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Eighty years of service: A history of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska

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EIGHTY YEARS OF SERVICE:
A HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT OMAHA, NEBRASKA
1891-1971

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
and the
Faculty of The Graduate College
University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Mary E. Heck

June 1972

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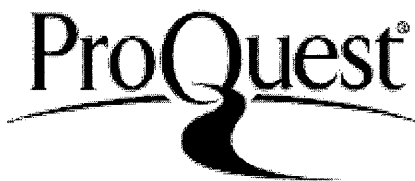


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Accepted for the faculty of The Graduate College of
the University of Nebraska at Omaha, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study has been to trace the history of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha. The major resources used have been the minutes of organizational bodies related to the school, catalogues, and the seminary magazine, The Seminary Record. In depth study of these materials leaves this student with a deep respect and admiration for the men who founded the institution and those who continue to give of their time and talents that Omaha Seminary might serve the Presbyterian Church. The quantity of the records available made it necessary to eliminate many details, which vividly portray the dedication of these men.

The writer is grateful to the seminary Board of Directors for granting her permission to do the study. Sincere thanks and appreciation go to Mrs. Goldie Smith for her aid, encouragement, and invaluable suggestions. Her dedication to the seminary and her interest in my personal welfare give her a special place in this research. Without the constructive criticism and patience of Dr. Frederick Adrian this project never would have been completed. The writer is deeply indebted to him.

Lastly to my three daughters, Kathleen, Virginia, and Carole, and to my husband, Fred, my gratitude and thanks for their patience, understanding, and never-ending faith in my ability to complete this thesis.

Mary E. Heck

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June, 1972

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CHAPTER I

THE FOUNDING

The Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha was founded to train ministers for the Midwest. For more than fifty years the school participated directly in the theological education program of the Presbyterian Church, but in 1943 due to changing views of theological education and rapidly increasing costs, the General Assembly withdrew its endorsement and the seminary was closed. A number of midwestern Presbyterians, however, were determined to preserve the school's corporate identity and assets. A loan program was initiated to aid students who planned to serve as rural ministers in the Midwest, and a short time later, the directors of the Omaha Seminary instituted an in-service education project for ordained Presbyterian ministers. Although its doors have been closed for more than a quarter of a century, the Omaha Seminary continues to serve the Presbyterian Church in the Midwest, as it has done from the time of its founding.

Near the end of the nineteenth century Presbyterian leaders came to the conclusion that the Midwest needed a seminary, which could supply ministers for their vacant churches and offer the more practical theological training needed on the so-called "frontier." The only

Presbyterian seminary between the Mississippi River and the Pacific coast was the one at Dubuque, Iowa, which specialized in the training of ministers for foreign-speaking congregations. Churches in the West found it difficult to attract ministers when the nearest Presbyterian theological schools were located more than five hundred miles away. Experience seemed to indicate that theological students who went to the East, many times did not return. Furthermore, to meet the need for an additional two hundred ministers to fill the pulpits in the area between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, the Chicago Presbyterian Seminary, the nearest theological school for all practical purposes, would have had to expand its physical facilities and greatly increase its staff. Many Easterners also failed to understand either the attitudes or the needs of the western congregations. Seminary training failed to prepare men for the hardships of the "frontier" ministry, and many were reluctant to accept pastorates in the "Wild West."¹

In 1891 the Reverend John Gordon of Omaha and the Reverend Stephen Phelps of Council Bluffs met to explore the possibility of founding a seminary in the area. At first Phelps felt the whole idea was impractical, but as they talked, he became convinced that the need

¹Julius F. Schwarz, History of the Presbyterian Church in Nebraska (Golden Anniversary Edition, 1924), p. 82; Charles Arthur Hawley, Fifty Years on the Nebraska Frontier (Omaha: Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1941), p. 18. Hereinafter cited as Hawley, Fifty Years. See also, Prospectus of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1891-1892 (Omaha: Finance Committee of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1891), pp. 6-7. Hereinafter cited as Prospectus.

for a seminary was "absolutely imperative and one which was earnestly impressed upon us by the Providence of God."² The need was obvious. As towns sprang up the demand for ministers increased, while college graduates entered other professions or went into business. Contrary to Presbyterian tradition and principle, many in the church advocated ordaining men who lacked theological training. The possibility of subsidizing students who would attend eastern seminaries was out of the question as there were no funds to finance the project. Both men also were concerned about the morals of the area, as "skepticism, infidelity, atheism, and vice were rampant."³

As a result, Presbyterian ministers and elders from the mid-western area were invited to meet in Omaha on February 17, 1891, to consider the idea of establishing a new Presbyterian theological seminary. Forty ministers and laymen answered the call. Those who could not attend but supported the idea, sent letters. Much of the opening session was devoted to prayer, as those in attendance realized the undertaking required serious consideration and presented many problems. Following a lengthy discussion, a motion was unanimously carried to establish a Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha.⁴

²Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 45, 50. Chapter III contains a verbatim manuscript describing the founding of Omaha Seminary written by the Reverend Stephen Phelps, pp. 50-58.

³Ibid., pp. 50-51.

⁴Ibid., pp. 51-52; "Minutes of the Board of Directors, Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1891-1924," pp. 1-2. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Board, I.

The founders then proceeded to work out an organizational structure for the new institution. To supervise all seminary affairs, they elected a Board of Directors composed of twenty ministers and twenty elders. It was agreed that the new seminary should adhere strictly to Presbyterian standards and would exist only if it received the approval of the General Assembly, the church's governing body. The men wanted to open the new seminary in September, so it would have to be approved by the Assembly at its May meeting. Committees were appointed to draw up a constitution, incorporate the school, and make financial plans and arrangements. Since there were no funds to pay salaries, the Directors proposed that local ministers provide the instruction. Facilities would have to be provided by some Omaha church until the new institution had a building or could pay rent. Dr. George L. Miller, owner of the Omaha Herald, attended the organizational meeting and offered the seminary twenty-five acres of land in suburban Seymour Park. He stipulated that the main seminary building must be located on the tract and must cost a minimum of twenty thousand dollars. The foundation must be laid within three years of the date of the offer. The founders gratefully accepted Miller's offer and voted to meet again in March to make detailed plans on the basis of committee reports.⁵

During the next three months everyone worked at a rapid pace to prepare plans for presentation at the May meeting of the General Assembly.

⁵Minutes, Board, I, pp. 3-4. See also, Prospectus, pp. 6-7.

An Executive Committee composed of four ministers and three elders was appointed to coordinate and expedite activities. In March, 1891, the Board adopted a constitution which reaffirmed the Presbyterian faith of the founders and granted the General Assembly a veto power over almost all seminary affairs. Several Board members attended the General Assembly to reinforce written petitions for approval of the school. The report of the Standing Committee on Home Missions set the stage for those who wished to secure an endorsement of the proposed western seminary. It declared that unlimited opportunities awaited the church in the Middle West and pointed out that in 1891 Missouri alone had requested thirty additional ministers. Omaha organized a new church every year. The Home Missions Committee had no pastors to supply the rapidly expanding number of churches in the Midwest.⁶

At first the chairman of the General Assembly's Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries felt the church did not need a seminary in the area, but the backers of the new school were not to be turned aside. The Reverend William Henderson of Omaha vividly described the need for the new theological school to prepare ministers to supply vacant rural pulpits. It would strengthen the church because it would lead more men into the ministry. Six students already had made plans to enroll in September. He submitted the report of the Directors with

⁶ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 5-20, 25; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 103rd General Assembly (Philadelphia, 1891), p. 58.

detailed plans for curriculum, faculty, and organization. Convinced by the westerners, the Standing Committee finally recommended the approval of an Omaha Seminary, and the General Assembly adopted the report, declaring it viewed "with satisfaction the organization of the theological seminary at Omaha."⁷

Receipt of the approval spurred the founders to complete plans for the opening in September. The school's constitution stated that only Presbyterian ministers could be selected for the faculty. These men, as well as Board members, were required to sign a pledge affirming their faith in the doctrine and government of the church and the seminary. Three founders agreed to serve on the first faculty. They were the Reverend William W. Harsha, Tekamah, Nebraska, Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology; the Reverend Stephen Phelps, Council Bluffs, Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology; and the Reverend John Gordon, Omaha, Professor of Biblical and Ecclesiastical History. The Directors asked the Reverend Charles Sterling, Omaha, to teach Hebrew. The churches served by the professors continued their full salaries because the seminary had no money. The Reverend Meade C. Williams of Princeton, Illinois, was invited to become Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis, but he declined the appointment.

⁷ Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 103rd General Assembly (Philadelphia, 1891), pp. 151, 263-64; Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 45-47. Hawley includes a letter from the Reverend William R. Henderson to Dr. Denise, dated January 13, 1927; in it Henderson relates his experiences at the General Assembly in 1891.

Cognizant of both the opportunity and the challenge offered, he felt the project was too risky. He pointed out that the founders were rushing to open in the fall of 1891, but they had failed to ascertain the support and sympathy of the area. There was no financial foundation and only one large initial gift, a tract of land with conditions attached. A trip to Omaha and the approval of the General Assembly even failed to convince him. He did, however, send a check for two hundred dollars to be applied on the first year's salary of a New Testament professor. When the Reverend Williams refused to join the faculty, a member of the Board suggested that the Executive Committee contact the Reverend Matthew B. Lowrie, Boulder, Colorado. The Colorado pastor accepted the invitation to join the seminary's first faculty. The First Presbyterian Church at Seventeenth and Dodge Streets offered the new school free use of rooms for classes. Realizing that they faced limitations of time, facilities, and experience, the founders decided to offer only beginning or junior classes the first year.⁸

Six students enrolled at the Omaha Seminary the first week in September 1891. Since the faculty also held full-time pastorates, classes were scheduled when the ministers could be in Omaha, e.g. no Saturday or Sunday classes were held, and Monday classes began at 4:30 P.M. The General Assembly approved the selection of Professors

⁸Minutes, Board, I, pp. 6, 8, 9, 11, 21, 24-28, 400, 402-03, 512; Prospectus, pp. 5, 8-9; Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 52, 57-58. See also, "Minutes of the Faculty," Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Volume I, 1891-1899, p. 21. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Faculty, I.

Harsha, Phelps, and Gordon, so their inauguration took place in October during the fall meeting of the Synod of Nebraska at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Omaha. At the same time the Executive Committee sent ministers to Omaha and Council Bluffs churches to solicit contributions for current expenses. The school needed money for equipment, faculty traveling expenses, and student aid.⁹

In planning the curriculum of the new seminary, the founders reiterated their original purpose: to train an educated pastor in the Presbyterian tradition with emphasis on practical experience and service to the western church. Classes in Homiletics would include not only studying the sermons of others but also preaching sermons. Professors would use textbooks and lectures but encouraged student participation. As provided in the constitution, the curriculum included courses in English Bible, biblical languages and literature, theology, church history and government, public speaking, and music. Courses were divided into three one year terms designated as junior, middler, and senior. Classes began the first Tuesday in September and ended the first Thursday in April. The schedule specified that

⁹Minutes, Board, I, pp. 24, 26-31, 43-44; Prospectus, p. 12; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 3-4; Hawley, Fifty Years, p. 53. See also, "Minutes of the Executive Committee, Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1891-1924," pp. 1, 6, 16, 20-21. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Executive Committee, I.

students would spend from fifteen to seventeen hours per week in classes. Those who completed the full three year course received a Bachelor of Divinity Degree.¹⁰

During the first three years the faculty slightly revised courses to meet the needs of the students and to improve the curriculum. Courses were shifted among departments; experience indicated a need for additional classes in Hebrew and Greek. In 1894 at the request of the faculty the Board added departments of English Bible and Apologetics and appointed professors for each. Everyone agreed on the importance of these subjects, and it appeared that creating the departments would emphasize this to the students.

The year the seminary opened the professors offered only junior classes, but middler classes were added in 1892 and senior classes in 1893. The Prospectus, as well as the annual catalogues, described the course work but also stressed the opportunities to preach in rural churches. The program did not neglect the academic side of theological education, but it gave equal emphasis to practical training.¹¹

¹⁰ Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 5-8, 13; Prospectus, pp. 8-9; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 13, 16, 21-24; First Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska (Omaha, 1892), p. 12. Hereinafter cited as First Catalogue.

¹¹ Minutes, Faculty, I, p. 5; Prospectus, pp. 8-10; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 29, 35, 52; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 18, 24; First Catalogue, pp. 7-10, 16; Second Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1893, pp. 8-10. Hereinafter cited as Second Catalogue. See also, Third Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1894, pp. 9-11. Hereinafter cited as Third Catalogue.

Although they served both as professors and full-time pastors, the faculty apparently maintained high standards. Dr. Phelps, a member of the original faculty, declared that they aimed to teach the students to be first-class ministers, "Christian gentlemen in character and conduct, able preachers and faithful pastors," loyal to the seminary, God, and the standards of the Presbyterian church.¹² An awareness of the school's financial difficulties prevented the Reverend Lowrie from accepting the Board's first invitation to serve as a full-time professor. In 1893, however, he agreed to serve as Professor of New Testament for fifteen hundred dollars per year. From the beginning it was understood that his duties included not only teaching but also fund raising. The other faculty members frequently rearranged the teaching schedule so their colleague could travel "East" to obtain money for seminary bills. The inauguration of Professors Lowrie and Sterling was held in September 1893, after the General Assembly had approved their appointments. The publication and circulation of their inaugural addresses gave increased confidence and added stature to the young theological school.¹³

¹²Hawley, Fifty Years, p. 57; Minutes, Board, I, p. 35.

¹³Minutes, Board, I, pp. 31, 34-38, 49; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 7-12, 15-16, 19-21, 23, 43-47; Minutes, Faculty, I, p. 13; First Catalogue, p. 6; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 104th General Assembly (Philadelphia, 1892), pp. 292-97.

The Board of Directors evidently appreciated the dedicated service of the faculty. When two professors found teaching and serving a church too burdensome, they received help from the Board. The Reverend Phelps anticipated a heavier teaching load as the seminary added classes beyond the junior year, and he felt his congregation suffered because he spent too much time traveling. Although he tried to resign in 1892, he remained on the faculty because a special committee assisted him with the work of his pastorate. The Reverend Sterling submitted his resignation in both 1892 and 1893. The Board gave him over one hundred dollars per summer for two years to enable him to study in the East and improve his Hebrew instruction. These small grants did not cover his teaching expenses, i.e. buying books for his department and paying a pastor to supply his church while he went to school. The Executive Committee agreed to pay supply pastors for him and investigated the possibility of the city library purchasing some of the books he needed. Sterling finally agreed to become Professor of Old Testament, even though the seminary was unable to pay him the three hundred dollar per year salary that he requested.¹⁴

Two more men joined the faculty in 1894. The Reverend James M. Wilson of Omaha became professor in the newly established department of English Bible. As a Board member he had frequently worked to raise money for the seminary. Eventually he not only taught classes but became

¹⁴ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 21, 37-8; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 6, 28, 19; Third Catalogue, p. 5.

president of the school. The Reverend Alexander G. Wilson of Tekamah, Nebraska, became Professor of Apologetics and continued to teach in the seminary until his death in 1904. Both men served full-time pastorates with small salaries. They asked only that the Board pay expenses related to their instructional duties.¹⁵

In addition to regular classes the seminary invited guest experts to lecture on missions and medical and legal subjects, as well as church government and policies. The speakers were usually ordained ministers, but the constitution of the seminary did not require them to be ministers, or even Presbyterians. Dr. Thomas Sexton, Dr. Thomas Marshall, Dr. S. B. Fleming, and Dr. T. S. Bailey spoke on foreign and home missions during the first three years. They received no salary, but the Board did pay their traveling expenses.¹⁶

Founding a new theological seminary presented many problems. From the beginning the Directors and faculty worked to secure an adequate library. At an early meeting the Board asked its officers to write other Presbyterian theological schools and request donations of duplicate volumes. The faculty wrote the Presbyterian Board of Publications and other publishing houses asking for contributions.

¹⁵ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 14, 40-42, 44-45, 49; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 51-52, 55-56; Second Catalogue, p. 5.

¹⁶ Minutes, Faculty, I, p. 20; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 23-24, 36, 41, 43, 51; Prospectus, pp. 5, 9; First Catalogue, pp. 10-11; Second Catalogue, pp. 5, 10; Third Catalogue, pp. 5, 11.

The Prospectus, 1891-1892, solicited donations of books from individuals, booksellers, and churches. Both the Omaha and Council Bluffs public libraries, as well as the YMCA, made available their facilities. The Auburn Theological Seminary faculty sent books during the summer of 1891. Individuals, laymen and ministers, donated many volumes during the seminary's first years, and the Board gratefully acknowledged each gift. When the General Assembly met in May, 1892, it received a report that the new school had a library of over six hundred volumes. By the end of the next year the library had almost doubled in size. In 1894 Dr. Lowrie became the first librarian and drew up rules for the use of the library.¹⁷

Throughout its history a succession of financial crises confronted the Omaha institution. The founders had appointed a finance committee at their first meeting. These men recognized that they must secure funds for current expenses and establish an endowment, if the school was to become a reality. Since they had no money and no assurance of financial support, a non-salaried faculty and free classroom space were secured during the early years. The Board refused to contract debts which it could not pay. In fact, the constitution required a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors to contract any debt. Because the seminary lacked both property and funds, it was unable to secure a

¹⁷Minutes, Board, I, pp. 7, 29, 42-43, 45; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 1, 3-5, 12, 16, 19, 26; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 16-17, 22; Prospectus, pp. 10-11; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 105th General Assembly (Philadelphia, 1893), pp. 292-94.

Nebraska charter for several years. At the annual meeting in 1894 the Reverend Phelps pleaded with the Directors to find some "generous steward" to provide the funds necessary to give the seminary legal existence.¹⁸

Before the end of the school's first semester, the Reverend J. C. Sloan, Rushville, Nebraska, was employed as a full-time financial agent. The Executive Committee agreed to pay him fifteen hundred dollars annually. Without any regular source of revenue this soon proved burdensome. Sloan failed to obtain the desired results, and the Executive Committee lost confidence in him. The members apparently failed to recognize the adverse effect of the severe drought and crop failures, which had plagued the area for several years. The contract with the Reverend Sloan was terminated at the beginning of 1893, but a temporary arrangement was made whereby he was to receive a percentage of the funds he raised. Finally in March the Board notified him that they appreciated his efforts, but a lack of money prevented a renewal of any contract. When Dr. Lowrie became a full-time professor, he accepted responsibility for securing financial support for the seminary.¹⁹

Every conceivable device was used to raise money. Directors presented the seminary's needs at synod meetings, ministerial associations, and Christian Endeavor conventions. Speakers urged synods to

¹⁸Minutes, Board, I, pp. 3, 6-7, 19, 25, 30, 42, 47-48; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 1, 6, 15-16; Prospectus, p. 7; First Catalogue, pp. 13-14.

¹⁹Minutes, Board, I, pp. 30, 42, 45, 47-48, 50-51, 54; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 2-3, 5, 17-19; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 12, 16.

appoint a standing committee for the Omaha school and make annual pledges to support it. Circular letters went out to churches, pastors, and elders in the East and the Midwest. The Treasurer repeatedly urged individual churches to make and pay pledges. The founders asserted that one thousand dollars invested in Omaha Seminary equalled five thousand dollars given to other schools. Each year the Board struggled to pay the bills. Several times members of the Executive Committee signed personal notes for as much as six hundred dollars to cover operating expenses.²⁰

By the time of the first commencement in 1894 the seminary had over two thousand dollars in unpaid bills, mostly back salaries. The Finance and Executive Committees had worked diligently; they paid out all available money to students for scholarships and loans. The General Assembly endorsed the idea of an endowment fund for the Omaha school, but this did not produce money for current expenses. When the Executive Committee sent Dr. Lowrie to the East to solicit funds, it had to secure a loan to pay his expenses. "Qualified students" also tried to raise money. Donors could make pledges payable over a five year period, but students were urged to secure the largest amount possible in cash. The nationwide Panic of 1893 aggravated the seminary's financial problems. In spite of adversity the school struggled along.²¹

²⁰Prospectus, p. 1; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 16, 19, 28, 30-31, 36-39, 42; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 30, 42, 45, 47-48, 50-51, 54.

²¹Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 16, 28-31, 34-39, 41-49; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 50-51, 54-55; Hawley, Fifty Years, p. 65.

For the first twelve years the seminary possessed no permanent quarters. The founders had no building and no money with which to pay rent. After holding classes at the First Presbyterian Church for the first year, in 1892 the seminary moved to the Second Presbyterian Church, Twenty-fourth and Nicholas Streets. The Executive Committee secured inexpensive room and board in private homes for students.

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Costs averaged four dollars per week.

In August, 1893, Silas H. H. Clark, a Union Pacific Railroad official, offered the seminary free use of the Canfield House at Ninth and Farnam Streets. An inspection by the Executive Committee and faculty showed it to be more than adequate. Under Dr. Lowrie's supervision the faculty assumed responsibility for utilization of the space for classrooms, chapel, library, and dormitory rooms. When students registered, they drew lots to determine their rooms. Room and board in the "new" building cost from one hundred fifty to one hundred seventy-five dollars per year. In 1894 Clark gave permission for the seminary to occupy this building for another year. The Board gratefully

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accepted his gift.

²² Prospectus, pp. 10, 12; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 3, 28; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, p. 1; First Catalogue, pp. 12, 14; Hawley, Fifty Years, p. 53.

²³ Minutes, Board, I, p. 53; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 28-30, 37, 48; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 14-15; Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 53, 65-66. Clark later became president of the Union Pacific Railroad. Previously Canfield House had been known as Bailey House and the Lindell Hotel. The Reverend Larimore C. Denise, Class of 1897 and President of Omaha Seminary, 1924-1943, later described the building as "a run-down, wooden building, abandoned as a hotel." See, Larimore Conover Denise, "Reminiscences of Larimore Conover Denise, D.D., June 7, 1872-June 7, 1962" (Mimeographed), pp. 36-37.

A few months after the move to Canfield House the seminary had an opportunity to buy the Southwest Presbyterian Church at Twentieth and Leavenworth Streets. The school would have had to assume a seven thousand dollar mortgage plus another one thousand dollars in other debts. Lacking capital and unable to negotiate a loan under favorable terms, the Executive Committee informed the church that they appreciated the offer, but they could not finance the amount necessary.²⁴

The Board of Directors worried about meeting the time limit on Dr. Miller's offer of land in Seymour Park. In 1892 they decided to erect a four story stone building for the seminary. A gift of South Dakota stone gave impetus to these plans, but the school had to transport the stone to Omaha. The architectural firm of Finley and Shields donated the plans and specifications and agreed to superintend construction for two per cent of the building's cost. The architects visited Chicago to inspect seminary buildings and get ideas for the Omaha school. During the summer of 1892 Financial Agent Sloan traveled to the Black Hills to canvass for funds to pay for shipment of the building stone to Omaha. The Executive Committee was disappointed when he failed to raise the two thousand dollars needed. Dr. Miller refused to give a deed to the property until the conditions were met. In 1894, at the end of three years, two lay directors unsuccessfully requested an extension of the time limit. Miller told them he might make another proposition when

²⁴ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 32-34.

they were ready to build but refused to extend his original offer. Financial difficulties forced the seminary to lose its only large initial gift, the building site in suburban Omaha.²⁵

Each student at Omaha Seminary had to possess a "good reputation for Christian character", a certificate of membership in an evangelical church, and the approval of his local church governing body. Every student signed a pledge to act and think, both publicly and privately, in terms of his Christian profession. The constitution required a college degree for admission, but the Board gave the faculty authority to waive the degree requirement, if the applicant possessed special talents for the ministry. Final authority to determine entrance and curriculum for students rested with the presbyteries. They could and did exempt students from further academic preparation and from specific classes, usually Hebrew and Greek. The Omaha faculty required a written certificate stating such exemptions for any student, and they frequently counselled students to complete their college work and then take a full seminary course. Those transferring from other theological schools had to present a certified transcript of credits in order to be admitted. The faculty interviewed each student personally before admitting him to the new school. During the year professors conferred regularly with all students in an attempt to keep their work at a high

²⁵ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 3-4, 31-33, 36, 48-49; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 2-5, 13-14; Prospectus, pp. 6-7; Third Catalogue, p. 13.

level. As soon as the seminary moved to the Canfield House, monitors were appointed to check on attendance and punctuality of students.²⁶

When Omaha Seminary opened, it possessed no endowment or promise of financial support, but it made every effort to help deserving students. There were no fees or tuition; expenses totalled no more than two hundred dollars per year. Even when the seminary obtained a building, it assessed each student only one dollar per month during the school year to pay for care and utilities in the library, chapel, and classrooms. Rural churches provided opportunities for students to help finance their seminary training, while the five month summer vacation enabled students to earn money for school expenses.

