

## **Press Release of the Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary held on January 9, 2025**

### **Opening and Roll Call.**

The chairman of the Board, Rev. John Louwerse, led in opening devotions. The governors were all present. Dr. Jason Van Vliet was present as principal and administrative assistant, Leanne Kuizenga, was present to take the minutes of the meeting.

### **Memorabilia**

Information was shared about the personal circumstances of emeriti professors, as well as widows and families of professors.

### **Minutes and Agenda**

The agenda for the meeting was established. The minutes of the regular meeting held on September 5 were approved. Outstanding matters on the action log were reviewed.

### **Decisions, Reports, Agenda Items**

1. At the last meeting the Board approved a memorandum of understanding outlining the way South African students will be financially supported. A signed copy of this memorandum of understanding was received.
2. An oral report was given by the principal on a meeting held between him and the dean of students, Dr. W. den Hollander, with the men appointed to organize classical examinations for students from CRTS. The goal of this meeting was to communicate openly about how these examinations were conducted so that there was some level of consistency in how exams are administered between various classes. It was a helpful and productive meeting.
3. Last year a letter was sent to the churches to make them aware of the need for future professors, and to encourage them to support those pastors deemed qualified for further studies. With the letter the Board sought feedback from the churches about the merits of establishing a bursary fund to support students who pursue an advanced degree, and how such a bursary should be funded. Based on feedback received from the churches the Board is sending a supplementary report to General Synod 2025 requesting the establishment of a bursary fund to support students who have recently graduated from seminary (not pastors in active ministry who have a church that could support them) in pursuing an advanced degree that would enable them to potentially serve as faculty at CRTS. The proposal will aim to strike a balance between offering meaningful support to students who meet appropriate criteria for advanced studies and maintaining fiscal responsibility toward the churches.
4. The chairman gave an update on the visits he and the vice-chairman made to administrative staff members, noting that things are going well with our staff. Following a comprehensive review of the principal's work last September, the Board's chairman reported on the implementation of various proposals aimed at streamlining the principal's responsibilities. The Board expresses sincere appreciation for the leadership of Dr. Jason Van Vliet at CRTS.
5. The Academic Committee passed on the minutes of their past meeting. They were received for information.
6. Revs. John Louwerse and Clarence VanderVelde reported on lecture visits to CRTS on November 5-6, 2024, as well as on visits with professors. This report was received with thankfulness.

7. The Finance and Property Committee provided minutes of the recent meetings they held. They were received for information. While there remains an outstanding balance on the fundraising campaign, the committee reported with thankfulness that additional money was recently received. The committee will also supply names of potential Board members in a confidential report to Synod.
8. Margaret Alkema, as ATS coordinator joined the meeting. After the Board meeting in September, CRTS submitted its report on diversity to the Association for Theological Schools (ATS). According to ATS's own standards, we are required to value, define, and demonstrate diversity within the context of our mission, history, constituency, and theological commitments. The Board is thankful that within ATS room is given for seminaries to define their own understanding of diversity rather than having others define diversity for us. We received correspondence back from ATS on this report commending CTRS for the "clarity and completeness" with which the report and appendices were presented. ATS was "very pleased" to accept our report. Considering the culture of our day, the Board is thankful that our perspectives on diversity were received in this manner!
9. A survey was conducted of Board and Senate members evaluating the effectiveness with which the Board, the Academic Committee and the Finance and Property committee do their work. The evaluation was generally positive. Some matters were addressed to help the Board and its committees to function better.
10. As part of our commitments to ATS, the Board agreed to go through its handbook and review all the policies and procedures of CRTS (this report is due in November 2025). Last September, the decision was made to merge the CRTS Handbook and the Admin Procedures Manual into one document. At that time proposals were also made for changes to Bylaw 12, putting some of the policies contained in it into the CTRS Handbook (at the time the original bylaw was passed CRTS did not have a Handbook). Thus, the CRTS Handbook went through a thorough review, worked on by Board, Senate, Academic Committee, Finance and Property Committee, Governance Committee, and especially some of our staff who have put countless hours into this revision. Many of the policies remained the same, some went through some linguistic revision, and some were brought up to date to reflect current practises. The Board approved another long list of revisions, and these will be passed through the governance committee and contained in a report to ATS in November. Margaret Alkema left the meeting.
11. A Principal's report was received. It outlined the real practical benefits of the renovated facilities, highlighting how the students were using the kitchen and lounge to meet for breakfast and devotions at the beginning of a certain day. Such opportunities are great for relationship building and for fellowship. Some of the students at CRTS were born and raised in different ecclesiastical contexts, and it may be beneficial for some of them to undergo an extra internship or vicariate before entering the ministry. The Lord willing we will have a large graduating class of ten Mastery of Divinity and one Diploma of Theological Studies students. Faculty are doing well. It appears that Dr. Ted Van Raalte is recovering well from his heart attack. Dr. John Smith is looking forward to a full sabbatical, beginning this semester. A campus visit day (mostly from students in Ontario) was held in November and was attended by about 20 young men. A similar event was held in Australia when Dr. Arjan De Visser was there and was attended in similar numbers. We are thankful that there appears to be significant interest in attending seminary!
12. Dr. Arjan De Visser reported on his visit among the Australian churches, making presentations in the churches and schools, leading worship services, and meeting prospective

students. Dr. Jerry Visscher reported on his attendance at the Evangelical Theological Society in San Diego, California. Dr. John Smith reported on his attendance at the Society of Biblical Literature, which also took place in San Diego, California. These reports were received with thankfulness.

13. An agreement, in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding, was reached between the Asia Mission Board and CRTS regarding the administration of funds from the Asia Mission Board via the Foreign Student Bursary Fund for Asian students studying at CRTS.

**Press Release and Closing**

The completion of the Press Release was delegated to the vice-chairman in consultation with the Executive and the Principal. Brother Kasper van Veen closed the meeting with prayer.

On behalf of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary,  
Rev. Joe Poppe (Vice-chairman/Corresponding Clerk)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joe Poppe', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.