 1990s, the high end of that range was achieved in 2000, and attempts will be made to maintain enrollment at this level in the future.

President Byker sees three other challenges for the future. "One is how to continue to improve the quality of

teaching, scholarship and research while remaining a committed Christian institution. We have gained an international reputation as an institution that has rigorous academic scholars who are committed Christians, and we don't separate the two. That is the vision for Calvin College, and we can never lose that. A second challenge is the cost issue. Our tuition is so far below comparable schools that it is really amazing. The challenge then is how do we continue to run this good a program with that much less money? A third challenge for the future is technology: how do we deal with it and what it costs?"

Being grateful to our ancestors and faithful to our heirs — the theme of Calvin's 125th anniversary celebration — remains the focus as the college enters into the 21st century. "As a whole the college should be continually asking, 'How can we receive from our ancestors and transmit to our heirs our beliefs and faith in Jesus Christ?'" said Cooper. "We cannot have spiritual amnesia or just assume that this is going to happen," he said. "Always in the forefront of our thinking should be Luke 18:8: 'When the Son of Man returns, will he find faith on the earth?' That should continue to be our guiding principle."



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