Students received aid from the Presbyterian Board of Education, their presbyteries, and the seminary itself. The amounts granted by the school varied in proportion to the other financial help received. Each year the faculty granted individuals sums ranging from fifty to one hundred dollars. No one student could receive more than two hundred dollars in aid from all sources. Even during the most difficult financial periods the Executive Committee allocated more than six hundred dollars per year for students' loans and scholarships. Detailed reports of aid granted went to the Board of Directors and the Presbyterian Board of Education. In 1893 the Omaha Board opened a separate bank account for a student loan fund. On a basis of need the fund loaned money at no interest to seminary students. After graduation the recipient could

²⁶ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 13-15, 43; Prospectus, p. 10; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 3-4, 14-16, 20.

repay the amount borrowed in five equal installments. In the spring of 1894 the Reverend James M. Wilson and his wife established Omaha Seminary's first scholarship fund. Called the Wilson-Douglas Loan Scholarship in memory of their parents, it offered a seminary student seventy-five dollars per year. The donors gave the school full authority to administer the fund. Thus, during the first years of its existence the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha instituted a tradition of aid to students for the ministry.²⁷

In 1893 the General Assembly moved to control more directly the Presbyterian theological seminaries. A Minority Committee Report declared the church should continue its traditional policy, which placed direct control in the hands of the synods and presbyteries. Local bodies were more aware of the best interests of the individual seminaries. If they failed to assume their responsibilities, the Assembly possessed the authority to intervene. The General Assembly's size made a uniform system of control impractical as well as undesirable. The minority report asserted that in practice a seminary, which failed to receive the approval of the Assembly, died. From the beginning the new Omaha school placed itself completely under the control of the Assembly. The movement toward centralization and the

²⁷Prospectus, p. 10; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 6, 10-11, 17-20, 22-23; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 29, 52-53; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 39-40; First Catalogue, p. 12; Second Catalogue, pp. 11-12; Third Catalogue, pp. 6-8.

authority of the General Assembly with respect to Presbyterian theological seminaries, as well as this minority report, ultimately had a direct effect on the existence of Omaha Seminary.²⁸

The new policies of the General Assembly were implemented in the fall of 1893. Omaha Seminary complied with every request for information and documents. The Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries invited Omaha representatives to its fall meeting and offered to confer with the Board and advise them on seminary affairs. The Omaha school's leaders took advantage of every opportunity to receive help, and the Directors appointed a special committee to maintain closer relationships with the General Assembly. At the 1894 Assembly meeting the body approved a one hundred thousand dollar endowment fund for Omaha Seminary, urged the church to support it, and praised the young school for its fine beginning.²⁹

The school's enrollment grew steadily during the first three years. By the time of the first commencement the seminary reported a total of twenty-two students, sixteen more than were enrolled in 1891. As the seminary added classes to complete the three year course

²⁸Minutes, Board, I, pp. 39, 55-56, 48; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 43-47; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 105th General Assembly (Philadelphia, 1893), pp. 292-95; W. C. Gray; William E. Moore; John H. Osborne; James Joy; Henry M. Knox, "Report of the Minority of the Committee of Conference with the Theological Seminaries" (Mimeographed report from General Assembly meeting, 1893), pp. 1-8.

²⁹Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 37, 40-48; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 26, 49, 53; Third Catalogue, pp. 6-8.

of study, its student body increased proportionately. In 1893 Omaha was the newest Presbyterian seminary, but it was not the smallest. The majority of the students came from midwestern states, but foreign countries—Syria and England—and non-Presbyterian churches, such as the Bohemian Church in Omaha, were represented in the student body.³⁰

The faculty and Board of Directors carefully planned for the first commencement at the Omaha institution. Each member of the graduating class had to present a ten minute speech at the exercises. When the seniors asked to be excused from this task, they were released from regular classes the last two weeks in March, so they could prepare their presentations. Representatives of the faculty and the Board also spoke. Certificates were awarded to the six graduates. Degrees or diplomas would not be granted until the school legally was incorporated. The Executive Committee arranged for a reception following the ceremonies. In spite of tremendous financial difficulties, which prevented the school from incorporating under Nebraska law and had caused it to lose the Seymour Park building site, the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha had graduated its first class.³¹

³⁰ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 3-4, 10-11; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 35, 39-40, 43; First Catalogue, p. 7; Second Catalogue, pp. 6-7; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 104th General Assembly (Philadelphia, 1892), p. 297; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 105th General Assembly (Philadelphia, 1893), p. 295.

³¹ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 36-38, 41-42, 47-49; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 19-21; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 15, 17, 26, 28, 47-48, 50-51, 54.

CHAPTER II

A DECADE OF PROGRESS

The next decade brought many changes to the new Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha. The student body doubled in size, and the school moved to its own campus in Kountze Place. It acquired a president and a number of full-time faculty members. While the struggle continued to pay current obligations and secure a permanent endowment fund, sufficient assets were obtained to enable the institution to receive a charter from the state.

The charter was secured after considerable delay. As early as 1894 the General Assembly had recommended that all theological seminaries obtain state charters, but the Omaha school did not have the five thousand dollars in assets necessary to incorporate in Nebraska. The Board of Directors, nevertheless, did adopt the Articles of Incorporation and had two hundred copies printed. As soon as sufficient funds were in the treasury, the Executive Committee was directed to incorporate the seminary on the basis of the articles. In the spring of 1895 the Douglas County Court issued a certificate

authorizing the incorporation of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha.¹ The document stated that the value of the seminary property equalled at least five thousand dollars.

Under the Articles of Incorporation the General Assembly had full jurisdiction over all seminary affairs. It had to approve the election of every board member, faculty member, and each course taught. The Assembly could execute this authority in any way it deemed wise. Article Eight established the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha as a charitable trust, stating all funds and property "shall be used only for theological education in the faith and doctrine set forth in the standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America as now or hereinafter interpreted by its General Assembly and for no other purpose and this provision governing all said funds or property shall be irrevocable and inviolable."² These provisions were all in accord with policies adopted when the school was founded, but the implications of this article were not apparent fully until many years later.

In 1897 a Board committee headed by Judge Warren Switzler secured legislation from the state to make the charter operative.³

¹Book 6, Miscellaneous Records, County of Douglas, State of Nebraska, March 18, 1895, p. 174; Book "H", Incorporation Records, County of Douglas, State of Nebraska, p. 105. Certified by James P. Hctor, County Clerk of Commissioners Court, July 18, 1940.

²Minutes, Board, I, pp. 59-62, 66-73; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 52-54, 56.

³Articles of Incorporation of Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, filed in office of Department of State, State of Nebraska, March 18, 1895, pp. 373-76.

The seminary constitution and by-laws were amended to agree with the Articles of Incorporation. The charter authorized the corporation to borrow money and go into debt, but only one thousand dollars indebtedness could be contracted. The Executive Committee was granted all powers of the Board of Directors when that body was not in session.⁴

As the school grew, the curriculum in every department increased in breadth and depth. The departments of theology and church history added new textbooks and revised the class schedule. Additional instruction was provided in biblical languages, especially Hebrew. Even the Apologetics Department, which was added in 1894, was expanded the following year to include lectures on psychology. The Board and the faculty emphasized the importance of a thorough knowledge of the English Bible, and every student memorized large sections of the scriptures. Even after the Reverend James M. Wilson resigned as Professor of English Bible in 1897, the Board refused to merge the department with others in the seminary. Other professors agreed to divide these teaching duties temporarily. Five years later the Directors acknowledged the importance of the department of English Bible, but they still did not have the funds to employ a professor.⁵

⁴Minutes, Board, I, pp. 83-85, 96, 98-99, 135, 142; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 85, 89, 122.

⁵Minutes, Board, I, pp. 104, 155; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 46, 48; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, p. 96; Fourth Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska (Omaha, 1895), pp. 9-12; Seventh Annual Catalogue of

Although the seminary expanded its academic program, it continued to emphasize practical education. In 1898 the middler class asked the faculty to abandon the weekly student preaching service but was informed that the Board had ordered the service held, as it was important training, and, furthermore, it was a part of the curriculum in every Presbyterian theological seminary. Around 1900 laymen asked for practical training in the form of special classes and a summer school for Bible study. Everyone agreed the program would be valuable, but the school lacked both the teaching staff and the money to provide it.⁶

As additional full-time professors joined the faculty, the schedule was revised. Saturday classes became the custom for junior students, who usually did not have student pastorates. Some senior and middler classes were held on week-day afternoons. The daily schedule contained at least three morning periods and a chapel service. There were many time changes, but every schedule included the fifteen minute daily chapel service. Each student was required to attend chapel, and written excuses had to be submitted for absences. From the beginning

the Officers and Students of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska (Omaha, 1897-1898), pp. 10-13. Hereinafter cited as Seventh Catalogue. See also, Eighth Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska (Omaha, 1898-1899), pp. 10-13. Hereinafter cited as Eighth Catalogue. See also, Tenth Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students, the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha (Omaha, 1900-1901), pp. 10-12. Hereinafter cited as Tenth Catalogue. See also, Twelfth Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students, the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha (Omaha, 1902-1903), pp. 11-14. Hereinafter cited as Twelfth Catalogue.

⁶ Minutes, Board, I, p. 138; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, p. 132; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 107, 112.

students had a two week Christmas vacation, but the faculty only granted a three day Thanksgiving recess after the students submitted a petition requesting it in 1896. The faculty, however, did cancel classes for special events, such as public memorial services for President William McKinley, after his assassination in September, 1901.⁷

The Board and the faculty supplemented the curriculum by asking prominent Presbyterians to lecture on missions, the work of the pastor, theology, and comparative religion. The chairman of the faculty had authority to change the class schedule as necessary to arrange special programs. Whenever the officials of Presbyterian church boards came to Omaha, they lectured to the students. The Omaha Seminary also took advantage of the fact that the Synod of Nebraska held its meetings in Omaha, and many of the officials in attendance spoke at both the synod meetings and the seminary. Synodical missionaries, such as the Reverend Thomas C. Kirkwood of Colorado, lectured annually on home missions. In both 1900 and 1901 the Moderator of the General Assembly discussed the ministry with the students. Although the seminary curriculum emphasized the training of ministers for western churches, the school invited foreign missionaries to speak at special meetings. In 1900 Miss Esther

⁷Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 25-26, 82, 87, 106-07, 134-35, 144; "Minutes of the Faculty," Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Volume II, 1899-1904, pp. 9, 17, 22-23, 25, 62-63, 81, 100. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Faculty, II. See also, Eighth Catalogue, p. 18.

Patton, who had served nineteen years at Kolhapur, India, shared her experiences with the students. Missionaries to Siam, Laos, Korea, and Africa also addressed the faculty and student body during the early years.⁸

A unique feature, which became an Omaha tradition, was a special course in public speaking. For five years between 1895 and 1901 Dr. Peter Robertson, Cincinnati, Ohio, was the instructor. The classes met in late winter and usually lasted for one week. To give the students full benefit from Dr. Robertson's instruction the faculty dismissed other classes. Both the professors and students praised this program and felt it was of great value. Several Omahans provided room and board for Robertson during his visits, so the lectures were presented at no cost to the seminary. In 1902 and 1903 the Reverend M. Dewitt Long, pastor of Knox Presbyterian Church in Omaha, taught public speaking to seniors and middlers. He held weekly drills in speaking, reading, and singing for his classes.⁹

In January of each year the seminary observed a special day of prayer for schools and colleges. Classes were dismissed and

⁸Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 27-28, 30-33, 43-44, 46, 53, 81, 87-88, 90-91, 103-04, 109-10, 127-28; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 39-40, 57-58; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 94, 138; Seventh Catalogue, pp. 4, 13-14; Eighth Catalogue, p. 13; Tenth Catalogue, pp. 12-13; Twelfth Catalogue, p. 14.

⁹Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 88-89, 91-92; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 26-27, 31, 64, 68-69, 70-71, 73-74; Tenth Catalogue, p. 13; Twelfth Catalogue, p. 15.

meetings held in the morning and evening. Students usually led the morning session, while faculty members or special guests spoke in the evening.¹⁰

During the years from 1894 to 1904 there were many changes in the faculty of the new school. Professor Sterling became ill during the spring of 1895 and submitted his resignation as professor of Old Testament. The Board felt overwork had caused his illness, so it agreed to pay a supply pastor for his church for three months and hired a "substitute" teacher for the fall term. The Reverend Sterling failed to recover and in 1896 the Board accepted his resignation with regret. As a founder and a professor, he had served the seminary well. To replace Sterling, a New Yorker, Dr. Joseph Lampe, who held a Ph.D. from Union Seminary, was invited to teach classes in the Old Testament Department. When Sterling resigned, Lampe succeeded him as professor. Some of Lampe's friends at New York City's Brick Presbyterian Church and Union Seminary promised to pay his salary because the school had insufficient funds to pay him. Lampe remained at Omaha Seminary for twenty-two years. The year after Dr. Lampe came to Omaha, the Reverend James M. Wilson resigned from the faculty. He felt he could no longer teach and serve his church.¹¹

¹⁰Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 89-90, 139-40; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 62, 90, 100; Fourth Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska (Omaha, 1895), p. 15. Hereinafter cited as Fourth Catalogue.

¹¹Minutes, Faculty, I, p. 97; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 53, 83-84, 148-50; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 100-01, 111, 151-52, 159; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 73, 79, 81, 97, 101, 110-11, 123-26, 129, 134-38.

Another founder, the Reverend Stephen Phelps, remained on the faculty until 1901. Each year the Board anticipated sufficient contributions from the Synod of Iowa to pay his salary, but despite tremendous efforts by Phelps and others this failed to raise even one-half the amount needed. In 1900 he agreed to serve as a professor and pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Bellevue. The church promised to pay four hundred dollars of his fifteen hundred dollar annual salary. When the Board decided in 1901 that all faculty members had to teach and raise money to pay their salaries, Phelps declared he could not possibly expect to receive an adequate salary under such an arrangement. He did not wish to leave the seminary, but he could not afford to continue as a professor unless the Board guaranteed his pay. The Executive Committee had no authority to make a special agreement with him, and in September Phelps submitted his resignation. He and the committee finally reached a mutually agreeable financial settlement of his claim. Phelps continued to have a deep interest in the seminary, and in later years he returned to lecture at the school, while his son became a faculty member.¹²

The departure of another founder was not accomplished so amicably. The Reverend John Gordon resigned in 1897, but a special committee persuaded him to remain as a professor and fund raiser on a full-time basis. The seminary had no money and could not guarantee his wages. He was expected to raise the money to pay his own salary.

¹²Minutes, Board, I, pp. 95-97; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 73, 79-81, 88-92, 97, 101, 110-11, 118-19, 123-26, 129.

For over two years the salary question and Gordon's relationship with the seminary caused problems. Finally in 1899 another financial crisis forced the Board to reduce the size of the faculty. Personalities and emotions became so aroused that a reorganization committee presented both a majority and minority report. Friends of the Reverend Gordon sent petitions and letters supporting him, but when the Board of Directors voted on the matter, there were seventeen votes for Lowrie, seventeen for Lampe, eighteen for Phelps, and only two for Gordon. The Directors retained the first three professors on the ballot and ordered them to divide the work in Gordon's department. They regretted that financial difficulties necessitated terminating Gordon's relationship with the seminary. The financial settlement with the professor was a difficult one, and at one time he even brought suit against the school to force payment of his salary. Finally Gordon and the Executive Committee agreed on an amount and he left the seminary.¹³

In 1900 Omaha Seminary obtained an endowment of twenty-five hundred dollars for a chair of theology from Mrs. Robert Laidlaw, a prominent eastern Presbyterian. When invested, the interest on the gift provided only a small income, but the Board gratefully accepted it. During the staff reduction controversy in 1899, everyone agreed

¹³Minutes, Board, I, pp. 101-02, 104, 111, 122-24, 128, 130, 135-36; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 95-96, 100-03, 106-11, 117-18, 121. After he left the seminary, Gordon taught history and served as president of Tabor College in Tabor, Iowa. See, Hawley, Fifty Years, p. 82.

to name the elderly Dr. Harsha as Professor Emeritus with no salary. Until a replacement could be found, he continued as professor of theology, so he received the money from the Laidlaw endowment. During the summer of 1900 Harsha was killed in a railroad accident. Dr. Lowrie then conferred with the Reverend Daniel E. Jenkins about joining the faculty. Jenkins had been president of Parsons College in Iowa and had a doctor of philosophy degree. He came to Omaha Seminary in September, 1900, as Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology. Jenkins not only served many years at the theological school, but in 1908 founded the University of Omaha.¹⁴

Full-time professors also joined the Departments of New Testament and History, Apologetics, and Missions. For several years the Reverend Alexander G. Wilson refused to take any pay for his work at the seminary, but after 1901 he agreed to become a full-time professor and for the next three years he taught history, apologetics, and missions. In 1902 the Reverend Charles Mitchell became Professor of New Testament. He was paid fifteen hundred dollars per year, the same amount received by other professors. A graduate of Princeton Seminary, he had taught Greek and philosophy at Princeton and at Bellevue College. He continued to teach at the Omaha Seminary for thirty-five years.¹⁵

¹⁴Minutes, Board, I, pp. 133-36, 148, 158-59; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 120-21, 126-27; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 46-50, 52, Tenth Catalogue, p. 18.

¹⁵Minutes, Board, I, pp. 110, 159, 163; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 137, 142-43; Minutes, Faculty, II, p. 96; Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 83-84.

Throughout these troubled years Dr. Lowrie taught classes and raised money for the seminary. Contrary to policy established previously, both the Board and the faculty asked that he be appointed to the Board and the Executive Committee in order to improve seminary management. To better manage seminary affairs the constitution was amended in 1898 to give the Board president full responsibility and authority to administer the school. This failed to solve the administrative problems, and the next year a reorganization committee recommended that a president, who could serve as a faculty member and financial agent, be appointed. In both 1899 and 1900 the Board asked Dr. Lowrie to become president of the seminary, but he declined the office. Finally in 1901 after the duties of the president and the official's relationship with the faculty and Board had been re-defined, Lowrie reluctantly became the first president of Omaha Seminary. He did not want the job, but he felt "a plain call of Providence." The division of his time between teaching and fund-raising was left to him.¹⁶

Although the Omaha Seminary was a new institution, the professors were invited to participate in ceremonies and events at other seminaries and to serve on special General Assembly committees on theological education. When the Presbyterian seminaries agreed to organize inter-seminary conferences in 1895, the Omaha Seminary faculty not only

¹⁶ Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 55, 108, 136; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 15, 37, 66; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 92, 96, 121; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 113-17, 121, 124, 128, 133-34, 138, 142-43, 150; Twelfth Catalogue, p. 8.

attended but on request presented a paper, "The Uniformity of Seminary Curriculum," at the first meeting. Professors attended each session held by the theological educators, as well as sending representatives to international church meetings, such as the Pan-Presbyterian Council. As early as 1896 Omaha professors advocated a four year seminary course, which would include one year of practical training for students, but this plan was not adopted by the Presbyterian theological schools for many years.¹⁷

The faculty taught a conservative Presbyterian theology and emphasized evangelistic preaching. They tried to exemplify this philosophy in their lives by maintaining high standards of morals and ethics. They neither drank nor smoked, and they insisted that students refrain from any conduct that would lessen their effectiveness as ministers. Because of the small classes the faculty had a great influence on the personal lives of the students. In 1896 a group of students complained about the conduct of another student. A personal conference between a professor and the student resolved the problem. That same year another student, H. J. B. Duncan, caused so much trouble that the faculty finally expelled him, but Duncan had several opportunities to reform before the expulsion action was taken. The professors tried to deal fairly with students and their problems. When one student was accused of immoral conduct, he was

¹⁷Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 31-32, 34, 36-37, 61-63, 66-69, 90, 93, 95, 98, 113-14, 142; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 12, 27-28, 31, 36, 55-56; Fourth Catalogue, p. 5; Seventh Catalogue, p. 6.

offered the choice of a hearing or withdrawing from school. He immediately withdrew, and the faculty notified his presbytery of his departure. In 1898 questions about the moral character of an Omaha senior prevented him from graduating with his class. When he was cleared, the faculty recommended him to the Board.¹⁸

Every student signed a pledge promising to obey school rules, attend classes, and respect the advice of the professors. Throughout each school year the faculty conferred with students individually and as a group to remind them of their duties and responsibilities and inform them about curriculum and rules. It tried to prevent failures by discussing poor academic work and encouraging students to improve. When illness and special problems created difficulties for students, the faculty administered special examinations and granted excuses from classes.¹⁹

The seminary library was an important factor in every student's academic growth, and the faculty and Board viewed with satisfaction the many gifts received for the library. In 1895 Hanover College sent a large box of books and pamphlets. Ministers and widows of ministers

¹⁸ Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 54, 58-59, 68, 81-86, 107-08, 136-37; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 7-11, 52, 63-64; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 120, 141; Larimore Conover Denise, "Reminiscences of Larimore Conover Denise, D.D., June 7, 1872-June 7, 1962" (Mimeographed), pp. 37-39. Hereinafter cited as Denise, "Reminiscences."

¹⁹ Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 51, 61, 72, 94-95, 99, 106-07; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 66, 87-88, 99-100, 108; Fifth Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska (Omaha, 1895), p. 9. Hereinafter cited as Fifth Catalogue. Catalogue reference includes a copy of the student pledge.

from a half a dozen states sent donations of books. Through gifts and a few purchases at least two hundred books were added each year, so that by 1902 the library contained over five thousand volumes.²⁰

The quality of the library as well as the quantity of books concerned those connected with the school. The Board authorized the sale of duplicate volumes and the use of the money to buy more current works and periodicals. Everyone attempted to obtain reference books, maps, and current theological magazines. While these items did not require large sums of money, the seminary never seemed to have enough. Copies of old religious papers no longer needed by the school were given to the State Prison at Lincoln for use by the inmates.²¹

The faculty supervised the operation of the library. In addition to teaching classes, some professors, including Gordon and Lampe, also served as librarians. The professor received no extra pay for his work, but his student assistant was paid a small monthly salary. In 1898 the Board approved a twenty-five cents per month library fee for students and faculty members. By 1903 the library had been completely catalogued according to the latest methods.²²

²⁰ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 38, 59; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 17, 40, 42; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, p. 135; Fifth Catalogue, p. 12; Seventh Catalogue, p. 14; Tenth Catalogue, pp. 13-14; Twelfth Catalogue, p. 16.

²¹ Minutes, Faculty, I, p. 97; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 2, 17, 33, 57, 86-87, 110-11; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 119, 155.

²² Minutes, Board, I, p. 142; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 71, 95, 112; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 9, 14, 23; Twelfth Catalogue, p. 16.

The basic problem of the seminary was the lack of money. With the addition of full-time faculty members and a building, costs increased at a frightening rate, from about five thousand dollars per year in 1895 to almost fifteen thousand dollars per year in 1904. In spite of this the conservative fiscal policies of the Board enabled the school to end most years with all current expenses paid.²³

Board members, laymen and ministers, presented the seminary's cause at synod meetings in Iowa, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Minnesota, Missouri, and Kansas. To further advertise the school and solicit gifts, the faculty sent fifteen hundred copies of the annual catalogue to midwestern synods, churches, colleges, and individuals throughout the United States. Repeated attempts were made without success to raise the necessary funds in the Middle West, but no matter how hard the leaders worked at least eighty per cent of the gifts came from eastern contributors. On week-ends and during summer vacations faculty members visited areas where they had friends or influence to solicit funds. Members of the Executive Committee wrote personal letters to churches and individuals requesting gifts for the school. Students who secured donations were paid a small commission.²⁴

²³Minutes, Board, I, pp. 56-57, 161-63; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 81-83, 86-89, 94-96, 108-09, 127-28, 132, 140-41, 147-48, 156.

²⁴Minutes, Board, I, pp. 57-58, 81-82, 127, 135, 156, 160-61; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 48-49, 64, 75, 77, 79-80, 83-84, 98, 115, 133; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 90, 98-99, 115, 117, 143-44; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 61, 66, 68, 70, 72.

The Executive Committee carried the greatest burden in regard to the recurring financial problems. It was often embarrassed because the seminary was so slow in repaying loans. In 1897 it told the Board the school's income was entirely inadequate and always had been. Four years later the committee asked the Board not to adjourn its annual meeting until it had formulated a firm financial program, but the Directors failed to reach any decision and referred the matter back to the Executive Committee. Dr. Lowrie tried to increase western gifts by asking the Executive Committee to raise amounts to match eastern contributions. On a few occasions he refused to solicit funds outside the Midwest. When he did travel to the East, however, he obtained amounts ranging from two to five thousand dollars each time.²⁵

The General Assembly recognized the progress and growth of the school in spite of the limited funds available. To aid in raising the endowment fund approved by the Assembly in 1894, a special committee was appointed. The school desperately needed funds which could be invested and yield a regular income, but the committee seemed unable to secure that kind of money. The Laidlaw gift, a legacy from a Minnesota judge, and donations by Mrs. Thaw, and even a small fund established by the class of 1898 simply did not provide enough income to pay faculty salaries. In 1903 a special campaign sent representatives to about twenty

²⁵ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 81, 156; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 50-54, 65, 70, 74, 86, 99, 101, 108, 111-16, 131-32, 142; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 61, 66, 68, 70, 72.

midwestern cities in eight states. Dr. Lowrie coordinated the effort, but little was added to the endowment. What money the seminary obtained was invested carefully in first mortgages or savings and loan associations.²⁶

Dr. Lowrie had become convinced very early that a full-time financial agent was needed for the school. In May, 1895, the Board asked one of its members, the Reverend W. F. Ringland of Hastings, Nebraska, to serve as financial agent for fifteen hundred dollars per year plus expenses. The cordial relationship Ringland had with the seminary seemed to disappear after he was employed. The Executive Committee felt he neither made frequent enough reports nor showed the expected results. In early 1896 it suggested that Ringland begin looking for other employment. Since he also had been associated with the Nebraska Relief and Loan Association, there were many problems when it came to clearing his accounts with the seminary. A special committee of the Board finally reached an agreement with Ringland the following year. Undaunted by their second unsuccessful experience with a financial agent, the Directors in 1900 authorized the Executive Committee to hire another agent, if it could find the "right man."²⁷

²⁶Minutes, Board, I, pp. 106, 161; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 74, 77, 120, 127, 138-39, 142-44, 146; Minutes, Faculty, I, p. 117; Minutes, Faculty, II, p. 24; Ninth Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska (Omaha, 1899-1900), pp. 14-15; Tenth Catalogue, pp. 16-17.

²⁷Minutes, Board, I, pp. 83, 86, 100-01, 106-07, 139; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 58, 62-65, 67-70, 71-72, 74, 76.

During this period the seminary slowly acquired a small amount of property and some investment income. It received several gifts of land. Most were not very valuable and were rented for whatever the school could get to pay taxes and insurance. Mrs. Mary Thaw of Pittsburgh consistently made the largest donations to the school. She gave land, securities, and cash. In 1902 her gifts totalled over twenty-six thousand dollars, ten thousand dollars for a new building and sixteen to endow a number of chairs in the seminary.²⁸

In 1895 the seminary moved to the Cozzens Hotel at Ninth and Harney Streets. Thomas McDougall, a leading Presbyterian in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Mrs. Mary Thaw, the owners, leased the building for five years at one dollar per year with the understanding that the school pay all taxes and insure the premises for at least ten thousand dollars. This building was in much better condition than the Canfield House, and the Board readily signed the lease. There was space for classrooms, library, chapel, kitchen, dining-room, and dormitory rooms for both faculty and students. Church societies and individuals were asked for fifty dollar gifts to furnish dormitory rooms and buy equipment needed.²⁹

A faculty committee supervised building operation and managed it according to the rules laid down by the Board. The seminary hired

²⁸ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 62, 67, 100-01, 103-05, 110, 133, 142; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 89, 158-59.

²⁹ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 57, 64-65, 74-75, 83; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 54-55, 57, 60, 120, 139; Minutes, Faculty, I, p. 34; Fifth Catalogue, p. 13; Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 66-67, 53-54.

a matron to run the kitchen, and students paid a weekly boarding fee of two dollars and fifty cents to help cover expenses. Residents paid thirteen dollars a month for single rooms and eight dollars for doubles. During Omaha's Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition in 1898 the Board permitted the rental of rooms to summer visitors. Other summers medical missionaries stayed at the hotel, and students rented rooms at special rates.³⁰

In 1900 McDougall died and left his interest in the building to the seminary. That same year the Executive Committee signed a new five year lease for the use of the hotel. The following year Mrs. Thaw deeded her share of the building to the seminary, so it belonged entirely to the theological school.³¹

Although grateful for the use of the Cozzens Hotel, the Board still had plans for a campus. As early as 1896 committees had been appointed to investigate possible sites, and in 1900 the Executive Committee was authorized to use any of the seminary assets to acquire land and construct a building. Unable to obtain a donated site, the Executive Committee proceeded to purchase one. At first three blocks in Dundee Place appeared to be the best buy, but the negotiations with the owners collapsed. The Executive Committee then took an option on

³⁰Minutes, Board, I, pp. 87, 110; Minutes, Executive Committee, I. pp. 59, 61-62, 66-67, 69, 78, 86, 104-05; Minutes, Faculty, I, p. 96; Minutes, Faculty, II, p. 21.

³¹Minutes, Board, I, pp. 134, 147-48; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, p. 130; Denise, "Reminiscences," p. 37; Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 66-67.

six acres in the Kountze Place Addition. The Dundee owners asked reconsideration of their land, but after visiting both sites, the committee decided that the Dundee lots were attractive, but too expensive and not the most desirable location for future development. Although the price for the Kountze Place site was twenty thousand dollars, John C. Wharton, a lay leader, had raised over eighteen thousand dollars of the amount by soliciting gifts from eastern supporters. The Board voted unanimously to buy the six acres in Kountze Place, which consisted of two city blocks between Twentieth and Twenty-first Streets, bounded by Spencer and Emmett Streets. Paved streets, city improvements, and service by three street car lines to downtown Omaha were important factors in the decision. Near the end of April, 1901, the Executive Committee met with an Omaha architect, who displayed plans for a seminary building and a president's house. The following month the Board approved the plans and authorized the Executive Committee to

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let contracts.

The special building committee was determined to erect a sturdy but attractive building, and it considered carefully every detail, from light fixtures to floor finishes. The contract stated that on the coldest day the heating contractor must guarantee to heat the whole building to a temperature of seventy degrees Fahrenheit. The finished

³² Minutes, Board, I, pp. 134, 139, 144, 147; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 75, 118-20, 122-25, 127-31, 133-34, 142-43; Twelfth Catalogue, p. 17.

structure was of buff brick trimmed with white stone and about one hundred fifty feet square. The first floor contained the library, chapel, parlor, administrative offices and classrooms. Dormitory rooms were on the second floor. Aside from furnace rooms and quarters for the janitor, the basement had space to be finished into a dining-room, kitchen, and gymnasium. The Executive Committee wished to name the structure for its chief benefactor, Mrs. Thaw, but she refused to allow her name to be used whenever she helped any institution. President Lowrie invited friends of the seminary to an official opening on October 30, 1902.³³

When the new structure was almost ready for occupancy, the Executive Committee took bids on the building at Ninth and Harney. In November, 1902, the Carpenter Paper Company offered the highest bid, \$26,240, which would net the seminary over twenty-seven thousand dollars including the interest. The following March the property officially was turned over to the paper company. At the annual meeting the Board summarized the costs for the new building and found it had paid a total of \$43,837.85.³⁴

³³ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 156-57; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 135, 139-41, 144-45; Denise, "Reminiscences," p. 76; Eleventh Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students, The Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha (Omaha, 1901-02), p. 15. Hereinafter cited as Eleventh Catalogue. Twelfth Catalogue frontispiece is a photograph of the new building.

³⁴ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 141, 144-45; Minutes, Board, I, p. 161.

While enrollment fluctuated, the gradual trend was upward. In 1895 it had reached thirty-two, but during the next few years enrollment at the Omaha Seminary like that of other theological schools across the country dropped as a result of the Spanish-American War. By 1902 the catalogue reported only twenty students enrolled. A few foreign students attended but well over ninety per cent came from the midwestern area.³⁵ By the beginning of the twentieth century over sixty alumni from the Omaha Seminary were serving Presbyterian churches. Most were in the western United States, but three had become foreign missionaries.³⁶

A number of non-Presbyterians attended the seminary's classes. In 1899 a deaconess from the Methodist Hospital was refused admission as a regular student but allowed to arrange special studies with individual faculty members. Students from Congregational, Protestant Episcopal, Baptist, United Brethren, Reformed, and German churches enrolled for graduate and undergraduate courses. In 1900 the seminary established a program to train ministers for the Bohemian churches in Omaha. Two years later the Reverend Jaroslav Dobias began teaching

³⁵ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 77-78, 118-19; Fourth Catalogue, pp. 6-8; Fifth Catalogue, pp. 6-8; Seventh Catalogue, pp. 7-9; Eleventh Catalogue, pp. 7-8; Twelfth Catalogue, pp. 9-10.

³⁶ Eighth Catalogue, p. 17; Tenth Catalogue, pp. 18, 21-22; Eleventh Catalogue, pp. 20-22; Twelfth Catalogue, pp. 22-24.

special classes in the Bohemian language and reformation history for
 these students.³⁷

Although the faculty admitted many special students, the majority were Presbyterians and were expected to have sufficient academic preparation for seminary work. More and more college graduates enrolled for the full three year course. Non-college graduates recommended by their presbyteries were admitted but granted special certificates, not diplomas, and advised to complete their college training. Catalogues after 1896 carried separate listings of these "special" students. The faculty reminded prospective students that the responsibility for allowing them to enroll in partial or irregular courses rested completely with their presbyteries. If a student failed to receive the approval of his presbytery to study for the ministry, he was not admitted to the seminary.

The faculty required written excuses for absences from classes and reported all absences to officials of the presbyteries concerned. Since student aid from the Presbyterian Board of Education also depended upon regular attendance, this provided the student an additional incentive to be present. As long as students maintained

³⁷ Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 42-43, 89, 102-03, 138-39; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 11-12, 18-19, 23, 56-57, 63, 86; Minutes, Board, I, p. 159; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 139, 142; Eleventh Catalogue, p. 13.

passing grades, they were granted excuses to travel to their churches or hold special services, but professors conferred with individuals who had an excessive number of absences.³⁸

The seminary attempted to improve and maintain high scholastic standards. In 1898 the Board established a policy that students expecting to graduate in the spring could not be admitted to classes after the first month of the school year. The faculty warned students that marriage would have an adverse effect on their studies and further discouraged married students by refusing financial aid to them. In keeping with the policies of the inter-seminary conference, the Omaha school prohibited junior students from holding regular pastorates. Occasionally near the end of the junior year, men who maintained above average grades received special permission to preach. The Board felt it best that middlers and even seniors exchange or rotate preaching assignments. To encourage students to attend school on a full-time basis, the Board in 1898 authorized the faculty to give second and third year students the opportunity to serve a church continuously if they agreed to spread their seminary work over four years rather than the usual three. Everyone recognized the students' need for funds and the need of the rural churches for ministers, but the seminary wanted the students first concern to be

³⁸ Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 44-45, 48-49, 52, 73-74, 77, 88-91, 93-95, 100-01, 104-05, 108-11, 113-14, 118-19, 129-30, 139; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 11-17, 20-22, 32, 51-54, 58, 81-83, 85-86, 89, 92, 96-98, 115; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 93, 136.

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their theological training.

The faculty established grading scales and examination schedules. At the end of the year each student took a two and one-half hour written examination in all but one subject. During commencement week oral tests were scheduled by professors, so visitors could observe work by the students. The Examinations Committee of the Board reviewed both types of examinations. Grades in scholarship and oratory also were reported to the Presbyterian Board of Education. All tests were graded on a one hundred point scale, and any student receiving a grade below seventy was required to take a second examination; a grade of less than thirty meant the student had to repeat the subject.⁴⁰

To keep costs as low as possible the seminary did not charge tuition and had few fees. Total annual costs for each student never exceeded two hundred dollars. Students paid seven dollars per year for care of the public rooms and library; thirteen to eighteen dollars annually for heat and light in dormitory rooms; and less than three dollars per week for board in the school dining-room. Although these fees were small, they did have to be paid if a student wished to graduate or transfer to another seminary.⁴¹

³⁹ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 109, 150; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 78, 111-13, 115, 121, 125-27; Minutes, Faculty, II, p. 15.

⁴⁰ Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 55-57, 63-64, 68-69; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 89-92.

⁴¹ Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 40-41, 75; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 1-2, 24, 38, 75; Fifth Catalogue, p. 13; Eighth Catalogue, p. 14; Twelfth Catalogue, p. 16.

The faculty and Board not only held costs down, but whenever money was available, granted aid to students. In addition to Board of Education aid, the seminary annually granted a total of more than five hundred dollars in scholarships. In 1895 the Board of Directors established a policy that an individual receiving aid from the Board of Education could receive no more than one hundred dollars additional help from the school. A maximum of one hundred fifty dollars could go to any student not receiving help from the Board of Education. The purpose of the financial grants was to enable students to devote full-time to their studies. Too often, however, Omaha Seminary lacked funds to aid students and had to suggest that they work. Small scholarships, such as the Wilson-Douglas Loan Fund, aided some students. Individual gifts of three hundred dollars were used for scholarships, and the senior class of 1897 set up a small fund. In 1903 the Board of Education notified Omaha Seminary that it would receive the Secretary's Scholarship of three hundred dollars per year for the next three years. The Omaha Directors were grateful for this recognition of the new school and submitted the names of eligible students to the Board.

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Great care was exercised in granting diplomas to seminary graduates. Students who failed to pass all subjects or omitted Hebrew

⁴² Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 26-27, 29, 30-33, 35, 41, 45-46, 50-51, 79, 80, 93, 99, 135-36, 138; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 17-19, 32, 60, 77, 89, 101-02; Minutes, Board, I, p. 163.

or Greek, only received certificates stating work successfully completed. When the seminary was incorporated, it issued diplomas to all students completing the full three year course of study. The 1899 graduating class petitioned the Board to grant them the Bachelor of Divinity Degree provided for in the constitution. The faculty declared that the constitutional provision in regard to the degree had been virtually a dead letter, and the school never had granted the degree. To them it seemed neither right nor expedient to approve the petition. On this basis, the Board amended the by-laws and declared the seminary would grant the Bachelor of Divinity Degree only to a student completing one year of post graduate study.⁴³

Commencement continued to be the highlight of each year for everyone connected with the seminary. An alumni association was organized in 1895, and it held a banquet and meeting at commencement time. Local newspapers and area churches received notices and invitations to attend the exercises and the reception following. Until 1903 the faculty selected four seniors to present individual speeches of at least twelve hundred words at commencement ceremonies. Almost every year the graduating class petitioned to be excused from this task, and the faculty finally withdrew the requirement. The major responsibility for making arrangements for graduation rested with the faculty members. The main speaker was usually a Presbyterian

⁴³Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 120-21, 124; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 3-5, 37-39, 40-44, 78-79, 94-95, 105-07; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 120, 136, 143.

minister, often a member of the Board of Directors. The chairman of the faculty also spoke and presented the diplomas.

At the end of the first twelve years the Examinations Committee of the Board submitted a report regarding the school and the students. While most students were interested in their studies and applied themselves, the committee felt presbyteries excused too many men from some subjects and certain further academic preparation. It pointed out that the faculty was aware of this problem and trying to improve the situation. In summary, the Examinations Committee declared "the seminary [was] to be congratulated on the character and work of the students and the thoroughness of the instruction given in the classroom."⁴⁴

⁴⁴Minutes, Board, I, p. 161. See also, Minutes, Board, I, pp. 93, 154-56; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 74-75; Minutes, Faculty, I, pp. 33, 36-39, 51-53, 57-58, 60-62, 64, 92, 94-95, 115-16, 140-42, 144; Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 31-35, 39-40, 67, 69, 73-77, 90, 92-93, 101-04.

CHAPTER III

TWENTY YEARS OF GROWTH

During the next twenty years the Omaha Seminary developed new programs and expanded the scope of its work. Four presidents attempted to cope with the financial problems but found that without sufficient endowment the school's growth was hampered and its existence even threatened. Although the Board considered moving the campus, the seminary remained in Kountze Place.

Students continued to attend school for seven months each year. After the move to the Kountze Place campus, classes met Tuesdays through Saturdays from 8:45 A.M. to noon. Since so many of the students preached on Sunday and the professors held pastorates or were traveling for the seminary, late afternoon classes sometimes replaced the Saturday schedule. The faculty felt more time was necessary to complete seminary courses, so in 1924 the Board lengthened the school year so classes would end on the first Thursday in May. Some students needed extra hours of instruction, and this also involved adjusting class schedules. The faculty required that students excused from Hebrew or Greek by their presbyteries, spend an equal amount of time studying other subjects,

so professors had to arrange both their schedules and those of the students for these classes.¹

Although there were slight changes in content and course titles, the departments of the seminary remained basically the same as at the time of the founding. They were: Homiletics and Pastoral Theology; Old Testament Literature, including Hebrew; New Testament Literature, including Greek; English Bible; Didactic and Polemic Theology; Ecclesiastical History and Missions; and Apologetics. Changing times and church policies required the addition of courses in Christian sociology, religious education, and the psychology of religion. In 1923 after the Executive Committee recommended that students receive more instruction to prepare them for the "executive work" of the pastorate, the faculty incorporated these ideas into existing courses. It continued to encourage students to bring real problems into the classroom for discussion. Students in

¹ Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 109-10; "Minutes of the Faculty," Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Volume III, 1904-1912, pp. 17-18, 57-59, 62-63, 84-86, 118. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Faculty, III. See also, "Minutes of the Faculty," Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Volume IV, 1913-1921, pp. 11, 164-67. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Faculty, IV. See also, "Minutes of the Faculty," Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Volume V, 1921-1927, pp. 236-37, 240. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Faculty, V. See also, Eighteenth Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students, The Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha (Omaha, 1908-09), p. 29. Hereinafter cited as Eighteenth Catalogue. Also, Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 6 (1916), n.p.

Homiletics classes delivered four sermons each year, as well as preparing other sermon outlines for the professor to study and criticize.²

In 1921 public speaking became a required course for all students. Although consideration had been given to the subject before that time, in 1904 the school began offering regular classes in speaking and added vocal music instruction, including hymnology and chapel choir. Ten years later the Board authorized a maximum expenditure of one hundred fifty dollars per year to pay a public speaking instructor. An Omaha woman, Mrs. Helen Harkness Calkins, taught "elocution" from 1917 to 1921, but when the Board required all students to enroll in public speaking classes, Edwin Puls, Professor of Speech at Creighton University, became a part-time seminary faculty member. He continued to teach at both schools until the seminary closed in 1943. Ministers and choir directors from the Omaha area held vocal music classes and organized a men's quartet and glee club.³

²Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 179-80; Minutes, Faculty, V, p. 227; Minutes, Board, I, p. 274; Sixteenth Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students, The Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha (Omaha, 1906-07), pp. 9-14. Hereinafter cited as Sixteenth Catalogue. See also, Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 3 (1916), n.p.; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1922-1923, pp. 20-21. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1922-23.

³Minutes, Board, I, pp. 235, 258; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 192, 195, 216, 239, 245; Fourteenth Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students, The Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha (Omaha, 1904-05), pp. 13-14. Hereinafter cited as Fourteenth Catalogue. See also, Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha,

The Board authorized the faculty to offer electives in each department after 1908. Subjects included special missions topics, social problems, and evangelism. Faculty members agreed to teach almost any course in which enough students expressed interest.⁴

Special lecturers and speakers continued to increase the scope of the seminary curriculum. The school invited area ministers, laymen, and alumni to attend and speak at the daily chapel services. Each year at least seven lectures were given on foreign missions, national missions, evangelism, church finance, the ministry, and various social problems, such as temperance and juvenile delinquency.⁵ Representatives of the Presbyterian Boards of Foreign and Home Missions came annually to the Omaha Seminary to discuss work in their fields and recruit missionaries. Students listened with special interest

1917-1918, Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 4 (1917), p. 41. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1917-1918. See also, Catalogue, 1922-23, p. 23.

⁴Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 61-62, 105-06; Eighteenth Catalogue, pp. 14-15; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1911-12, Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 4 (1911), pp. 12-13, 19. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1911-12.

⁵Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 112, 115-16; Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 4, 9, 35, 37-39, 92, 94; Thirteenth Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students, The Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha (Omaha, 1903-04), p. 12. Hereinafter cited as Thirteenth Catalogue. See also, Eighteenth Catalogue, p. 15; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 7 (1913), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 8 (1915), p. 7; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 7, (1917), n.p.

to lectures on the rural pastorate. Officials from the Presbyterian Board of Education and the Moderator of the General Assembly also visited the campus at frequent intervals.⁶

Each year the faculty continued the tradition of special services on the day designated as the "Day of Prayer for Schools and Colleges." In 1915 the General Assembly designated the first full week of February as "Education Week." Churches held "Vocations Day" and "Education Sunday" and the seminary climaxed the observance with meetings on the annual "Day of Prayer." The school also noted great events in church history with special programs. The evening of November 1, 1917, four professors spoke on Martin Luther's life and work to celebrate the Luther Quadricentennial.⁷

After the move to the new campus both the Executive Committee and the faculty discussed the possibility of establishing a Bible training school for lay evangelists, Bible teachers, and others, who were not candidates for the ministry, but wished to increase their knowledge. The school welcomed anyone who could benefit from its regular classes, although it realized lay workers needed additional programs. Finally in 1908 two new courses of study were presented.

⁶ Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 41-42, 54; Fourteenth Catalogue, p. 12; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 2 (1911), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 1 (1914), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 3 (1918), n.p.

⁷ Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 9-10, 12, 24-25, 51-52, 69-70, 79, 91, 105-06, 119; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 16-17, 33, 106-07; Minutes, Faculty, V, p. 230; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 7 (1915), n.p.; Catalogue, 1922-23, pp. 9-10.

One offered a two year "Brief Popular Course," which included many regular seminary classes in theology, English Bible, and church history plus electives. The other was a "Practical Training Course" of three years and required an additional year of more advanced work. Students paid a nominal fee of one dollar a month and had to meet the same requirements for class attendance as regular students. In 1921 the Board and faculty tried unsuccessfully to organize a cooperative laymen's training program with the University of Omaha, Bellevue College, and the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education.⁸

Whenever possible the Board supported special educational events and conventions. In November, 1910, the Laymen's Missionary Convention met in Omaha, and professors dismissed regular classes, so students could attend the meetings. Twenty missionaries from the Presbyterian Board of Sabbath School Work held a three day institute at the seminary in December, 1911. All of these programs enabled the Omaha Seminary to expand its curriculum and the learning experiences of its students.⁹

The seminary usually had a faculty consisting of five professors and the president, who also taught classes. The Reverend Charles Mitchell

⁸ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 166, 187, 252, 258-70, 264; Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 12-15, 64-65, 75-76; Eighteenth Catalogue, p. 15; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha (Omaha, 1910-11), pp. 17, 29. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1910-11. See also, Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 8 (1915), p. 30.

⁹ Minutes, Faculty, III, p. 82; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 2 (1911), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 3(1912), n.p.

was inaugurated as Professor of New Testament in September, 1904. He was a frequent speaker in area churches, teacher at the University of Omaha and Bellevue College, and considered a special personal counselor by students. Mitchell published many articles and a collection of his lectures, which he dedicated to his students.¹⁰

Following the death of the Reverend Alexander G. Wilson in 1904, the Reverend Charles Herron came to the seminary. Herron descended from a long line of Presbyterian pastors and came to Omaha on the recommendation of a seminary director, the Reverend William McEwen of Pittsburgh. Mrs. Thaw also knew the Herron family and agreed to underwrite one-half of his salary as Professor of Church History and Missions. Herron spent most summers in Europe and his international contacts brought much prestige to the school.¹¹

In 1917 Dr. Joseph Lampe, who had served the seminary for twenty-two years, resigned and was succeeded as Professor of Old Testament by the Reverend Frank H. Ridgley. The new faculty member

¹⁰ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, p. 149; Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 83-84; Thirteenth Catalogue, p. 6; Fourteenth Catalogue, pp. 6; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1923-24, p. 8. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1923-24.

¹¹ Minutes, Board, I, p. 168; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 149, 151-52; Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 1-4, 9, 18; Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 87-89; Thirteenth Catalogue, p. 6; Fourteenth Catalogue, pp. 6, 20; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 5 (1914), n.p.; Catalogue, 1923-24, p. 8.

was a graduate of Western Seminary and received his doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Pennsylvania. A former teacher at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, he proved to be a valuable addition to the faculty.¹²

Dr. Daniel Jenkins, who had joined the faculty in 1901, continued to teach theology and in 1911 became Dean of the Faculty with the responsibility of serving as president during that officer's absence. He delivered the Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological School in 1906, the youngest man ever to receive that honor. He later repeated the lectures in Omaha but said he was too busy to organize them for publication. Jenkins also raised funds for the seminary, securing over ten thousand dollars in Iowa and Nebraska during 1907. In addition to these activities, Jenkins founded the University of Omaha.

The first location of the University of Omaha was in Redick Reserve about a five minute walk from the seminary campus. Jenkins wanted the university to be Protestant and Christian, so he asked several seminary professors to teach there. Many directors served on the boards of both schools, and relations between the two institutions generally were more than friendly. For seventeen years Jenkins served

¹² Minutes, Board, I, p. 234; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 88-91, 99-100, 146-48; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1917-18, p. 5; Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 6 (1918), n.p.; Catalogue, 1923-24, p. 8.

as President of the University of Omaha while receiving full pay as a professor at the seminary. Since he spent a considerable amount of time at the university, the Board was disturbed at times because it felt he neglected his teaching duties. In 1922 the seminary faculty formulated plans for a coordinated course allowing students to graduate from both the seminary and the university in six years. For two years professors and the Executive Committee approved the program, but they never seemed able to adjust the details with the university. The relationship between the two institutions intrigued Mrs. Thaw. Her chief interest was in the seminary, but she had supported the university by subsidizing part of Dr. Jenkins' salary. In 1922 the faculty and the Executive Committee wrote her that they believed the cooperation between the two schools could and should be increased because seminaries which had no close ties with a college or university were at a definite disadvantage. A brief explanation of the plans for the coordinated program was enclosed with a notation that more time was needed to work out the details.¹³

The Board of Directors refused to make some revisions in the curriculum until the faculty could be enlarged. Professors at the Omaha School worked an excessive number of hours with no guarantee

¹³ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 199, 249, 252-53, 273; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 167, 225, 244-46, 249-51; Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 32-33; Minutes, Faculty, V, pp. 197-200, 208, 220; Thirteenth Catalogue, p. 6; Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 91, 98-104; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1912-13, Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 8 (1912), p. 9. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1912-13. See also, Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1920-21, pp. 33-34. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1920-21.

that they would even receive their promised salaries. After Dr. Marshall became president in 1910, one of his major goals was to increase faculty salaries and assure professors that they would be paid. It was also increasingly evident to Mrs. Thaw and the Board that the seminary would be unable to secure or retain competent teachers if they were not adequately paid. The Directors therefore increased professors' salaries from \$1650 per year in 1906 to twenty-four hundred dollars per year in 1921.¹⁴

In spite of heavy teaching schedules and inadequate pay, the professors maintained close relationships with their counterparts in other theological seminaries. Whenever time permitted, they accepted invitations to ceremonial functions and celebrations. Almost every year the president and one other faculty member attended the Inter-Seminary Conference, which met just prior to the meeting of the General Assembly. All of the faculty participated in the preparation of surveys and reports for the General Assembly's Committee on Theological Seminaries. Omaha Seminary policies and advice on curriculum and admission requirements were requested by these bodies.¹⁵

In its entire history only four men served as president of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha. In a period of less than

¹⁴Minutes, Board, I, pp. 181-82, 186, 249, 257; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 154, 169, 182-83, 185, 191, 198, 203-04, 206, 217, 223-24; Minutes, Faculty, III, 41-43.

¹⁵Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 43-44, 95, 108, 113; Minutes, Faculty, IV, 8, 40, 59, 160, 167; Minutes, Faculty, V, pp. 185-87.

twenty-five years the school appointed its first president, Dr. Matthew B. Lowrie, and elected the fourth, the Reverend Larimore C. Denise. Each one of them found fund-raising to be a major part of his responsibility. Lowrie spent almost as much time obtaining money for the seminary as he did teaching. The Board attempted to reward his efforts with salary increases and always paid him at least two hundred dollars per year more than the other faculty members. Lowrie had accepted the presidency reluctantly because he disliked the many financial and business duties connected with it. In December, 1909, he told the Executive Committee that the financial situation had become increasingly critical because he could not devote enough time to raising money. The school needed someone to work consistently and continuously to obtain the essential endowment. With this in mind he resigned as president effective May, 1910, but asked to remain as a professor. Recognizing his determination to leave the administrative office, the Board approved both his requests. Lowrie ended his long association with the seminary in May, 1912, when he returned to his home in Colorado. The Board accepted his resignation with regret, designated him Professor Emeritus, and elected him a Director. It found it impossible to thank adequately a man who personally had raised over two hundred fifty thousand dollars for the seminary and had won the support and interest of its major benefactress, Mrs. Mary Thaw. When Lowrie

died in 1915, the Board and the faculty sent the family their sympathy
 and appreciation for his service to the seminary.¹⁶

To succeed Lowrie as president, the Board elected the Reverend Albert B. Marshall, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Because he had served on the Board since 1896, including a term as its president, Marshall was completely aware of the seminary's problems and operation. Some Directors feared that the school's eastern friends would not be pleased with his election, and his lack of influential eastern contacts would effect adversely the school's donations. The Board set the new president's salary at two thousand dollars a year and directed that he raise it in the West. After some hesitation Marshall accepted the office and resigned his pastorate in August, 1910.¹⁷

During the Reverend Marshall's presidency the financial demands of the seminary increased, and the president spent more and more time raising money. He took his fund-raising duties seriously and traveled extensively in the Middle West. He usually succeeded in raising enough for current expenses and moderate sums for scholarships and endowment. Serving on the boards of three Presbyterian colleges gave Marshall valuable contacts and enabled him to speak on the campus of almost

¹⁶ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 176, 188-89, 192, 194-95, 203-04; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 160, 164, 166; Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 111, 113-14; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 49, 53-59; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 6 (1912), n.p.; Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 86-87, 94-95.

¹⁷ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 192-93, 205, 245, 249-50; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 166, 168, 171, 185, 222-23.

every midwestern college recruiting students for the Omaha Seminary. In addition, he taught classes in homiletics, pastoral theology, English Bible, and problems of the pastorate. As had his predecessor, he found the burden of being president, financial agent, and professor more than he wanted. He submitted his resignation to the annual meeting of the Board in 1920, but agreed to remain until a qualified successor, a "strong" president could be found.¹⁸

Obtaining a new president proved to be a difficult task. In September the Board asked the Reverend James M. Wilson to serve as Acting President. The Reverend Wilson had served previously on the faculty and had been a member of the Board since the founding of the seminary. Wilson knew what was involved and declined to act as president and continue as a full-time pastor at Omaha's North Presbyterian Church. The Board then asked him to become president at a salary of four thousand dollars per year plus use of the Vanderburgh House. Wilson accepted this offer and assumed his new position at the opening of the fall term.¹⁹

Working with Dr. Jenkins, President Wilson tried to develop closer cooperation between the seminary and the University of Omaha. During his administration the faculty prepared the coordinated

¹⁸ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 205, 245, 249-50; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 171, 185, 222-24; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 1 (1911), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 5 (1912), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 8 (1915), p. 6; Omaha Seminary Record, V, No. 1 (1919), p. 12; Omaha Seminary Record, V, No. 2 (1920), p. 8.

¹⁹ Minutes, Board, I, p. 253; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 228, 232, 241. Later the name of North Presbyterian Church was changed to Calvin Memorial Presbyterian Church.

course of study for the two schools. The Reverend Wilson engaged in an active recruiting program at colleges and conventions and tried to increase enrollment. The Board of Education recognized his effectiveness and asked him to represent it at Buena Vista College during Church Vocations Week in 1923.²⁰

While the seminary needed more money for faculty salaries and building maintenance, its income declined rapidly due to economic adjustments after World War I. President Wilson visited meetings of presbyteries and synods to solicit funds. At the end of 1922 he and his wife attempted to decrease the seminary deficit by donating over two thousand dollars to the school's endowment fund. They donated \$1166 of his unpaid salary for the previous year and one thousand dollars of his salary for 1922-1923. It was understood that this was not a cash transaction, but the seminary would pay the amount from General Funds to the Endowment Fund when money was available. The President and his wife hoped others would follow their example, so that the school could finish the year without debts. In 1923 when the General Assembly approved a major endowment campaign for the Omaha Seminary, it seemed obvious that the school's president would have to devote his full time to this effort. Although he asked to remain on the faculty as a professor, Wilson resigned but remained

²⁰ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 244, 246; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 153, 158, 163; Catalogue, 1922-23, p. 8.

as president until the Board could find a man "to take charge of the financial and administrative activities of the seminary and be elected President."²¹

During an earlier trip to the East Wilson had conferred with Mrs. Thaw and a former Princeton classmate of her son, the Reverend Larimore C. Denise. Denise had been born and raised in Omaha, graduated from Omaha Seminary, and his father, an Omaha doctor, had been one of the school's founders. He had held pastorates in Kansas and Pennsylvania and was serving then as Assistant Superintendent of the National Reform Association. Since the Association had its headquarters in Pennsylvania and Mrs. Thaw supported it, she had come to have respect for the ability of Denise. When the seminary needed a president, she recommended him. With so many factors in his favor, both the Executive Committee and the faculty endorsed him for the presidency. Denise met with seminary leaders during November, 1923, and discussed the duties of the office, especially fund-raising. About the same time Mrs. Thaw wrote that if Denise was chosen, in addition to her other gifts, she would pay four thousand dollars a year toward his salary. In December the Board elected Denise as president of the seminary and he took office January 1, 1924.²²

²¹ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, p. 259; Minutes, Board, I, pp. 254-55; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 252-54, 257; Catalogue, 1923-24, p. 8; Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 105-07.

²² Minutes, Board, I, pp. 276-81; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 261-64; Minutes, Faculty, V, p. 227; Denise, "Reminiscences," pp. 73-74; Hawley, Fifty Years, pp. 108-12; "Minutes of the Executive Committee," Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, Volume II, 1924-1944, p. 9. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Executive Committee, II.

Between 1904 and 1924 the seminary library grew from five thousand volumes to over eight thousand. The Board noted the growth but each catalogue and every edition of the Seminary Record solicited books and contributions for the library.²³ Donations of books and money came from many individuals and places, including Pennsylvania, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Colorado, and the District of Columbia. After his death the family of Professor Lampe contributed his four hundred volume library to the school. A church school class in Pittsburgh, the Auburn Seminary, and a charitable foundation, as well as several alumni, donated money, magazines, and books. The Board appropriated fifty dollars each year to buy books and in 1920 the Executive Committee increased this amount to one hundred dollars plus twenty-five dollars for periodicals.²⁴

Reference materials, recent publications, and periodicals headed the list of requirements. The faculty welcomed a 1915 donation of the Catholic Encyclopedia from an Omaha priest and gifts of biblical commentaries from Protestant ministers. In 1911 the Reverend

²³ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, p. 170; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 8 (1915), p. 34; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 7 (1917), p. 36; Thirteenth Catalogue, p. 14; Catalogue, 1910-11, p. 20; Catalogue, 1917-18, pp. 41-42; Catalogue, 1920-21, p. 40; Catalogue, 1922-23, pp. 42-43.

²⁴ Minutes, Board, I, p. 165; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 191, 195, 203, 217, 228; Minutes, Faculty, III, p. 39; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 13, 34, 38, 49, 81, 86, 97, 155; Minutes, Faculty, V, pp. 203, 212-13; Catalogue, 1910-11, p. 20; Catalogue, 1922-23, p. 43; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 5 (1914), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 1 (1915), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 6 (1916), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 7 (1917), n.p.

Willis Weaver, former missionary to South America, contributed some sixteenth and seventeenth century books, which began a rare book collection for the seminary. Seven years later an anonymous "book lover" donated almost one hundred volumes dating from the same period.²⁵

Faculty members continued to serve as librarians in addition to their teaching duties. With the aid of a student librarian, who was paid one hundred dollars per year, Professors Jenkins and Herron worked in the library. The increased size of the student body and the library made formal policies for its use more important. During 1922 and 1923 Dr. Herron made stricter rules for the library and established regular hours for it. Students were encouraged to make full use of the facilities, but the faculty wanted to protect the seminary's resources.²⁶

Financial problems retarded the growth and limited the programs of the seminary. Some Presbyterians talked of uniting Bellevue College and the theological school but neither institution had the money to accomplish the merger. The Executive Committee frequently

²⁵ Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 103-04; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 32-33, 37, 148-49; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 2 (1911), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 6 (1914), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 1 (1915), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 6 (1918), p. 8.

²⁶ Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 85-86, 98, 113; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 9, 24, 47, 74-75, 97; Minutes, Faculty, V, p. 204; Minutes, Board, I, p. 235; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 170, 182-83, 195, 203, 217, 253; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 6 (1912), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 7 (1915), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 6 (1918), p. 12.

authorized its officers to borrow money, sell stock, and dispose of property which produced little or no income. Each president was directed by the Board to teach classes but to spend as much time as he thought wise in raising money. Generally the school ended its fiscal year, April 30, technically free of debt, but it was because money had been borrowed to pay bills or additional contributions were received at the last minute. At several annual meetings Board members gave enough to cover deficits. Sometimes the Executive Committee was forced to use undesignated gifts to pay current expenses, when it needed and wanted to build up the endowment. Everyone was happy when enough money came in to pay the bills, but all recognized this was a very precarious way to finance a seminary.²⁷

The increased number of faculty members, building maintenance, and general inflationary economic trend until 1920 meant that the school's increased income failed to meet expenses. Between 1904 and 1916, however, donations from the West finally exceeded those from the East for the first time in the school's history. At the end of World War I unstable financial conditions decreased the number and amount of all gifts. Seminary income in 1922 was down over one

²⁷Minutes, Board, I, pp. 172-73, 181, 185, 214; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 129, 147-48, 150-51, 156, 160, 163, 165, 170-71, 179, 192, 198, 204, 241, 252, 257, 265-67; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 3 (1916), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 6 (1918), p. 8.

thousand dollars over the previous year and the next two years showed
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 only slight increases.

Money given for endowment was invested in bonds, loans, and savings and loan associations. As the seminary increased the amount and number of its investments, it became necessary to appoint a loan committee to investigate and recommend investments to the Executive Committee. After 1908 a legal examiner checked all abstracts, and the seminary began to keep more detailed records to enable it to collect delinquent accounts. Prices of stocks varied so greatly that real estate mortgages and loans in well-developed communities
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 were considered the best investments for the seminary.

The Executive Committee tried numerous plans to obtain money. During World War I a "Gold Bond" Plan offered higher interest rates, exemption from taxes, and a secure income to those who donated their Liberty Bonds to the seminary. Another similar plan which endured longer was the "Annuity Plan." The school signed a contract and agreed to pay the annuitant four to seven per cent interest depending on his age. When the donor died, since the gift was exempt from inheritance taxes, the full amount went to the seminary. Some donors,

²⁸ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 164, 190-91, 232, 241, 248, 268-69; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 213, 215; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 3 (1912), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 5 (1912), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 2 (1917), n.p.

²⁹ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 151, 153-55, 159-60, 162, 172, 182-83, 187-90, 197, 201-03, 205, 228, 235, 240, 245.

such as the Fisher brothers of Liverpool, Ohio, asked that their gifts be used to set up scholarship funds. In 1906 the school received fifty thousand dollars from John H. Converse, an influential Presbyterian in Philadelphia and the president of Baldwin Locomotive Works. Converse asked that the money be used as endowment for professors of homiletics and pastoral theology. Every member of the Executive Committee personally signed the letter thanking him for his contribution, the largest the seminary ever had received.

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While the seminary managed to raise enough money to pay current expenses, adequate endowment funds, so necessary for financial stability, came in slowly. The General Assembly frequently reminded Presbyterians to aid the newest seminary and endorsed its endowment program for one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars in 1909 and two hundred fifty thousand dollars in 1923. With the approval of the increased amount in 1923, the Board of Directors laid plans to conduct a major endowment drive. The Reverend Wilson resigned as president to allow the school to find a more capable administrator for financial affairs. The Reverend Denise accepted the presidency fully aware that fund-raising would be his major responsibility, and he immediately launched plans for an aggressive endowment campaign.

³⁰ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 228, 250-51; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 148, 152-53, 156-60, 163, 165, 180-82, 195, 206, 212, 240; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, p. 2; Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 1 (1917), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 6 (1918), p. 8; Omaha Seminary Record, V, No. 3 (1920), pp. 7-8.

He obtained help from the Presbyterian Church national offices, but the Executive Committee authorized him to employ any assistants he needed.³¹

Almost every year the seminary president and alumni spoke at "platform" meetings and attempted to convince synods and presbyteries to include the school in their annual budgets. When the Synod of Nebraska met at Omaha's North Presbyterian Church in 1913, the delegates toured the campus. The school made very effort to schedule its activities so they did not conflict with any synod or presbytery sessions. Churches designated certain Sundays as "Omaha Seminary Day" to publicize the school, and the seminary itself encouraged visitors. Among the church leaders and benefactors who visited the school during 1915 was Mrs. Thaw, who came to the campus for the first time. When the visitors returned home, they did what they could to encourage students to attend the school and churches to support it by contributions. In 1911 President Marshall began publication of a quarterly magazine, The Seminary Record, which helped advertise the school.³²

³¹ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 168, 175-76, 179-80, 182, 190-91, 197, 218, 223, 233, 240, 272-73; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 151, 154-55, 158, 161-62, 179, 205, 227, 234, 244, 251-53, 255, 260, 265-68, 270, 273; Minutes, Faculty, V, p. 232; Catalogue, 1912-13, pp. 27-28; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 7 (1917), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 1 (1917), n.p.; Hawley, Fifty Years, p. 119.

³² Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 35-36, 38, 82-83; Minutes, Faculty, IV, p. 163; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 1 (1911), pp. 2-3; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 1 (1914), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 2 (1915), n.p.; Catalogue, 1920-21, p. 42; Catalogue, 1922-23, pp. 45-46.

The seminary moved into the new building in 1902, but it took more than fifteen years to complete the basement rooms for the gymnasium and dining-room. The Executive Committee gradually landscaped the grounds, planting more than eighty trees by 1914. It also purchased a horse lawn mower and hoses to care for the campus. In 1906 the grounds were rolled for tennis, volleyball, and handball courts, and baseball diamonds were laid out on the grounds.

In spite of the great care taken when contracts were signed, the boiler and heating plant presented almost constant problems for the Building Committee. When it learned that the building violated a city ordinance because it lacked fire escapes, the Executive Committee immediately authorized installation of the proper equipment. The Board was proud of the building and enforced strict rules for its care. Students furnished their own bed linens and cleaned their own rooms, but the seminary expected them to avoid unnecessary use of water and electricity, as well as to prevent damage to walls and woodwork. After 1921 only seminary students, prospective students, visiting ministers, and those connected with the school could rent dormitory rooms.

³³ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 151-52, 154-55, 167, 169, 171, 180, 192, 245, 252, 254, 270-71; Catalogue, 1917-18, p. 41; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 1 (1911), p. 2; Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 2 (1917), n.p.

³⁴ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 147, 149, 169-70, 191, 206, 240.

A five thousand dollar bequest from Judge Charles Vanderburgh of Minneapolis enabled the seminary to build a residence for its president. Finished in 1905 Vanderburgh House, named in honor of the donor, had three stories and one and one-half baths; a garage was built in 1924. In 1913 when the Easter Sunday tornado damaged churches and homes in Kountze Place, it caused only slight damage to the seminary building, but the insurance company paid over four hundred dollars for damage to Vanderburgh House.³⁵

A few years later two organizations offered to buy the Kountze Place campus, but both offers were rejected. In 1920 the Salvation Army offered one hundred fifty thousand dollars for the property. The Board felt it needed two hundred thousand dollars to build on another site and at least one year to complete a new campus. Unable to meet these terms the Salvation Army withdrew its offer.³⁶

In 1921 the Graham and Peters Realty Company, acting for Father Flanagan's Boys' School and Home, offered the price previously set by the Board and excellent terms for payment. President Wilson

³⁵ Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 106, 119-20, 130, 141, 148-51, 154, 184-85, 196, 271; Minutes, Board, I, p. 116; Eighth Catalogue, p. 16; Fourteenth Catalogue, p. 16; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 1 (1913), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 8 (1915), pp. 36-37; Denise, "Reminiscences," p. 75.

³⁶ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 251-52; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 225-26.

tried to convince the Board to sell because he felt the move would infuse new enthusiasm into the seminary and attract more students. He pointed out the availability of a fine five acre site in the Dundee area and that estimates for the site and building were only \$155,000, which left enough to construct four professors' homes on a new campus. After noting that the Kountze Place area and others near the center of the city were deteriorating, the Board viewed the Dundee site and toured the area around the seminary. Several Kountze Place Protestant ministers attended a special Board meeting and objected to the sale of the campus to a Roman Catholic organization because of the adverse effect it would have on Protestantism in the area. Omaha Judge A. L. Sutton and President Wilson felt it wrong to criticize an excellent institution simply on the basis of its Catholicism. Other Directors wondered about a Masonic group operating a home for boys. Absent members wrote that they approved the sale but wanted assurance that there was a good site elsewhere. Several present requested more time, but the boys' school wanted possession on June 1. The Board finally approved the sale and directed the Executive Committee to complete the details, purchase a new site in the Dundee area, and secure bids for a new building.

³⁷ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 264-71; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 235-37.

When the Executive Committee met a week later, it took no further action to consummate the sale. It noted the protests of the Kountze Place residents and recommended to the Board that the pending negotiations be discontinued. The committee referred the sale of the property to the Board for authorization at the annual meeting in May, but by that time the offer had been withdrawn and the entire issue closed.³⁸

Just prior to the outbreak of World War I the seminary's enrollment reached a peak of forty-one students. It had climbed steadily since 1904, when twenty students were enrolled. During the war enrollment averaged thirty-six students, not as big a drop as many expected. From 1919 to 1923 the number declined gradually until it was back to the 1904 level. As in the seminary's earlier history, at least ninety per cent of the students were from the Midwest. Students from Canada, England, Ireland, Japan, and Korea also enrolled at the Omaha Seminary. Each year about fifteen per cent of the student body were classified as "special students,"³⁹ those from foreign countries or taking less than complete courses.

³⁸ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 256-57; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 238, 257.

³⁹ Fourteenth Catalogue, pp. 7-8; Eighteenth Catalogue, pp. 7-8; Catalogue, 1910-11, pp. 7-8; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1915-1916, Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 4, pp. 8-15. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1915-16. See also, Catalogue, 1917-18, pp. 8-13; Catalogue, 1922-23, pp. 11-14; Catalogue, 1923-24, pp. 10-12; Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 3 (1918), n.p.

While the seminary carried on an active recruiting program, it attempted to enforce stiffer admission requirements. Anyone who wished to be accepted in the "special" category, i.e. without a college degree, was advised to apply in writing early to insure admission. The Board of Directors advised the faculty to use caution in admitting non-college graduates even though the school needed to increase enrollment. The Board recognized that the situation was not unique at Omaha, but a problem for all seminaries because of the increasing tendency on the part of presbyteries to recommend men who lacked adequate preparation. In 1915 in line with the General Assembly's policy that students complete college training before entering seminaries, the Board ordered the secretary of the faculty to write presbytery education committees and inform them to use more care in recommending students. The Examinations Committee of the Board admitted in 1913 that some of the "ill-prepared" men served well in the ministry, but it did not recommend any retreat from traditional Presbyterian standards of theological education. Although the Board and the faculty even considered refusing to accept these unqualified students, by 1922 the situation began to improve and the seminary had a larger proportion of college graduates enrolled.

⁴⁰ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 199, 206-07, 219, 224-25, 238-39; 242-43, 265; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 246-47; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 111-12; Catalogue, 1912-13, pp. 24-25; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 8 (1915), pp. 32-33.

The professors carefully recorded admissions, promotions, credits earned, and incomplete grades given students. In 1922 new student application forms were approved to improve record-keeping. Anyone who did not submit a letter from his presbytery or a certified transcript was admitted on a conditional basis until proper credentials were received. When a student submitted questionable credentials in 1917 and failed to authenticate them, the faculty withdrew his permit to enroll. Although the faculty accepted some men exempted from further study by presbyteries, it told many to take more college work before beginning seminary training.⁴¹

While most students were Presbyterians, men from ten other denominations attended the seminary. Because the school failed to find a replacement for the pastor who headed the Bohemian program, it declined after 1909, but a former Jewish rabbi and a Greek orthodox priest attended classes during 1922. Non-Presbyterian students studied only selected subjects and often remained at the school for only one or two terms. By the 1920's the seminary revised its policy and admitted a few married students. The wives of some students and Mrs. Marshall also enrolled as special students.⁴²

⁴¹Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 21-22, 43-45, 69, 71, 76-77, 82-84, 98-99; Minutes, Faculty IV, pp. 6-7, 11, 21-22, 85-87, 153-57, 173-74; Minutes, Faculty, V, pp. 181-84, 190, 196, 237-40.

⁴²Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 11-12, 20-21, 59-60, 88-91; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 47-48, 63, 76-80; 93, 100, 124-25; 127-28; 135-36; 141-42, 144-45, 159, 171-72; Minutes, Faculty, V, pp. 189-96, 200-03, 208-09, 222-24, 231, 233-34; Nineteenth Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students, The Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha (Omaha, 1909-10), p. 16. Hereinafter cited as Nineteenth Catalogue.

The faculty continued to exercise strict control over the conduct and morals of students. While it cancelled classes due to the "flu" epidemic in 1918, the faculty told one student he could not graduate because of irregular attendance and poor work. Punctuality and regular class attendance continued to be requirements. Students were advised to improve their work or repeat courses, if they wished to receive diplomas. A 1916 policy stated that all deficiencies had to be removed before a student entered the second semester of his senior year. Students consistently rated higher in practical studies than in philosophy and theory, but the Board felt this was due to a failure of students to apply themselves rather than inadequate preparation. The advantages and disadvantages of student preaching often were discussed by the Board and faculty. Although there were many opportunities to preach in Iowa and Nebraska churches, first year students were not permitted to hold regular pastorates. In 1915 and 1916 the Record declared thirty churches had regular student⁴³ pastors.

The faculty asked some students to withdraw because of questionable actions in financial matters and personal conduct. In 1916 the conduct of a senior, C. B. Day, led to his expulsion from the seminary. A faculty investigation proved him guilty of

⁴³ Minutes, Board, I, pp. 167-68, 234-36, 242, 257-58, 274; Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 52, 119-20; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 72-74, 85, 92, 94-96; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 8 (1915), p. 17; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 2 (1915), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 3 (1916), n.p.

immoral conduct, but the professors agreed to give him a chance to reform and remain in school. Less than two weeks later Day admitted that he and a woman, not his wife, had spent several hours together in a Council Bluffs hotel room. He denied any immoral act or purpose, but this time the faculty expelled him. In 1915 the Board praised President Marshall for his strong stand against the use of tobacco by students. Beginning in 1913 the Presbyterian Church Temperance Committee sponsored an annual oratorical contest with cash prizes for two winners. The adoption of state and national prohibition amendments in 1916 and 1919 caused celebrations at the school. In 1921 the school obtained the services of John H. Vance, M.D., as student health officer.

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The student body and professors participated actively in Omaha religious events. Sunday School Missionary Conferences and Tabernacle Services were held on the campus. When Billy Sunday came to Omaha in 1915, he was invited to speak at the seminary. A Young Men's Christian Association, which sent representatives to conferences and sponsored mid-week prayer meetings, was organized. Students and faculty members also attended annual conventions of

⁴⁴ Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 24-27; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 60-62, 74, 114, 117, 121; Minutes, Faculty, V, pp. 209-10, 233, 239; Minutes, Board, I, p. 223; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 243-46, 260; Catalogue, 1917-18, pp. 38-39, 44; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 6 (1916), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, V, No. 1 (1919), pp. 4-5; Catalogue, 1921-22, p. 39.

the Student Volunteer Association, an organization to publicize the missionary work of the church. On the campus itself President Wilson organized a student council in 1921 and seasonal parties held by students led to the organization of a club composed of wives of students, faculty, and alumni and called the Seminoles. This group sponsored social and education events, as well as buying gifts for the seminary when funds were available.⁴⁵

In spite of the seminary's financial problems it raised fees only when rising costs forced increases. Even after World War I a student could attend Omaha Seminary for about two hundred twenty-five dollars per year, only twenty-five dollars more than it had been in 1900. In addition to aid granted by the seminary and Wilson-Douglas Loan Fund, Dundee Presbyterian Church in Omaha, the Men's Bible Class of First Presbyterian Church, Wichita, Kansas, and other groups established scholarships. When one student died while attending seminary, his parents used the money set aside for his education to establish a scholarship. The Presbyterian Board of Education offered students opportunities to compete for the Secretary's, Newbury, and Muchmore Scholarships. Beginning in 1911 the family of a St. Louis minister

⁴⁵ Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 67-68, 74-75, 78, 101; Minutes, Faculty, IV, p. 140; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 186-87; Catalogue, 1910-11, pp. 19-20; Catalogue, 1915-16, p. 38; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 3 (1916), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 7 (1917), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, V, No. 3 (1920), pp. 4-7; Catalogue, 1920-21, p. 39.

presented a comprehensive Bible commentary to the senior class member with the highest academic standing. The amounts varied from less than one hundred dollars to over five thousand dollars, but there never seemed to be enough.⁴⁶

The highlight of each seminary year was the spring commencement. Beginning in 1911 a communion service led by the faculty became the traditional opening event for commencement week. After 1908 the alumni sponsored a dinner each year just prior to graduation. Frequently both the dinner and the ceremonies were held at North Presbyterian Church. An outstanding senior, a faculty member, and a guest spoke at the exercises. When the seminary was twenty-five years old in 1916, it invited a founder and former professor, the Reverend Stephen Phelps, to speak at graduation exercises.⁴⁷

In 1913 and 1915 the Board of Directors established new requirements for the awarding of the Bachelor of Divinity Degree. It amended the constitution and by-laws to require that students be college graduates with two years of Greek and one year of Hebrew and complete ten credits, in addition to the regular three year seminary course, in order to receive the degree. The candidate elected a major

⁴⁶ Minutes, Faculty, II, pp. 117-18; Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 5, 13, 92-94, 101, 107, 109; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 99-100; Minutes, Faculty, V, pp. 227, 236; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, p. 222; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, p. 2; Catalogue, 1910-11, p. 20; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 1 (1911), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 1 (1914), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 8 (1915), pp. 34-35; Omaha Seminary Record, IV, No. 8 (1919), p. 41.

⁴⁷ Minutes, Faculty, III, pp. 25-26, 29, 40-41, 58, 71-73, 81-82, 93, 96, 107-10; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 1-4, 40-43; Minutes, Faculty,

and a minor subject area, passed prescribed examinations, and submitted a thesis assigned by the head of his major department. Seminary students with above average grades were given permission to take ten hours beyond their regular course and submit a thesis to receive the degree. Completing degree work "in absentia", required specific faculty approval. The entire faculty carefully planned each student's complete course and discussed his progress regularly. Each thesis was examined in detail and revisions recommended before the degree was granted. Students who failed to comply with revisions suggested were not approved for degrees.

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By 1924 there were over two hundred Omaha Seminary alumni and ninety per cent of them served churches in the Midwest. The seminary declared that although it specifically trained men for the "West", its program was more than adequate for any minister. The Board of Directors recognized the quality and service of the alumni by electing at least two graduates of the school to the Board each year after 1913. The alumni valued their seminary training, supported the school with their gifts, recruited students, and solicited funds.

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V, pp. 232-33, 240-41; Catalogue, 1922-23, p. 9; Omaha Seminary Record, I, No. 5 (1912), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 5 (1914), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 5 (1916), n.p.

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Minutes, Board, I, pp. 177, 211-13; Minutes, Faculty, IV, pp. 9, 18, 20, 32, 44, 66-69, 84; Minutes, Faculty, V, pp. 182, 184; Catalogue, 1913-14, pp. 23-24; Catalogue, 1916-17, pp. 33-35; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 1 (1913), n.p.

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Catalogue, 1912-13, p. 28; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 5 (1914), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, II, No. 7 (1915), n.p.; Omaha Seminary Record, III, No. 5 (1916), n.p.; Catalogue, 1922-23, pp. 17-18.

CHAPTER IV

EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT

Under the leadership of President Denise the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha grew and prospered in spite of a severe national depression and the death of its chief benefactress, Mrs. Mary Thaw. New faculty members were added, and the curriculum was expanded to fit new concepts in theological education. Considerable time was devoted to proposed mergers and attempts to obtain accreditation from the American Association of Theological Schools.

The seminary was fifty years old in 1941 and by that time had developed four basic departments: Biblical, Old and New Testament studies; Theological, systematic theology; Historical, church history and government; and Practical, religious education, public speaking, homiletics, and pastoral theology. The curriculum emphasized knowledge of the Bible, the Presbyterian form of church government, church history, and evangelism. When the General Assembly in 1935 recommended that all seminaries offer these courses, it was informed that the Omaha School already required them of every student.

¹Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1941, Omaha Seminary Record, XXIII, No. 1 (1941), pp. 27-35. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1941. See also, "Minutes of the Board of Directors," Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1924-1964, p. 23. Hereinafter cited as Board, Minutes, II. See also, "Minutes of the Faculty," Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1927-1943, Volume VI, pp. 38, 70, 84-85. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Faculty, VI.

To better serve students with pastorates the class schedule was shifted to four days a week, Tuesday through Friday. Hours also were adjusted to allow other working students to finish classes before one o'clock in the afternoon. The school year was divided into two semesters of sixteen weeks each after 1937.²

Every school schedule included a daily chapel service. Faculty members led services on Tuesday and Friday, but each Wednesday guests conducted a longer service. An afternoon student preaching service replaced the morning chapel on Thursday. In 1940 the faculty decided the Friday chapel would be the responsibility of students, so seniors conducted services in the fall and the less experienced juniors in the spring. Special services in downtown Omaha during Holy Week or synod meetings replaced seminary chapel, but students were expected to attend the special services. In spite of numerous attempts to induce students to attend chapel, attendance declined unless the faculty assigned seats and took attendance. While students objected, the professors refused to drop the seating plan because attendance became so irregular without it.³

Although the Board advocated intensive study of basic subjects, it encouraged the addition of new courses and expanded the scope of older ones. Two years of public speaking became a requirement for graduation.

²Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 109, 159; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 59, 95.

³Minutes, Board, II, p. 81; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 63, 65-66, 74-75, 78, 93, 96-98.

Vocal music instructors not only taught singing but also trained groups to represent the seminary at various church functions. In 1940 and 1941 Hugh Wallace of Dundee Church in Omaha conducted weekly classes in music. New courses at the seminary included church administration, archeology in the Holy Land (based on a trip there by President Denise), and one on the ministry and mental health. After 1939 an Omaha Presbyterian elder and medical doctor, Harrison A. Wigton, taught the latter course. Special courses in speaking, theology, and the Bible for pastors' wives and those who did not wish to enter the ministry were offered at a cost of only two dollars per semester for one class and four dollars for two or more classes.⁴

An important area of curriculum extension was in the field of religious education. In 1924 and 1927 the seminary cooperated with Omaha church bodies in presenting schools of religious education. In 1929 the Board established a department of religious education with classes for ministers, teachers, and church secretaries. Until 1937 the Reverend R. J. Harmelink taught classes in methods and principles of Christian education and also led youth programs at several churches. After he left to take a position with the Presbyterian Board of

⁴ Minutes, Faculty, V, p. 257; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 5, 47, 69, 99; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 3, 8, 139, 143-45, 207; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 73, 82, 95, 120; Omaha Seminary Record, VII, No. 3 (1925), pp. 2-4; Omaha Seminary Record, XVII, No. 3 (1935), p. 4.

Christian Education, various ministers taught the classes. In 1939 Mrs. Walter Clyde, wife of the professor of systematic theology, became the religious education instructor. She had a Master's Degree in religious education from Hartford Seminary and was paid an hourly rate for her work.⁵

Each year more than twenty special speakers presented programs at the seminary. Most were Presbyterian pastors, but representatives of the Mormon, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and various other religious groups also participated. Rabbis discussed the Jewish faith and practices. Lecturers spoke on the activities of the Council of Churches of Christ in America, the National Council for the Prevention of War, and the W.C.T.U., as well as those of several boards of the Presbyterian Church. Many special programs related to the job of the pastor, such as five lectures on church finance in 1940 and discussions on the rural pastorate in 1941.⁶

⁵Minutes, Board, II, p. 97; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 8, 159-60, 188; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 3, 13; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1931, Omaha Seminary Record, XIII, No. 1 (1931), p. 34. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1931. See also, Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1934, Omaha Seminary Record, XVI, No. 1 (1934), p. 7. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1934.

⁶Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 97-99, 102; Catalogue, 1931, p. 8; Omaha Seminary Record, XIV, No. 1 (1932), pp. 8-9; Omaha Seminary Record, XV, No. 1 (1933), pp. 8-9; Omaha Seminary Record, XIX, No. 1 (1937), pp. 8-9; Catalogue, 1941, pp. 9-10; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1924-1925, Omaha Seminary Record, VII, No. 2 (1925), pp. 10-11. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1924-25. See also, Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1936, Omaha Seminary Record, XVII, No. 1 (1936), pp. 8-9. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1936.

From 1930 to 1942 the seminary sponsored a two week summer school in Hollister, Missouri, for rural ministers. The school was instituted by President Denise at the request of church leaders in Missouri and Kansas. Enrollment increased from thirty-four the first year to eighty-one in 1935. Seminary professors served on the faculty, but after 1935 representatives of the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education also participated. Costs were minimal, fifteen dollars covered all expenses for the two weeks or three dollars when students supplied their own room and board. Presbyterian bodies in the Ozark region, including the Southern Presbyterian Church, financed the school and aided in its administration, so the only cost to the seminary was for the time spent by Denise and others. Faculty members received only expenses for themselves and families. In the beginning students received no credit for this work, but in 1940 by attending all the class sessions in Hollister and writing special papers, one-half a regular semester credit could be earned. Another summer school was held in Colorado Springs in 1940, but schedule problems prevented any further sessions there. The Executive Committee considered a school on the Omaha campus, but dropped the idea because of a lack of interest. The Board of Christian Education carefully observed these summer programs, and within a short time several presbyteries and synods began sponsoring similar schools.

⁷Minutes, Board, II, pp. 43, 65-66, 70, 75, 82, 94-95, 97, 109, 116, 120-21, 129-30; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 79-80, 85-87, 98, 100, 111-13, 125, 131, 144-45, 153, 164, 174, 191, 194, 198, 201-02; Denise, "Reminiscences," p. 78.

Relations between the Presbyterian Seminary and the University of Omaha ended when the university became a municipal institution in 1930. Relations had been strained since the death of Dr. Jenkins, and credit could no longer be used to earn degrees at both institutions. Several times the Executive Committee of the seminary tried unsuccessfully to establish a closer working relationship, but the university declined except to rent rooms for book storage in the basement of the seminary building. Students at the theological school, however, continued to enroll at the university and complete academic work there. The move by the university to West Dodge Street in the late 1930's ended any talk of collaboration.⁸

Although the Reverend Denise continued as president of the theological school, there were many changes in the faculty. Dr. Jenkins had a nervous breakdown in 1926, after serving the seminary for more than twenty-five years. He never recovered and for two years area ministers taught his classes in theology. At the annual meeting in 1928 the Board elected a former missionary to Siam, the Reverend Henry Dale White, as Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology. White remained at the Omaha Seminary as a full-time professor until his retirement in 1939. Even then he taught classes four hours per week and served as assistant pastor of Dundee Presbyterian Church.

⁸ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 31, 51; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 46-48, 83-84, 97, 124-26, 139-40.

After the death of his wife, he received permission from the Board of Directors to live in a third floor apartment in the seminary building. Students had a great deal of respect for White, but by 1940 he was past seventy years of age and some said he often digressed from the subject. In 1939 the Reverend Walter Clyde, an Omaha Seminary alumnus and holder of Ph.D. from Hartford Theological Seminary, joined the faculty as Professor of Christian Theology and Ethics. Approved by the General Assembly in 1941, Clyde was officially installed as a professor in December of that year.⁹

In the Department of Old Testament the Reverend James Mayne succeeded Dr. Ridgeley, who returned to Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, in 1927. An experienced minister, Mayne also served as a "stated" supply pastor for the Castelar Presbyterian Church in Omaha. After he came to the seminary, he completed work on a Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. In 1938 the Executive Committee appointed Mayne the Dean and increased his salary to
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compensate for his many extra duties.

⁹ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 22-23, 31, 133; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 32-33, 45, 53, 172-73, 183, 186, 191, 210, 218; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 4-5, 74. Also, interviews with the Reverend Alton Kaul, Omaha Seminary Class of 1940, in July, 1970, at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

¹⁰ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 23-24, 27, 110; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 42, 44, 57, 170, 175, 199, 214; Minutes, Faculty, V, p. 280; Minutes, Faculty, VI, p. 64; Omaha Seminary Record, X, No. 1 (1928), p. 7. Also, interviews with the Reverend Davis B. Cecil, Omaha Seminary Class of 1940, in July, 1970, at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

The Reverend James M. Wilson, former president of the seminary, resigned from the faculty in 1931 due to ill health. For the next three years the Reverend Albert F. Ernst, pastor of Lowe Avenue Presbyterian Church, taught classes in Pastoral and Practical Theology, Homiletics, and English Bible. Ernst had a Ph.D. but was never installed as a professor. He not only taught classes and served a church but was a member of the Board of Directors and officer of the Executive Committee of the seminary. The Reverend V. H. Vartanian, Ph.D., who later changed his name to V. Gregory Rosemont, taught classes in English Bible after 1934. He worked part-time at the seminary and served as Professor of Religion at the University of Omaha. In 1938 the Reverend William H. Phelps, son of a founder, succeeded Ernst as pastor of the Lowe Avenue Church and began teaching classes in Homiletics.

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In 1934 after teaching thirty years at the Omaha Seminary Professor Herron retired. Because he received only a small pension from the Presbyterian Board of Pensions, the Directors authorized payment of a supplemental pension for him. To succeed Herron the Board elected the Reverend Francis L. Bouquet, former Professor of Bible at Park College, Missouri. Bouquet also served as librarian and never supplied a church regularly as did several of his colleagues.

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¹¹ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 106, 109, 129; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 26-28, 65; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 57, 97, 103, 105-07, 109, 112, 207; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1938, Omaha Seminary Record, XX, No. 2 (1938), p. 8.

¹² Minutes, Board, II, pp. 58, 61-62, 128; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 13, 121, 126-27, 130-31, 150-51, 198, 202; Minutes, Faculty, VI, p. 42.

During these years four men served as Professor of New Testament at Omaha Seminary. Dr. Charles Mitchell, who had joined the faculty in 1902, retired in 1935. Like Herron, he received a supplement to his pension so that he had an income of one thousand dollars per year. The next Professor of New Testament, Dr. H. Framer Smith of Chicago, also served as "stated" supply of the Florence Presbyterian Church and lived in the church manse. The congregation asked him to become its regular pastor, but the Executive Committee and President Denise refused to allow any full-time professor to be installed as a church pastor. Until he resigned in 1939 to become president of Pennsylvania Bible Institute, Smith led many Bible conferences and study groups in the Midwest. To succeed him the Board chose a former college teacher, the Reverend Charles Hawley, who had a Ph.D. from Columbia University. Hawley was to receive twenty-seven hundred dollars cash salary annually, the same as other professors. In 1937 with funds from the estate of Mrs. Thaw, the school had purchased three homes near the campus and rented them to professors. The home secured for Hawley cost more, so consequently he paid ten dollars more in rent than other faculty members. Because the professor said he could not support his family on his salary, the seminary agreed to increase it sixty dollars per month, if he wrote a history of the school for its fiftieth anniversary. After many delays Hawley completed the manuscript for distribution in 1941, but he also agreed to end his relationship with

the seminary in August of that year and to accept other employment before that date, if he found it. The Reverend Earle E. Cairns, a graduate of Omaha Seminary and an experienced teacher, became professor of New Testament in the fall of 1941.¹³

Even though there was always a shortage of money, the Board tried to reward the faculty for its services and loyalty. After 1927 the seminary paid into the Presbyterian Pension Plan for all full-time professors. About the same time the Board adopted a rule whereby a professor had to retire at the beginning of the seminary year following his seventieth birthday. The Board could vote, however, to employ a professor over seventy on a part-time basis. During the depression of the 1930's the Executive Committee froze faculty salaries and directed each professor to donate to the school ten per cent of his income. As economic conditions improved, salaries were raised and additional homes were purchased for use by the faculty.¹⁴

During these years President Denise taught classes, but he spent most of his time raising funds and handling administration of the seminary. He also served on the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education and as an officer of the Council of Theological Seminaries,

¹³ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 81, 86, 96, 102, 117, 124, 131-32; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 134, 140-41, 150-53, 155, 161-62, 184, 186-90, 194, 200-04, 206-07, 210-12; Omaha Seminary Record, XIX, No. 2 (1937), n.p.

¹⁴ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 10, 27, 31, 37, 40-41, 51, 84, 89, 91, 93, 111; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 7, 81, 95, 121-22, 132, 169.

which included all the Presbyterian theological schools. In 1933 he served as Moderator of the Synod of Nebraska. To improve the seminary's public relations, Denise traveled over twenty-five thousand miles each year. By obtaining railroad passes and staying with friends, he was able to hold his annual expenses for these trips to less than three hundred dollars. The Board regularly passed resolutions praising his leadership and administration of the seminary. To aid him it employed a full-time secretary and assistant treasurer. In 1939 Mrs. Alberta H. Casler joined the staff in this capacity.¹⁵

To implement the new theories of theological education an adequate library was an essential resource. By 1941, fifty years after its founding, the school had a library of over twenty thousand volumes, more than twice the number reported in 1926.¹⁶ Donations of books by ministers continued to provide the majority of the additions; occasionally laymen sent cash contributions. Since the seminary needed recent publications and periodicals, it especially welcomed these gifts. There were so many old, or "inactive", books that in 1940 the size of the library's basement storage room had to be doubled. In 1941 only 251 books were added, but one-half were new

¹⁵Minutes, Board, II, pp. 56, 70, 82, 86, 90-91, 98, 111, 122, 130; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 37, 71, 107, 111, 115, 128, 130, 140, 185, 212; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 13-14; Denise, "Reminiscences," p. 77; Interview, the Reverend Alton Kaul, Omaha Seminary Class of 1940, in July, 1970, at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

¹⁶Minutes, Board, II, pp. 42, 83, 133; Omaha Seminary Record, VIII, No. 1 (1926), p. 12; Catalogue, 1941, pp. 16-17.

volumes purchased by the school, and the high cost of the materials limited the number bought.¹⁷

When Professor Bouquet became librarian in 1934, he rearranged and recatalogued the entire library. He found and listed over five thousand volumes printed in the United States before 1876. These, as well as the rare book collection, were placed in special storage rooms in the basement. In recognition of his services in the library, the Board authorized extra pay for his duties. Students, who assisted Bouquet, usually were paid under various federal programs, such as the NYA and FERA. A book bindery even was set up in the basement to save money.¹⁸ New library rules limited the number of books which could be borrowed at one time and set up a system of fines for overdue books. When a student registered, he paid a deposit of three dollars for use of the library facilities. At the end of the year if he owed nothing for fines or damage, his deposit was returned.¹⁹

The Building and Grounds Committee of the Board worked continuously to keep the seminary building and Vanderburgh House repaired and painted. Each summer rooms in the seminary building were

¹⁷ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 54, 75, 83, 91, 111, 119, 133; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 15, 49, 74; Minutes, Faculty, V, p. 289; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 11, 14, 29.

¹⁸ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 83-84, 95, 98, 101, 111, 117, 119, 130; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 111, 181, 191; Minutes, Faculty, VI, p. 11.

¹⁹ Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 57, 92-93, 100.

redecorated and furnishings renovated. Major projects for both structures included new roofs and new heating systems. The boiler systems had caused constant problems and needed expensive repairs, so new oil burners were installed. As the student body increased, storage rooms were converted to dormitory rooms and additional showers and drinking fountains installed. After 1938 students did most of the routine summer maintenance work on the building, and for four years, 1938 to 1942, a student, Lewis Koerselman, served as custodian and maintenance man.²⁰

During 1927 the Executive Committee had the campus landscaped and concrete sidewalks laid across the grounds. The drought of the 1930's damaged the lawn to such an extent that it had to be reseeded in 1939.²¹ In 1935 signs to advertise the seminary were erected at the front and back of the campus.²²

At various times the Board of Directors considered relocating the school on the former Bellevue College campus. Some of the Directors, including former seminary president, A. B. Marshall, repeatedly urged the move, and the Executive Committee even hired an architect to prepare estimates for remodeling the buildings.

²⁰ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 20, 31-32, 45, 84, 87-88, 98-102, 112-14, 126, 144, 151, 174-75, 186, 190, 201.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 23, 37, 42, 190.

²² Ibid., pp. 138-40, 143.

At every point, however, the majority of those connected with the seminary felt it would lose far more than it would gain by moving from Omaha.²³

The Executive Committee allowed various community organizations to use the seminary building and grounds. After 1927 the Kountze Place Ministerial Association sponsored an annual two week summer Bible school, which over two hundred children attended. The Omaha Council of Churches used seminary classrooms for leadership training schools during 1938 and 1939. The Executive Committee also authorized use of the facilities by public school citizenship classes and for WPA sewing classes. These groups paid the janitor and utilities and assumed responsibility for any other incidentals or damage.²⁴

The perennial financial problems of the seminary were accentuated by the depression of the 1930's. The stock market crash reduced the value of seminary-owned stocks by as much as fifty per cent. To raise money the treasurer willingly sold a thousand dollar Chilean bond, formerly paying seven per cent interest, for four hundred dollars. Such sales also reduced the school's endowment. Payments on mortgages held by the school were extended and interest rates reduced in order to obtain some income.²⁵

²³ Ibid., pp. 41, 167, 186, 188, 190; Minutes, Board, II, p. 23.

²⁴ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 12, 17, 23, 26-27, 31; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 9-12, 43, 46, 48, 52, 55-56, 78-79.

²⁵ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 58, 60; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 13-14, 38-40, 52, 88, 90-91, 99-100, 105-06, 110-11, 120, 126, 157.

As incomes of churches declined, synods found it impossible to send the seminary a percentage of their budgets as they had done in the past. In 1939 receipts were more than thirty thousand dollars and disbursements about twenty-one thousand, but almost half the receipts included one large gift designated for endowment.²⁶

To raise money for current expenses and endowment the seminary conducted seven financial campaigns between 1924 and 1941. Those in 1924 and 1926 were for endowment and increased that fund to over one hundred thousand dollars, but still far short of the two hundred and fifty thousand recommended by the General Assembly.²⁷ The Board launched fund drives in 1934 and 1936 to pay current expenses. It hoped to obtain pledges of fifteen thousand dollars per year for three years, but adverse economic conditions reduced the amount pledged to about five thousand per year. Between 1928 and 1932 the Executive Committee hired two ministers as financial agents. The Reverend H. S. Condit worked three years and was moderately successful until his death in an automobile accident. The Reverend Charles Miller worked only during 1932 and resigned due to the depression.²⁸

²⁶ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 112, 134; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 148, 175, 181, 191, 196, 204-07, 213-14; Omaha Seminary Record, XXI, No. 3 (1939), n.p.

²⁷ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 5-6; Minutes, Executive Committee, I, pp. 271-73; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 24, 30-31, 34.

²⁸ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 62-63, 75; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 108, 121-22, 128, 135, 137, 150-53, 155; Omaha Seminary Record, XVI, No. 2 (1934), p. 1.

All Presbyterian seminaries participated in the 1939 Sesqui-Centennial Fund of the Presbyterian Church, but the Board of Christian Education required each of them to submit special reports on financial conditions and programs, as well as have a survey made of their fund-raising possibilities.²⁹ The Omaha Seminary paid Martz and Lundy, a Chicago firm, six hundred dollars to conduct a survey during the spring of 1939. The firm's representative recommended that the school hire an experienced fund-raiser and conduct a campaign in the spring of 1940. He felt that the Golden Anniversary of the school in 1941 would give added appeal to the plan for raising endowment funds. As a result, the Executive Committee hired Jesse G. Arnold of Denver to organize and publicize the drive. In April, 1940, students, professors, laymen, and ministers canvassed the area around Omaha. Almost twelve thousand dollars was pledged and over four thousand dollars received in cash during the first three weeks of the campaign. Promotional costs were about two thousand dollars by mid-May. Denise felt it was important to continue the campaign until everyone had been contacted, so he tried unsuccessfully to hire a part-time financial agent. Finally in December Arnold returned and worked another six weeks to try and complete the canvass.³⁰

²⁹Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 57, 59-60, 82, 101-02, 108, 111-12, 114-18.

³⁰Minutes, Board, II, pp. 102-03, 112, 118, 123-24, 131; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 72, 176-77, 183, 193, 196-98, 202-05, 207-12, 214-15; Minutes, Faculty, VI, p. 88.

The theological seminaries made frequent attempts to persuade the General Assembly to include them in the Benevolence Budget of the church. Their participation in the Sesqui-Centennial Fund seemed a step in this direction. Several presbyteries recommended inclusion of the seminaries in the budget for 1940, but the General Council of the Assembly only authorized the collection of a special offering for the schools in the fall of 1941. Each seminary was to receive a proportionate share based on the number of its undergraduate students. No one at the Omaha School expected this to bring in much money, but it was a step toward the church assuming responsibility for theological education.³¹

The Omaha Seminary received several large gifts to its endowment fund in spite of the adverse economic conditions. Mrs. Mary Thaw died in 1929 and from her estate the seminary received over one hundred fifty thousand dollars, including one-fifteenth of the residual estate to purchase and maintain property, five thousand dollars for scholarships, and seventy-five hundred dollars from an insurance policy. In addition, each faculty member received one thousand dollars. The seminary signed a statement that Mrs. Thaw's name would not be used in any memorial in order to obtain the bequest.³² An Omaha couple donated Canadian land valued at over

³¹ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 124, 131; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, p. 208; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 152nd General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1940), pp. 43-46.

³² Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 53, 55, 70, 74-76, 79, 81, 87, 97, 124; Omaha Seminary Record, XII, Nos. 2-3 (1930), p. 3.

sixteen thousand dollars, and bequests from estates in New York, Pennsylvania, and Iowa amounted to over seventy-five thousand dollars. Bank failures and the stock market crash resulted in cancellation of some gifts because estates shrank so that donors recalled gifts or their heirs wrote that there were insufficient funds to pay all the beneficiaries. After several years of litigation in Sarpy County Courts, in 1935 twenty thousand dollars went to Omaha Seminary from the endowment and alumni funds of the bankrupt Bellevue College. President Denise and A. A. Lamoreaux, a member of the Executive Committee, visited the farms bequeathed to the school and reported that most of the properties had little value. In 1939 the seminary sold land in Slope County, North Dakota, to the United States Government, but usually the Executive Committee made minor repairs and hoped to obtain enough rent to pay the taxes on the farms. Gradually seminary funds were invested in low risk stocks and bonds rather than land and mortgages, which produced little income.³³

The faculty and the Board tried in every way to increase enrollment and at the same time raise the standards for admission. Only candidates specifically exempted from further academic preparation by presbyteries were admitted without at least three years of college preparation. When seven students from Ireland applied for admission

³³ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 75-76, 101; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 4-5, 13-15, 35, 45, 91-92, 94-95, 98-99, 102, 104, 106, 110-14, 117, 120, 129-30, 135, 137-39, 162-63, 167, 171-73, 183, 190, 195-97, 200, 203, 207-08.

in 1928, they were advised to complete work at the University of Omaha before enrolling at the seminary. Apparently this was supported by the presbyteries because of thirty new students enrolled during 1938 and 1939, only two lacked college degrees, and all "special" students in those years were non-Presbyterians. Between 1924 and 1941 students from nine Protestant denominations attended seminary classes. A considerable number of women studied to become church secretaries or directors of religious education.³⁴

In addition to requiring higher standards for admission, the faculty established and enforced strict rules for the students' behavior. Anyone absent from more than one-fourth the sessions of a class was automatically failed. To obtain an excused absence a student was required to submit a written justification to the professor and the dean. Absences from student preaching services resulted in reductions in public speaking grades. Papers turned in late also received lower grades. Students paid a two dollar fee for late registration and could not register for classes after the third week of the semester. In 1937 the faculty adopted a new grading scale: 93-100, A; 85-92, B; 77-84, C; 70-76, D; E, incomplete; F, failed. Students who seemed unable to meet the higher educational standards were advised to find another vocation. The faculty also suggested

³⁴ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 31-32, 49, 102; Minutes, Faculty, V, pp. 263-67; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 8-9, 12, 18-20, 24-27, 29-36, 43, 48-49, 58-60, 67-68, 79-80, 85, 94-95.

that students who held full-time pastorates take four years to complete their course of study. Several students were advised that their "temperament" simply did not fit them for the ministry.³⁵

Enrollment climbed to a high of twenty-seven full-time students in 1930 but dropped slightly after 1933 during the national depression. In May, 1940, however, President Denise reported fifty-seven students were enrolled and during the next two years the overall enrollment increased, although there were less full-time undergraduate students. Most still came from the Midwest, but the survey by Martz and Lundy indicated there were students from seventeen states.³⁶

The Board of Directors also established stricter policies for the awarding of degrees. In line with recommendations of the American Association of Theological Schools, the Board changed degree titles to Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Theology. Candidates for the Bachelor's Degree were required to have an A.B. degree from an accredited college, including one year of Greek and one year of Hebrew, and ninety-six semester credits at the seminary with a grade of "C" or higher. In 1926 a senior had to spend an extra year at the seminary because of low grades. Transfer students had to earn at

³⁵ Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 31-32, 55-56, 61, 66, 69-75, 77, 86, 98.

³⁶ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 121, 130; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 46, 88, 127, 191; Omaha Seminary Record, XII, No. 4 (1930), p. 3; Omaha Seminary Record, XIII, No. 4 (1931), p. 5.

least thirty-two hours at Omaha Seminary to be eligible for a degree. Graduates of non-accredited colleges were admitted on a probationary basis and became candidates for degrees only after they proved their capabilities. In 1938 the faculty refused to recommend a student for a bachelor's degree because his A.B. degree was from a non-accredited institution. By 1941 the faculty screened candidates so carefully that almost no degrees were granted in absentia.

After 1940 candidates for a Master of Theology Degree were required to be graduates of an approved theological seminary, have a "B" average in Hebrew and Greek, present an acceptable thesis to the faculty, and complete twenty-four hours of post graduate work. The thesis had to be written in the student's major field, contain at least ten thousand words, and be submitted by April 15 of the year in which he wished to receive his degree. Occasionally theses were rejected completely, and in other instances the faculty withdrew its approval of a candidate for a Master's Degree because the student refused to follow the instructions of his adviser and generally did poor work.³⁷

The seminary did not promise to find every student a pastorate, but the demand for student ministers was often greater than the supply. Presbyteries supposedly guided students in locating churches, but gradually the members of the faculty assumed this responsibility.

³⁷ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 22, 134; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 28-29, 81; Minutes, Faculty, V, pp. 253-54, 272-74; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 40, 62, 64, 70, 86, 96, 99-100; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1940, Omaha Seminary Record, XXII, No. 1 (1940), p. 23. Hereinafter cited as Catalogue, 1940.

Most students held pastorates in Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska. In addition to the practical experience gained, students were encouraged to discuss problems during their classes at the seminary. President Denise reported to the Board in 1940 that students regularly supplied twenty-nine churches with a membership of over three thousand. Additional practical experience for students came from their participation in broadcasts on several Omaha radio stations.³⁸

The seminary students participated in inter-seminary conferences and conventions during the year. Whenever possible the school paid at least part of their expenses and also sent a faculty representative. On the campus each class elected officers and sent them to a "Seminary Council", which worked with the faculty on student programs. The professors planned spiritual retreats in the fall for students as well as special parties in their homes each year.³⁹

While many students attended the Omaha Seminary because of the opportunities for student pastorates, the reasonable costs were also an important factor. Semester fees never exceeded twenty-five dollars, and total costs including board and books were just over one hundred dollars per semester. In 1933 to improve food service the seminary

³⁸ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 66, 90, 97, 101, 130; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 42, 108, 196; Minutes, Faculty, VI, p. 69; Catalogue, 1940, p. 21.

³⁹ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 50, 90; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 78, 90; Catalogue, 1940, p. 24.

took over management of the student boarding club. Three meals per day for six days cost only four dollars per week, but accounts had to be paid in advance because the school borrowed money to finance the club.⁴⁰

Although the Omaha Seminary spent less per student than most other seminaries, it continued its policy of granting as much aid as possible to students. Special funds from many individuals were designated for scholarships. The Board approved a special two hundred fifty dollar scholarship in 1925 to a junior student, who would spend his week-ends working for the seminary. After 1926 two prizes were given annually to the junior and the middler student with the highest academic ranking in their respective classes. Beginning in 1939 students who received fifty dollars per semester in aid worked fifty hours per semester at the school. Seminary supporters also established low interest loan funds, which could be repaid by students following graduation. Some former students became delinquent in payments and in 1940 the school employed a Kansas City collection agency to collect the notes.⁴¹

To climax the work of each year the Executive Committee and faculty planned commencement activities, including the traditional communion service, alumni banquet, and reception. During these years graduation ceremonies and the dinners were held at Omaha's First

⁴⁰ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 127, 209; Catalogue, 1941, pp. 21-22; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1929, Omaha Seminary Record, X, No. 4 (1929), pp. 19-20.

⁴¹ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 13, 20, 22, 199; Minutes, Board, II, p. 10; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 65, 73, 82, 84-85, 95-97; Omaha Seminary Record, VIII, No. 1 (1926), pp. 25-26.

Presbyterian Church. Many alumni attended these events; over two hundred came in 1931. Even the depression years failed to reduce greatly the number attending. Retiring professors, such as Jenkins, Herron, and Mitchell, were given special recognition at these events. After 1928 the Omaha School followed the practice of other seminaries and discontinued having a senior class member speak at commencement. Presbyterian ministers from Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Kansas, and Oklahoma spoke at the graduation ceremonies.⁴²

In 1941 the seminary was fifty years old and held a "semi-centennial" celebration as a part of commencement. Special services at North Presbyterian Church marked the actual founding in February, but to enable more people to attend, the anniversary banquet was held in May on the day before graduation. At the service following the dinner the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Reverend William Lindsay Young, presided. An outstanding Presbyterian layman and Omaha Board member, Dr. George Rosenlof of Lincoln, and a leading Presbyterian minister, the Reverend Arnold Lowe, were the speakers. The following night the alumni association sponsored a dinner for the graduates and a 1927 alumnus spoke at the commencement activities. At all the services ministers and laymen told of the progress and growth of the seminary during its fifty year history.⁴³

⁴² Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 13, 15, 23, 35, 37, 53, 62-63, 93-94, 105-06, 120-21, 131, 148, 150, 158-59, 168; Minutes, Faculty V, p. 251; Minutes, Faculty, VI, p. 5.

⁴³ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 208-11; Omaha Seminary Record, XXIII, No. 2 (1941), n.p.

Even while the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha celebrated its golden anniversary, it evaluated its activities and relationship to the church. In 1934 and 1938 the Board had appointed fact-finding committees to survey the effectiveness of the institution, but both times the small number of responses and the varied suggestions made the results of little value. Of the four hundred questionnaires sent out in 1938, only thirty-six replies were returned.⁴⁴

Of more value was the fund-raising survey by Martz and Lundy in 1939. This document pointed out both strengths and weaknesses of the school and suggested means to improve the seminary program and financial foundation. The school needed over five hundred thousand dollars in endowment in order to employ additional faculty members, balance its budget, and improve the library. With these needs in mind, the Board appointed another study committee and launched an extensive fund-raising campaign in 1940.⁴⁵

One possible solution to the problem was merger with another theological school. The General Assembly had considered this as early as 1929, but no seminary would agree to a union which meant a loss of any of its assets, programs, or identity. Most proposals concerned a merger of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha and Dubuque Seminary. The Boards of both institutions, however, refused to unite

⁴⁴ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 103-05; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 169-70, 178-81; Minutes, Faculty, VI, p. 43.

⁴⁵ Thomas R. Byrd, "Fund-Raising Survey of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska," May, 1939, pp. 1-3; Minutes, Board, II, p. 128.

if it meant moving to another location. At the 1940 meeting of the General Assembly the Special Committee on Theological Education declared that the Presbyterian Church should reduce the number of its seminaries from eleven to six. There were too many seminaries for the number of students enrolled. Merger of the Omaha and Dubuque theological schools also was included in this proposal. Careful investigation of seminary problems and operation also convinced the committee that the church as a whole should assume financial responsibility for support of the theological schools. The committee felt that the problems were of such magnitude that they could not be solved hurriedly, so it recommended immediate minor changes and asked for more time to make specific proposals. The General Assembly approved a special offering for the seminaries and continued its committee. One change for the seminaries after 1940 was the adoption of a uniform system of accounting so that the Board of Christian Education could better evaluate their finances. The new, more complex system of bookkeeping required that an auditor be hired and an annual report be submitted to the Board of Christian Education. The Omaha Seminary Executive Committee acted promptly to institute these changes in the accounting procedures.

⁴⁶Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 152nd General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1940), pp. 112-17, 132-36; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 43, 132-33; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 73, 129, 143, 145-46, 199-200.

Aware of the views and actions of the General Assembly, the Board of the Omaha School worked even harder than before to up-grade the curriculum and obtain accreditation from the American Association of Theological Schools. In the event of any merger, the Board hoped to operate from a position of strength. In November, 1939, a representative of the Association visited the campus and recommended certain changes before the organization would grant its approval. The faculty again increased standards for admission and the granting of degrees. Special students, those without degrees from accredited colleges, would make up no more than twenty per cent of the total enrollment. Credits could not apply on both theological seminary and college degrees. All work for Master's Degrees had to be done in residence. President Denise wrote the Association and requested details on what was needed to make the library acceptable. The Board approved all the changes made by the faculty and authorized any further actions necessary to obtain the accreditation. The Association of Theological Schools Accrediting Committee would meet again in June, 1941, and everyone hoped to have the Omaha Seminary approved at that time.

⁴⁷ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 112, 122-23, 126, 131; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, p. 194; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 82-83, 85, 87-88.

CHAPTER V

CLOSING OF THE SEMINARY

In spite of all efforts to keep the seminary in operation, the General Assembly withdrew its approval of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha in 1943, and the school closed its doors. As a result of the closing, the seminary Board found itself with two masters. As in the past it acknowledged the authority of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. After 1945 the Board also was subject to the jurisdiction of the District Court of Douglas County, Nebraska.

While the school remained in operation, the faculty and the Board consistently sought to develop curriculum in line with their stated purpose to train ministers for the midwestern rural churches. To emphasize this point in January, 1942, the seminary began offering a course in rural sociology. A professor from the University of Nebraska School of Agriculture was employed to teach the class. All students were required to enroll in the new course, but only those who wanted scholastic credit had to take the examinations. To further aid students in the rural ministry, the seminary offered new courses in personal evangelism, expository preaching, and at the request of the students, recreational leadership. At the same time, the Board of

National Missions, Board of Christian Education, and the Department of Rural Evangelism sent an increased number of speakers to discuss the work of the rural pastor.¹

In the spring of 1943 the faculty considered placing the seminary on a quarter system. Due to a lack of agreement on the part of the professors, it was decided to wait until the 1943 General Assembly acted in regard to a theological education program, before making any extensive changes.²

The summer school program at Hollister, Missouri, continued during 1941 and 1942, but by the latter year the enrollment had dropped to sixteen due to wartime travel restrictions. In both 1942 and 1943 Professors Clyde and Cairns and President Denise investigated other possible extension programs. The war plus commitments to denominational conferences prevented the addition of any other activities.³

By September, 1941, all full-time professors, except President Denise, had doctor of philosophy degrees. The seminary, however, still lacked full-time professors in the important departments of homiletics and pastoral theology. The Reverend William H. Phelps instructed these

¹ Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 103, 111, 114, 122, 127; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 140, 151; Catalogue of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska, 1942, Omaha Seminary Record, XXIV, No. 1 (1942), pp. 9-10.

² Minutes, Faculty, VI, p. 130; Minutes, Board, II, p. 243.

³ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, p. 217; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 121, 131-32; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 141, 151-52.

classes on a part-time basis. Dr. Earle E. Cairns, a member of the Omaha Seminary class of 1938, became Professor of New Testament in the fall of 1941. Mrs. Clyde and Edwin Puls continued as part-time instructors in religious education and speech, respectively. Every professor received a cash salary and free use of a home near the seminary campus; those performing extra duties received extra pay. Faculty members not only taught classes at the seminary, but also supplied churches, participated in leadership training schools, led young people's conferences, and wrote articles for publication. Professor Cairns also served as Protestant chaplain at Boys' Town. Besides Sunday preaching the professors spoke at service clubs, commencement exercises, and synod meetings as representatives of the theological school.⁴

In June, 1941, the Executive Committee began to search for a successor to President Denise, who would reach retirement age by May, 1943. Denise requested this action, but he did not decrease his activities to raise money and publicize the seminary. At a meeting in December, 1942, the Executive Committee authorized a special committee to approach John Oliver Nelson, Ph.D., Philadelphia, about the presidency. When contacted, Nelson tactfully, but firmly, declined the position. The special committee continued the search for a new executive

⁴ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 215-17, 226, 231, 243; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 136, 140-41, 151-52.

but was unable to find a qualified candidate, who would accept the position. Therefore, at the annual meeting in 1943 the Board voted to retain Denise as president for one year beyond retirement age.⁵ Mrs. Alberta Casler remained on the staff as secretary, assistant treasurer, and registrar.⁶

Aware of the deficiencies of the seminary library, the Board and faculty determined to build and improve it in accordance with the standards of the American Association of Theological Schools. As part of this effort, in January, 1943, Miss Mary Inglis, a former librarian at Technical High School, joined the staff on a part-time basis. The Board decided that Dr. Bouquet would continue to supervise the library, but as soon as possible the seminary would employ a full-time professional librarian. The library contained about twenty thousand volumes, including almost nine hundred current publications, which were added during 1942 and 1943. The seminary also began to subscribe to a large number of theological magazines. Students attending classes not requiring textbooks were assessed a one dollar fee, which was used to buy new books. Professor Bouquet continued to transfer old books to the basement "archive section." His catalogue of these materials showed that the seminary owned a complete file of the minutes of the General

⁵ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 215, 230-32, 235, 239-40, 242; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 141, 156.

⁶ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 215, 233.

Assembly since 1705, a valuable collection of old hymnbooks, and even publications in American Indian languages.⁷

The financial situation of the seminary brightened during 1942-1943. After searching many years, the school seemed to have found a successful financial agent, Jesse Rogers, a member of the Dundee Presbyterian Church. Originally hired to aid Jesse Arnold, Sesqui-Centennial Fund Campaign Director, Rogers began work as a full-time fund raiser in March, 1942. In his first six months at the seminary Rogers raised over six thousand dollars in cash and pledges from Omaha and Council Bluffs churches.⁸

The increase in contributions aided the seminary but failed to meet all of its expenses. The school's current expense account had an average deficit of over five hundred dollars, and the Executive Committee had to continue to transfer "unrestricted funds" to pay current obligations. The Board of Directors approved an annual budget of twenty-eight thousand dollars for the school in 1942. The budget was part of the new accounting system required by the General Assembly and the seminary by-laws as amended in 1941.⁹ By 1942 the school

⁷ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 143, 148, 150; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, p. 240; Minutes, Faculty, VI, p. 119.

⁸ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 218-20, 222, 224-27, 230-31, 233, 239-40; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 138, 148, 152-53.

⁹ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 136-37, 142-43, 150, 153; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 216-17, 228-30, 239, 261.

owned five houses occupied by professors, four other houses in Omaha, and eight almost valueless farms. These properties gave the seminary little additional income, and the Investment Committee sold the farms as it received reasonable offers for them.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1942 for the first time included the seminaries in the church budget. It set aside two per cent of its undesignated funds for theological education. The nine Presbyterian seminaries were to receive a share of the funds on a basis of student enrollment, per capita cost, and the amount necessary to increase endowment income enough to meet current expenses. For 1942-1943 the Omaha Seminary received seven per cent of the amount budgeted for theological education, or about three thousand dollars. The school received only about fourteen thousand dollars from student fees and endowment, so in addition to the amount received from the General Assembly, it needed another eleven thousand dollars to meet its twenty-eight thousand dollar budget. The Assembly also designated areas for all seminary fund-raising efforts. This limited the Omaha institution to the states west of the Missouri River and east of the Rocky Mountains. The June, 1942, issue of the Seminary Record explained the new system and urged individuals and churches to continue gifts specifically designated for the Omaha Seminary, since they were not

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Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 216-25, 232-33, 241;
Minutes, Board, II, p. 142.

counted in the percentage sent to the denomination's Central Receiving Agency.¹¹

In spite of higher admission requirements more than forty full-time undergraduate students attended Omaha Seminary during 1942 and 1943, and only about ten per cent of them lacked college degrees. Under a new policy the faculty refused to admit additional students without degrees, even as special students, and put on probation any who were graduates of non-accredited institutions. Men who had attained college degrees after seminary graduation and then hoped to use some of the same credits for a Bachelor of Divinity Degree from the seminary were refused. On the other hand, in 1942 it readily granted Lewis Koerselman a B.D. because he had completed a full academic program at the University of Omaha. In 1943 only one member of the seminary graduating class lacked a college degree, and he had been an ordained minister when he entered the seminary. The faculty felt the school lacked adequate facilities for graduate work and in 1941 asked the Board to discontinue granting the Master of Theology Degree. Although the Board refused to drop the graduate program, it urged the faculty to offer the program only in accordance with the standards of the American Association of Theological Schools. Since the Omaha institution could not meet these standards, the resolution in effect ended the graduate program.¹²

¹¹ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 142, 148, 152; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, p. 229; Omaha Seminary Record, XXIV, No. 2 (1942), n.p.

¹² Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 106-09, 112-14, 116-17, 120-21, 129; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 141-42, 145, 148, 152-53; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, p. 220.

The faculty admonished students in regard to poor attendance and scholarship, as well as telling some of them to withdraw because they failed to maintain the required grade average. One senior found he was not able to participate in the 1943 commencement because he had not made up certain deficiencies. When a former Omaha student tried to transfer his credits to Dubuque Seminary, his transcript carried a notation that his work was less than passing, and although the Dubuque School could do as it pleased, the Omaha School would not grant him a degree unless he repeated several courses.¹³ A schedule of fees for make-up examinations also encouraged students to do their work promptly. Failure of students to pay fees in the student "boarding club" led the faculty to appoint Professor Clyde as club supervisor. In addition, Clyde supervised the student preaching program and unsuccessfully tried to get church officials to aid him in making student preaching assignments. Since most students preached every Sunday, this duty presented many problems.¹⁴

With the help of Professor Cairns the student council planned a spiritual retreat at the Bellevue Presbyterian Church and Fontenelle Forest for the fall of 1942. The program was so successful that the council held a similar one day affair at the Immanuel Hospital Chapel the following spring. In January, 1942, five seniors represented the

¹³Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 106, 109-11, 119-20, 124-25, 128-29, 133-34.

¹⁴Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 119, 121-22; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 136, 143; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, p. 232.

seminary at a Faith and Life Seminar for pastors at Hastings College. The Board of Christian Education helped pay student expenses at the seminar.¹⁵

Both students and professors participated in planning for commencement. The annual banquets and exercises continued to be held at First Presbyterian Church in Omaha. In 1942 the Chief Justice of the North Dakota Supreme Court spoke and in 1943 the speaker was the Reverend Orlo Choguill, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church,¹⁶ Emporia, Kansas.

In spite of the concerted efforts by everyone at the seminary, the American Association of Theological Schools seemed unwilling to consider the accreditation of the Omaha institution. In 1942 the Executive Committee asked the Association to re-examine the seminary. When President Denise attended the Association meeting that June, he urged approval of the school. On his return to Omaha, however, he reported that the application was still pending and the situation did not look encouraging because the Association had approved only one application out of fourteen in the past two years. The Association's Executive Secretary notified Professor Clyde in January, 1943, that the accrediting committee had not met the previous year and did not plan to meet until December, 1943. If the Omaha School was to be accredited, it could not be done before then.¹⁷

¹⁵ Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 111, 117, 123, 129, 131; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 149, 152; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, p. 232.

¹⁶ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 224-25, 242-43; Minutes, Faculty, VI, p. 131.

¹⁷ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 227-29; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 113, 118-19, 127.

Even more discouraging to the Omaha Seminary were the actions of the General Assembly and the reports of its Special Committee on Theological Education. During 1941 the Omaha and Dubuque theological schools sensed that in the near future one of them might lose the approval of the General Assembly, so each prepared publicity pamphlets explaining why it should be continued. In addition to this information, the Omaha institution declared in its paper that in the past decreasing the number of seminaries had resulted in less candidates for the ministry, as had happened in the merger of Lane and Chicago seminaries. If the church had too many ministers, the Omaha Seminary felt a union might be a good idea, but the problem in 1941 was a shortage of ministers. In the fall of 1941 one member of the Special Committee on Theological Education of the General Assembly visited the Omaha campus and that winter representatives of the Omaha Board of Directors attended a meeting of the Special Committee of the General Assembly. At that meeting the midwesterners asserted the unanimous feeling of the Directors of the Omaha institution that it remain in its present location.¹⁸

During 1942 representatives of the Special Committee evaded answering direct inquiries on seminary mergers, and one suggested a consolidation of Omaha Seminary and Park College, Missouri, on the latter campus. The Executive Committee explained to him personally

¹⁸ Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 106, 108-09; Minutes, Board, II, p. 138; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 217, 219; Omaha Seminary Record, XXIII, No. 3 (1941), pp. 2-6. Special Committee on Theological Education of General Assembly hereinafter cited as Special Committee.

why this would be both illegal and unwise, and sent the Special Committee a written report on the matter. The Omaha representatives emphasized that Nebraska law did not permit such an illegal removal of the assets of charitable trusts from the state. When the General Assembly met in May, it agreed with the Special Committee that mergers were not feasible at that time. On the other hand, it approved further study of the seminaries by the committee. Almost everyone connected with the Omaha School felt this was only a temporary measure, and they knew that any decline in enrollment or reduction in financial support would make the institution vulnerable in the future.¹⁹

In the fall of 1942 the Special Committee published a confidential report, "A Policy and Program for the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A." Before the General Assembly met in 1943 the committee planned to discuss the document and its implications with each of the theological seminaries. During early November the Omaha Seminary faculty discussed the report at length in preparation for another visit by the Special Committee. The comprehensive report covered every aspect of theological education, including criticisms of ministers by the church, evaluations of both pre-seminary and seminary curriculum and faculty, and recommendations for future seminary programs. While the Omaha faculty agreed with many of the points in the report, it also

¹⁹ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 220-24, 227; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 142, 144.

felt that the Special Committee had been too critical of the seminaries because it failed to recognize both the poor quality of the pre-seminary training and more importantly the work of the Holy Spirit in the church. It seemed obvious that in terms of the recommended program, the Omaha theological school had too many deficiencies to survive. On November 16, 1942, three members of the Special Committee, including the chairman and executive secretary, and the chief administrative officer of the General Assembly met with the faculty and the Board of Directors to discuss generally theological education in the Presbyterian Church and specifically the Omaha Seminary.²⁰

The Omaha supporters found the attitude of the Special Committee very discouraging, but at the committee's request the faculty and the Executive Committee prepared additional information on the Omaha Seminary. A committee made up of Professors Mayne, Clyde, and Bouquet was asked to explain specifically what faculty, curriculum, and library facilities would be required to carry out the recommendations of the Special Committee.

While the leaders of the Omaha School cooperated in every way with the Special Committee, they also studied ways to protect what they considered the best interests of the Omaha Seminary. On December 1

²⁰Special Committee on Theological Education, "Policy and Program of Theological Education," September, 1942; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 147-48; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 233-34; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 124-26.

they heard a report by James Adams and Henry Maxwell, Omaha attorneys and Board members, on the legal status of the property of the seminary. They were told that under Nebraska law all the seminary property constituted a charitable trust. Therefore, only by action of the District Court could any property be removed from Nebraska, and in the past the courts had been very reluctant to allow this when the corporation involved was a going concern. The lawyers also explained a related but pertinent point, the cy pres doctrine. When a charitable trust was unable to fulfill its designated purpose, the court usually applied any funds to a purpose as nearly as possible like the original, but it kept the assets in the state. After considerable discussion this information was submitted to the Special Committee. In late winter of 1943 representatives of the Omaha institution went to Chicago to meet with the Special Committee. Only one member of the entire committee met with them. To add to the ferment, an Omaha Board member received a letter from Dr. Hermann Morse of the Special Committee suggesting a cooperative program between the Omaha and Chicago seminaries. None of these reports or contacts encouraged the Omaha Seminary Executive Committee. It took heart only from the advice of its attorneys that the seminary assets could not be removed from Nebraska as long as the school fulfilled the conditions of the trust, i.e. training ministers for the Presbyterian Church.

²¹ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 234-42; Minutes, Board, II, p. 147; Minutes, Faculty, VI, pp. 127-29; Robert Adams, "Memorandum, The Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, The Judicial Doctrine of Cy Pres and the History of Its Application to the Seminary," pp. 4-5. Hereinafter cited as Adams, "Memorandum."

In April the premonitions of those connected with the Omaha theological school proved to be accurate. The chairman and two members of the Special Committee informed them that it would recommend that the Omaha Seminary be discontinued and its assets transferred to the General Assembly. Within a few days the four full-time faculty members signed a statement that they felt the appraisal of Omaha Seminary was objective and accurate, and they agreed not to oppose the report. They advised that the seminary not continue to operate after September 1, 1943. Later they would qualify this approval, but by then the damage had been done.

The written recommendations of the Special Committee left no doubt that it considered the Omaha School an inferior institution, which should be closed. The standard of theological education was so low that the Special Committee could see no practical way to revise and improve the Omaha School to enable it to serve satisfactorily the Presbyterian Church. The Special Committee saw many of the same deficiencies at the Dubuque Seminary, but recommended that the school there be continued temporarily to see if it could find adequate resources and strengthen a recently established program to train rural ministers. When the Omaha Seminary Board met in May, it studied the report and discussed the actions of the Special Committee. It appeared to the Directors that for some reason Omaha Seminary had never been given a fair hearing, and they believed that the Special Committee had exceeded its authority. Rumors relating to the report already had prevented the seminary from obtaining

a new president and made it impractical, if not impossible, for the school to open in the fall. The Board then adopted resolutions asking the Special Committee to revise its report in order to present the positive contributions of the Omaha School, as well as its faults. The Board, however, agreed with the faculty and the Executive Committee that if the General Assembly withdrew its approval, the seminary would be discontinued. It accepted all moral and financial responsibilities to the faculty and students, but the Board decided it would not release control of any seminary assets. The Directors also asked that a joint committee be appointed to study theological education in the Midwest and the future use of seminary property. These decisions came only after lengthy discussions convinced the majority of the Board members that they would have to accept the Special Committee report even though many thought it unfair. Some directors also agreed to discontinue the seminary because they recognized that the recurring financial problems would be even greater if they tried to upgrade the seminary program.²²

The Special Committee modified its criticisms of the Omaha Seminary in its report to the General Assembly, but the recommendations remained the same. Even a last minute appeal by President Denise on the floor of the General Assembly failed to prevent approval of the report. In July, 1943, a special issue of the Seminary Record

²² Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 246-49, 250-56; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 154-57; Letter, April 30, 1943, signed by the Faculty, Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha.

attempted to explain to alumni and supporters what had happened and why, but for many there seemed no justification for the closing. President Denise later wrote that he felt the Omaha School was closed to increase the amount received by other seminaries from the General Assembly theological education fund, and to enable the General Assembly to obtain control of the assets of the Omaha institution. He also hinted at collusion between the chairman of the Special Committee and an Omaha faculty member, who vigorously urged acceptance of the report.²³

Following the action of the General Assembly the Executive Committee immediately began to adjust the affairs of the seminary in terms of the decision to close. Professors Bouquet and Clyde resigned in June to accept teaching positions at other seminaries. Dr. Cairns went to Wheaton College in Illinois to teach history. Dean Mayne, who had been ill since late spring, died in August. At the end of 1943 President Denise resigned to accept a pastorate in Hawaii, where his son had a church. To aid Denise the Board approved a retirement allowance to supplement his pension; he received this until his death in 1966. The Board felt considerable concern for the two elderly former professors, Mitchell and White, and authorized continuation of the special pensions previously granted them. Financial Agent Rogers left in August to work for Hastings College, while

²³Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 155th General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1943), pp. 57-120, 172-78, 359-81, 425-28; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 256-61; Denise, "Reminiscences," pp. 82-83; Omaha Seminary Record, XXV, No. 2 (1943), 10 Pages, No Numbers.

Mrs. Casler remained as office secretary to handle administrative
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 matters.

Uncertain as to the future of the seminary and unable to dispose of the school's assets without the approval of the General Assembly, the Executive Committee decided to lease the Kountze Place building and grounds. Some Mennonite church leaders contacted the seminary officials in June, 1943, and inquired about renting the building and grounds for a Bible Training Institute they planned to open that September. After receiving the approval of the Special Committee of the General Assembly and the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee rented the main building to the Mennonite group until June 1, 1944, with the understanding that it would handle all maintenance and pay all expenses on the property, including insurance. The Presbyterian seminary would be allowed to keep its office and library in the building, but the new school, soon incorporated as Grace Bible Institute, was allowed use of the library facilities. When the Reverend Denise left Omaha, his
²⁵
 residence also was rented by the Bible Institute.

Shortly after the Executive Committee signed the lease with the Mennonites, it received an offer from the United States Government

²⁴ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 158, 162, 164-66, 168, 173, 191; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 261, 263, 266-72, 275, 277, 280, 290-91, 293; "Minutes of the Executive Committee, Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1944-1971," pp. 6, 31-32, 60. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Executive Committee, III.

²⁵ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 262, 265-66, 268, 280-81, 289; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 163, 167-68.

to rent the building and convert it into apartments for war workers. The Mennonite lease would have precluded this had it not been that they were looking for a permanent location and within six months they had purchased Stuntz Hall on South Tenth Street. Consequently they agreed to end their lease earlier than originally planned. The seminary Board then signed a seven year lease with the government to rent the main building for about three thousand dollars per year and the president's house, which was to be converted to four apartments, for five hundred dollars per year. The seminary agreed to pay taxes, insurance, and a share of permanent building improvements. The contracts contained an option to end the rental arrangement earlier if both parties agreed. In March, 1944, the Executive Committee moved the seminary office to the basement of the Dundee Presbyterian Church and arranged for the sale of the seminary's furnishings exclusive of the library. The Mennonites bought most of the furniture for \$1056.75. While some of the gifts donated by Omaha church groups were returned, the chapel pulpit temporarily was placed in North Presbyterian Church. The Executive Committee decided to leave most of the books in the basement storage room of the seminary building, although it loaned some volumes to the Synod of Nebraska headquarters. The government completed the remodelling in time for the apartments to be occupied by midsummer of 1944. Since only part of the campus was leased to the government, the Kountze Place Protestant churches again held summer religious meetings on the grounds.

²⁶ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 267-68, 276-77, 290-300; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 1-3, 6, 9-10, 19-20, 22; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 171-73.

With the end of World War II the government offered to cancel the lease on the seminary property, and since the Board recognized that the theological school would never reopen on the old campus, the offer was accepted. Early in 1949 an Omahan, Carl C. Wilson, obtained FHA financing and purchased the east half of the campus for twelve thousand five hundred dollars. To protect the value of the seminary building the Board required that the housing units be of brick construction, meet all building code requirements, and be built without any unnecessary delay. The Board also declared that the units must be at least one hundred feet from the seminary building, although it did authorize slight modification of this requirement if necessary to obtain financing. Later that year Wilson also purchased the seminary building for forty-five thousand dollars. He agreed to permit the library to remain stored in the basement rent-free for three years. Thus the Presbyterian Theological Seminary ceased to exist in Kountze Place, since the president's house and residences of the professors had been sold previously. Until the sale of the campus the seminary office had remained in the Dundee Church basement. The Board then authorized rental of space in downtown Omaha, and the office was moved to the Barker Building, where it remained until 1954, when it was moved to the Omaha National Bank Building at Seventeenth and Farnam Streets.

²⁷ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 268-70, 274-76; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 15-16, 27, 31, 35-36, 39-41, 42-44, 51-52, 58; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 190-91, 195, 199-201, 212.

Final disposition of the seminary library began in 1955. When Wilson sold the old seminary building in that year, the school had to move its library from the basement. An appraisal by a professional librarian indicated that only the collection of rare books and old Bibles had any real value. The Executive Committee offered to give the other materials to various seminaries, but none appeared interested. The Board sold all but the valuable materials, which were moved to the library of the Municipal University of Omaha. In 1969 these were given to the Department of Theology at Hastings College and placed in a special section of the college library. Grace Bible Institute purchased most of the other books for about five cents per volume. ²⁸

Financial problems had been an important factor in discontinuing the seminary, and the administration of the school's assets became a major concern of the General Assembly, the Special Committee on Theological Education, and the Omaha Seminary Board of Directors. The last full year of seminary operation the school had a net loss of over three thousand dollars. After the announcement of the closing, gifts and payments on pledges declined rapidly, so the treasurer told the Board it would have to use caution if it was to meet continuing expenses.

²⁸ Dr. Milo Bail, President of the University of Omaha, served on the seminary Board of Directors and was a member of Dundee Presbyterian Church, Omaha. The gift of books to Hastings College provided that the seminary be allowed to borrow any of them as needed for the Presbyterian Pastors' Summer School each year. After the summer school began in 1957, a small number of books were purchased each year for it. These also were given to Hastings College. Minutes, Board, II, pp. 176, 182, 191, 195-97, 223, 233, 245, 254, 258; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 18, 23, 62, 86, 134; "Minutes of the Board of Directors, Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, 1965-1971," pp. 35-36. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Board, III.

At the same time the Board assured annuitants that they would continue to receive their payments, and it would honor any other commitments previously made.²⁹

After the General Assembly action in 1943 in regard to the Omaha School, the Special Committee and the Omaha Board chose members of a subcommittee to decide on the best uses of the Omaha Seminary assets. At a joint meeting of the two groups in June, 1943, they had agreed that it would take at least a year to settle all the financial and legal matters relating to the seminary property. Both bodies also declared that although the school did not operate, the legal corporation continued to exist.

While the Board proceeded with the closing of the seminary, some of its members obviously were displeased with the progress of events. Although they acknowledged the authority of the General Assembly, they refused to accept the view of the Special Committee that the General Assembly had absolute and final authority in regard to the seminary and its property. They resented meetings with representatives of the Chicago and San Francisco seminaries and proposals for building a new seminary in Dallas or consolidation of Omaha with other theological schools. Neither did they like the idea of transferring the seminary assets to various colleges. More palatable was a

²⁹ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 159-60, 163, 179-80; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 263, 270, 280, 282, 289, 294-95; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 2, 4-5, 9.

proposal to use the money to establish chairs at McCormick Seminary or foundations for graduate study. The Omaha supporters especially favored the McCormick program because it could be organized on a trial basis without permanent commitment of the Omaha School's assets, and it would continue the training of ministers in the Midwest, the purpose for which Omaha Seminary had been founded. The 1944 General Assembly approved the McCormick "arrangement" under which the Omaha Seminary retained custody of its assets but for five years donated the net income to McCormick Seminary. The Chicago school was to use the money for a training program for rural pastors, and it was required to report to the Assembly and to the Omaha Board each year on the use of the funds. A subcommittee from the Omaha School and the Special Committee was to study and recommend within five years a permanent program for the Omaha Seminary. At the same time the Assembly organized a new Council on Theological Education to coordinate all programs of theological education in the Presbyterian Church.

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Everyone involved in these matters acknowledged that the financial arrangements would be effective only on receipt of the approval of the Nebraska courts. The General Assembly considered this only a formality, but many loyal supporters of the Omaha Seminary protested even a

³⁰ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 158, 160-62, 166-67, 172; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 263-65, 268, 276, 278-79, 293-94, 297-98; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 156th General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1944), pp. 127, 137-54, 174-75, 323-35; Omaha Seminary Record, XXV, No. 3 (1943), n.p.

temporary financial arrangement with any other school. Even before approval of the plan to send the net income to McCormick Seminary, several donors wrote the Omaha Board and asked the return or the transfer to other church agencies of their gifts. They did not feel sending money to Chicago was in line with the original purpose of their donations. A similar problem arose in regard to the assets received from the former Bellevue College. Less than six months after the General Assembly agreed to discontinue the Omaha theological school, a representative of the Hastings College Board of Trustees wrote the chairman of the Special Committee to request transfer of the Omaha share of the Bellevue funds to Hastings College. He questioned the validity of the original transfer of the funds to the Omaha Seminary and stated that since Hastings College was the only Presbyterian educational institution remaining in Nebraska, it should receive all the funds of the former Bellevue College.³¹

As soon as it was aware of the Hastings College action, the Executive Committee of the Omaha Seminary also wrote the chairman of the Special Committee. It related the history of the Bellevue College-Omaha Seminary relationship and the distribution of the college funds by the Sarpy County Court. It seemed ridiculous to the Omaha body to

³¹ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 280-85, 298-99; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 3, 5, 9; Minutes, Board, II, p. 172.

treat the Bellevue part of the Omaha School's assets any differently than the rest of them. The Special Committee agreed and stated there would be no special division of any funds. The attorney for the Omaha School then filed a petition with the Sarpy County Court and obtained authority for the school to retain the Bellevue College assets, although the seminary temporarily had changed its mode of operation. To prevent any future problems in regard to the Bellevue College funds, the seminary Board directed the treasurer to keep them in a separate account.

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In July 1945 Judge Thomsen of the Douglas County Court approved the request of the Omaha Seminary, a charitable trust, that it retain the assets of the corporation and for five years send the income from them to McCormick Seminary. The theological school had told the court that it could no longer carry out its purpose as defined in its charter and it asked the court to determine how the funds could be used as nearly as possible according to the original corporation purpose, in legal terms, cy pres. The seminary petition named several donors as defendants. These individuals declared that the seminary (plaintiff) was not a general charitable trust, but a specific one, so the doctrine of cy pres did not apply. Therefore their gifts should be returned to them because the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha no longer

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Minutes, Board, II, pp. 169-71, 176-78, 181-82, 205; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 285-89, 293; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 10-11, 17.

performed the function for which the trust had been created. The Court, however, declared the property of the seminary did constitute a general charitable trust and as such it was subject to the jurisdiction of the court. The doctrine of cy pres would apply to the use of assets belonging to the trust. Two defendants received small sums representing gifts formerly donated to the seminary, but the Court denied the return of any other gifts. The Court also approved the five year "arrangement" for the trust income to go to McCormick Seminary. On the other hand, any future use of the assets would be determined by the Court.³³

Between 1946 and 1948 Omaha Seminary sent over thirty-three thousand dollars to McCormick Seminary. With this money the Chicago school established a Rural Church Department, which conducted classes on its campus as well as extension courses in Lincoln, Nebraska. Omaha Seminary money also supported "refresher courses", special summer schools, and an internship program for rural pastors.³⁴

³³ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 176-78, 181; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 13, 17, 25-26; Adams, Memorandum, pp. 3-5; Petition filed in Douglas County District Court by Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha on December 9, 1944, Doc. 383, No. 282, Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Plaintiff, v. George H. Reiff, et al., Defendants.

³⁴ Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 5, 33-34, 39, 46, 57-58; Adams, Memorandum, p. 6; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 188-89, 206-07; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 158th General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1946), p. 350; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 159th General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1947), pp. 89-90, 330-33; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 160th General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1948), pp. 80-83.

In spite of the discontinuance of the seminary, the Board of Directors vigilantly guarded its assets and increased their value. By June, 1945, the auditor's report estimated the total value of seminary assets at almost four hundred fifty thousand dollars. The Executive Committee carefully evaluated returns on seminary investments and authorized the Investment Committee to place most funds in securities, especially Series "G" War Bonds. As a result of this program the school's assets earned an income of over four per cent for the year ending May 31, 1950.³⁵ Money from the sale of Omaha properties and most of the farms owned by the seminary also served to increase the investment income and total assets.³⁶

Throughout these years the Board never lost sight of its major goal, the reopening of the Omaha Seminary. The McCormick program appeared to only accomplish a small portion of the work to be done in the Midwest, because the number of participants remained small. In 1949 the Special Committee and the Omaha Board of Directors recommended that the payments to the McCormick Seminary end. They asked that the Moderator of the General Assembly appoint a special committee to consider establishing a new seminary in the area formerly served by the

³⁵ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 159-60, 179-80, 215; Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 265, 292, 294-95; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 4-5, 7, 9, 13, 26.

³⁶ Minutes, Executive Committee, II, pp. 270, 272-73, 278, 280, 282, 291, 294-95; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 7-9, 11-14, 18-19, 21, 23, 39, 54.

Omaha institution. The 1950 General Assembly approved this recommendation, and the supporters of the school renewed their efforts to re-establish a seminary at Omaha.³⁷

³⁷ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 201-02, 217; Adams, Memorandum, pp. 6-8.

CHAPTER VI

THE SEMINARY CONTINUES TO SERVE

Until 1956 representatives of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha persisted in their efforts to have the General Assembly reopen the school. In that year a regional survey indicated that another theological school seemed unnecessary and was economically unfeasible. The Board of Directors then decided to use the school's net income to implement a scholarship loan program and a continuing education project for midwestern rural pastors, but the idea of reviving the seminary died slowly.

For fifteen years after the Omaha Seminary closed its doors many Presbyterians in the Midwest repeatedly discussed re-establishing the theological school. Almost every year presbyteries sent overtures to the General Assembly stating that the closing imposed hardships on the midwestern church and recommending that another seminary be established to replace it. In 1948 twenty-seven presbyteries from nine midwestern states concurred in such an overture to the General Assembly. Other Presbyterian organizations submitted similar recommendations. For various reasons the Assembly declined to consider establishing another seminary. In 1946 the Reverend William B. Lampe,

an Omaha alumnus and son of an early professor at the school, became the Moderator of the General Assembly. He wrote the President of the Omaha Board that the general feeling was to wait and see if the arrangement between McCormick Seminary and the Omaha Seminary worked. He encouraged the Omaha Board to insist on use of the school's assets for training rural ministers to serve in the Midwest.¹

After consulting with an active group of alumni in 1948, the Board of Directors began making definite plans to have the seminary reopened. Since only two years remained for the arrangement with McCormick Seminary to continue, the Directors felt they must present a concrete proposition to the General Assembly as soon as possible. They agreed to encourage and support the Alumni Committee, but at the same time they decided they would renew the efforts of the Board to convince the General Assembly to reopen the seminary.²

With this goal in mind the Executive Committee employed the Reverend Henry Lampe, a seminary alumnus and former missionary to Korea, to contact presbyteries and synods to find out if a seminary really was needed in the Midwest and if the area would support it. The District Court approved use of seminary income to pay Lampe's salary and expenses.

¹ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 186, 205, 227; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, p. 23; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 158th General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1946), pp. 29, 230; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 160th General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1948), pp. 31-32, 195-96.

² Minutes, Board, II, pp. 192-93; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 36-37.

At the 1949 annual meeting of the Board a Seminary Planning Committee was appointed to work with Lampe. All efforts would be directed toward convincing the General Assembly that a theological seminary was needed West of the Missouri River and East of the Rocky Mountains. The first step was to persuade the Special Committee on Theological Education of the General Assembly so the Board asked the committee to meet with it in October, 1949. The Directors met just prior to the joint session and unanimously passed a resolution favoring the reopening of the seminary. The resolution included a history of the Omaha School and a statement of the harm done the church by its inopportune closing. The Board minced no words as it condemned the closing action and the sending of Omaha Seminary income to the Chicago school. It asked for Special Committee support of a resolution to permit the Omaha Board of Directors to retain seminary income to finance a survey of the Midwest and to establish a new seminary. Special Committee members agreed that the Assembly should consider establishing a seminary in or near Omaha, but they reminded the advocates of the Omaha School of the financial problems involved in founding an institution, which would maintain Presbyterian standards of theological education. Resolutions were approved asking the 1950 General Assembly to appoint a new committee to survey the needs of the area and to discontinue sending the Omaha School's income to McCormick Seminary.³

³ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 203, 205-06, 208-12; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 41-53, 55-57.

During the spring of 1950 the Executive Committee sent letters to all elected commissioners to the General Assembly. Prior to the meeting of that body the committee met with eighteen midwestern delegates to urge their support of resolutions favoring establishment of a new seminary in the Midwest. The efforts of the Omaha Seminary were at least partially successful. The 1950 General Assembly terminated the sending of the Omaha School's funds to McCormick Seminary and appointed a new committee to survey the need for an additional theological seminary. Encouraged by these actions and reports that many Presbyterians felt the closing of the seminary had been abortive, the Board acted to insure appointment of a committee favorable to the Omaha School. It also prepared informational papers publicizing its cause. In addition, it authorized the Executive Committee to buy property near the University of Omaha as a possible building site. The Board labelled this action as "confidential", to be discussed only with Board members. Confident that their cause was won, the Directors thanked the Reverend Lampe for his services and ended his relationship with the school.⁴

Early in 1951 the Moderator of the General Assembly appointed a Special Survey Committee, which included Eugene Dinsmore, as representative of the Omaha Seminary Board. Preliminary meetings indicated the

⁴ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 217-18; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, p. 58.

major obstacle to establishing a new seminary was financial, so the Omaha Board spent much time discussing possible fund-raising campaigns. At a joint meeting of the Survey Committee and the Omaha Seminary Board in June, 1952, the pros and cons of establishing a new seminary were discussed at length. The enthusiasm and loyalty of the Omaha School's supporters convinced the chairman of the Survey Committee that there would have to be another Presbyterian seminary in the West. Everyone, however, agreed that additional statistics and information were necessary to convince first the Council on Theological Education and then the General Assembly.⁵

By May, 1953, the high hopes for a new Omaha Seminary again dimmed. The Survey Committee recommended the appointment of another committee. No longer sure the Presbyterian Church needed another seminary, the majority of the committee members wanted further fact-finding studies made of regional needs, as well as consideration of other alternatives. The Assembly approved such a study and also a scholarship loan plan for five thousand dollars of the Omaha Seminary income. This action failed to satisfy the Omaha Board, and at its annual meeting in June, 1954, it reaffirmed its confidential authorization for purchase of a site for a new seminary.⁶

⁵ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 221-24, 228-31; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 59, 61, 65-66.

⁶ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 236-38, 240; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 67, 75-76; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 165th General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 226-28.

During the summer of 1955 four sociologists conducted a comprehensive survey to determine the need for an additional seminary in the Midwest. The study covered twelve states and attempted to answer questions concerning not only the need for a new theological school, but alternatives for the region, and possible support for any new program. The District Court approved the expenditure of six thousand dollars of Omaha Seminary accumulated income to pay the costs of the survey. The final report was discussed by the Omaha Seminary Board, the Joint Committee appointed by the Assembly, and the Council on Theological Education at its November meeting. Many ministers wished to have a Presbyterian seminary in one of the metropolitan areas of the Midwest, but the traditional problems relative to financial support of the institution prevented any church official from saying he thought the church in the region would support a seminary. More acceptable to the church leaders seemed alternative programs, such as short courses, institutes for rural pastors, and post-graduate seminars held on university or seminary campuses. While the survey did not deny most of the claims made by the Omaha Seminary supporters or the fact that a new seminary would serve the church in the Midwest, it pointed out many practical problems, which seemed to outweigh the advantages of establishing a new school.⁷

⁷ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 245-50; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 77-80, 83-85; T. Earl Sullenger, Paul Meadows, George L. Wilber, Roderick B. Peck, "Presbyterian Regional Survey," Parts I and II, September, 1955.

In spite of the non-committal results of the survey, the Omaha Seminary Board continued its efforts to have the seminary reopened. As the two major Presbyterian denominations in the United States discussed merging, the midwesterners saw further opportunities for a new seminary in their area. While the Omaha Directors felt that the talk of union would aid their cause, they soon found Presbyterian leaders so concerned with plans for the denominational merger that talk of a new seminary was put aside. Even so when delegates attended the General Assembly meeting in Omaha in May, 1957, they were greeted by a committee publicizing re-establishment of the Omaha Seminary. The Board of Directors also discussed purchasing the Brownell Hall grounds in the Dundee area not far from the University of Omaha. On the other hand, at the same meeting the Board moved to initiate an in-service education program recommended as a result of the survey. By 1963 the emphasis had shifted. The General Assembly continued to receive petitions asking for establishment of a new seminary, but one to communicate a gospel for the urban workingman. There was no talk of a new seminary for the rural communities formerly served by the Omaha Seminary.

By retaining the principal and adding all capital gains to it, the market value of the seminary assets increased from over five hundred seventy thousand dollars in 1952 to almost three million dollars in 1971.

⁸ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 249-50, 252, 254, 261; United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 175th General Assembly, Part I, Journal (Philadelphia, 1963), p. 365.

Dedication to the school and almost uncanny foresight in making investments, especially by experienced stockbroker, Eugene Dinsmore, gave the school an investment portfolio of superior quality. Only the dividends and interest, the net income were spent, but in 1971 these amounted to almost eighty thousand dollars, as opposed to about ten thousand dollars in 1961. Although most of the Directors appeared to no longer anticipate the re-establishment of a seminary in Omaha, they strongly supported use of seminary income for several theological education programs. They adopted a fairly conservative fiscal policy because they feared a drop in the market might bring a decline in the income. In the meantime, as income increased the scope of seminary-sponsored projects expanded. Directors also felt they were building a strong fund, which might in the future be used to establish an institution for theological education.⁹

The improved financial situation of the seminary brought additional responsibilities to the members of the Board. Not only did the District Court and the General Assembly, through the Council on Theological Education, have to approve all expenditures, but under Nebraska law, the "prudent man" rule, all Board members personally were liable for financial risks of the trust. The law required that

⁹ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 227, 230-31, 275, 280, 285; "Minutes of the Board of Directors, Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha," 1965-1970, pp. 8-9, 11, 19, 23-25, 28, 30, 35-36, 47. Hereinafter cited as Minutes, Board, III. See also, Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 101-02, 108, 140; Minutes, Board, June 17, 1971, Mimeographed, Pages 2, 3.

Directors handle investment funds as a "prudent man" handling his own funds. Even if the entire Board favored a program, and it fell within the scope of activities allowed by the court, but the proposal involved a great deal of risk, the seminary could not participate in it. In both 1968 and 1969 the Board declined to support programs requested because they involved both a high degree of risk and obscure objectives.¹⁰

Not only was the Board required to observe the "prudent man" rule, but programs also had to be theological education, as nearly as possible like the purpose of the original trust, cy pres. This restriction prevented Omaha Seminary participation in several commendable proposals for projects on college campuses in Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa, and Kansas. In 1971 the seminary was unable to give direct financial aid for the operation of the James A. Douglas Memorial Foundation at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, but it offered support which fell within their guidelines, i.e. a student loan for a staff member. All these programs generally involved religious education, but they did not fall within the scope of the activities defined by the courts for the seminary.¹¹

¹⁰ Minutes, Board, III, pp. 30-32, 37-39, 42-46; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 125-26, 129-30, 132.

¹¹ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 232-33; Minutes, Board, III, pp. 13-14; Minutes, Board, June 17, 1971, Mimeographed Page 8; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 88, 99, 104-05, 108, 114-19, 131-32, 138-39.

Although the Board took no action without the approval of the Court in regard to spending seminary funds, it never ceased to acknowledge the authority of the General Assembly. The school filed regular reports with the national body and paid the expenses of delegates to the annual meetings of the Council on Theological Education. These representatives emphasized in their reports to the Board the importance of this contact for the future of the seminary, as well as the cordial treatment they received from other theological educators. The Council not only approved the programs of the Omaha Seminary but also communicated glowing reports of them to the General Assembly. In 1971 the name of the council was changed to the Council on Theological Seminaries. In September of that year Mr. James Erixon, a member of the Omaha Seminary Board and Director of the Omaha School for Presbyterian Pastors, was invited to attend an informal meeting to discuss coordination of the increasing number of continuing education programs in the church. The other educators hoped that Erixon would share his experiences in organizing the pastors' school for the Omaha Seminary.

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In 1953 the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha inaugurated a scholarship-loan program to aid students from eleven midwestern states. Board members noted the rising costs of theological education and felt

¹² Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 51, 59-60, 68, 93, 102-03, 106, 110, 112, 115-16, 120, 122-23, 125, 134; Minutes, Board, II, pp. 233, 235-36, 239, 259-60, 272, 278, 287, 295; Minutes, Board, III, pp. 6, 13, 23, 29, 37; Minutes, Board, June 17, 1971, Mimeographed Page 6; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 165th General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 191, 193.

such a loan program constituted a "temporary expedient" which partially accomplished the original purpose of the seminary. In May 1954 the General Assembly endorsed the plan and the District Court approved the Board's petition to use five thousand dollars from the school's investment income for it. The Board allocated eight hundred dollars per student per year, three hundred dollars for the student himself and a five hundred dollar grant to the seminary he attended. If after graduation from seminary the loanee served five years in a rural church, the loan was cancelled. If a student did not repay his loan by such service, he could repay in cash after graduation at four per cent interest. Students must attend Presbyterian seminaries, apply each year for renewal of the loan, and be approved by the Christian Education Committee of their presbytery. After it set up the guidelines for the program, the Board appointed a special committee to put the project into operation and report on its progress. The committee carefully screened applicants and rejected some because they did not plan to serve rural pastorates and did not attend Presbyterian seminaries. On the other hand, James C. Costen, who attended Johnson C. Smith Seminary, pointed out that his race might prevent him from obtaining a rural midwestern pastorate, but he was willing to meet the service requirements in any area accepting him. The Student Loan Committee felt the young man needed the money and as long as he did all in his power to fulfill the terms of the loan, he should receive it.

In the next two years the seminary aided seven students and three Presbyterian seminaries. Letters to presbyteries, synods, and seminaries publicized the project and asked for applicants.

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The Student Loan Committee soon found it necessary to clarify and confirm the rules for granting loans and repayment of them by service. Several loanees moved from the Midwest or failed to serve rural churches, so they received reminders that they should repay in cash. By 1959 and 1960 the number of applicants had increased to the point that although the committee granted the full amount to each loatee, it had to divide the subsidy to the seminaries on a proportionate basis. The committee also exercised greater care to be sure loanees actually needed the money and were from the eleven state midwestern area. Increases in seminary tuition rates and the need for more ministers led the Board to ask the Court to approve seventy-five hundred dollars for the scholarship-loan program. The Directors also authorized the Student Loan Committee to use flexibility to grant loans, if it received too many applicants. Each loatee would receive three hundred dollars per year, but the amount to the seminaries again would be divided on a pro-rata basis. The Board re-emphasized that those not likely to go

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Costen, a black, was a member of Calvin Memorial Presbyterian Church in Omaha and repaid his loan with service in the Presbyterian Church in Rocky Mountain, North Carolina. He later received his doctorate and in 1971 was associated with an inter-denominational seminary in Atlanta, Georgia. Minutes, Board, II, pp. 233, 238-39, 244-45, 253-54; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 69-76, 81-82; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 168th General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1956), p. 202.

into rural service should not be granted loans. Although the Court readily approved the increased allocation, the number of applicants and loans increased correspondingly and costs to students again raised. After 1963 the eight hundred dollars was divided equally between the loanee and his seminary. By that time thirty-three students had participated in the loan plan; the majority had repaid loans by five years service in a rural church. The Council on Theological Education and the General Assembly not only approved the loan program, but also praised the Omaha Seminary for its service to theological education in the Presbyterian Church.¹⁴

Between 1954 and 1966 the Omaha Seminary spent over seventy thousand dollars for the scholarship-loan program, but there was still room for improvement. A survey of the Presbyterian seminaries indicated that more of the money should go directly to the students and to do this the allocation needed to be increased. Each student then received five hundred dollars while three hundred dollars went to his seminary. To finance this program in 1966 the District Court approved the expenditure of fifteen thousand dollars for loans, double the previous amount. To encourage prompt submission of applications the Loan Committee met early in the summer to approve loans. Students who filed applications

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Minutes, Board, II, pp. 257-58, 262-64, 266-68, 272-73, 277-78, 282-82, 285-86, 291-94; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 89, 93-98, 100, 102-03, 105-06; United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 171st General Assembly, Part I, Journal (Philadelphia, 1959), pp. 357, 678.

by that time had their money when the fall semester began. The Loan Committee made every effort to see that each loan was repaid and suggested that some students be more cautious about incurring indebtedness and balancing their budgets. Although the loans were given for only three years, some students attended seminary for four years, including a one year internship. In these instances the loan did not become due until one year after the student received his degree. Interest rates for cash repayment remained at four per cent, but since interest was figured on the balance due at the end of the year, loanees saved one year's interest. The Board made provision for graduate work by students, and deferred payment by either cash or service when loanees received fellowships to study one year abroad. Still the Directors felt more students should take advantage of the plan, so they redoubled their efforts to publicize the program. In 1968 the Board changed the service obligation for loans in order to meet the changing times and the Presbyterian denomination's definition of "town and country" church. Loanees could serve as ordained ministers in a town of ten thousand or less population to repay loans by services, rather than towns of twenty-five hundred or less as previously specified. All population restrictions were removed for those who served special fields, such as Christian Education, social work, music, chaplaincy, inner city pastorates, foreign missions, and national missions.

¹⁵ Minutes, Board, III, pp. 2-6, 12, 15-18, 23, 25-29, 33; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 108-09, 111-13, 116-21, 122, 125-26.

Better publicity for the program and the broadening of the rules resulted in an increase in the number of applications in 1969 to eighteen as opposed to ten the preceding year. At its annual meeting that year the Board discussed how to further extend the effectiveness of the loan program. It looked with pride at several former loanees, who had achieved national recognition, and noted current aid to a full-blooded Indian loanee. Over ninety thousand dollars had been spent on the program, and a loanee could repay by service to a midwestern church except as a full-time regular pastor in a city of over ten thousand population. Several Board members, including a synod executive from North Dakota, pointed out the continuing need for pastors of rural churches. In spite of changing times, the Board agreed that training ministers for midwestern rural churches had been a prime reason for the founding of the Omaha Seminary, so it could not move too far from this function. It directed the Student Loan Committee to present recommendations at the next annual meeting and to keep proposed changes in mind when making 1969 loans. To meet the need for increased funds for the program, in September the Court approved the use of twenty thousand dollars a year for the project.

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To better aid students the Loan Committee presented a number of recommendations at the annual meeting in 1970. It reviewed the entire

¹⁶ Minutes, Board, III, pp. 36-38, 40-41; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 132-34.

student loan program since its beginning in 1954. Eighty-six loans had been made; thirty-six cancelled; twenty-seven were being collected; and twenty-three were current loans. One hundred eleven thousand four hundred fifty dollars had been expended, over eighteen thousand dollars during 1969-1970. The Loan Committee recommended that service to cancel a loan be reduced to three years and that the requirement apply to all loans not delinquent. Cash repayment would remain on a five year basis. The amount loaned annually to students should be increased to seven hundred dollars and the seminary subsidy raised to five hundred dollars per student. The changes recognized the trend toward ecumenical work in rural areas and adjusted service requirements to include work involving not only Presbyterian churches but merged congregations, if one was Presbyterian. The Board approved all these recommendations, but it continued to specify that loanees attend only Presbyterian seminaries. As a result of the changes, the Board requested that the General Assembly and the Court approve allocation of thirty thousand dollars for the student loan program.

For 1970-1971 more than twenty loans were approved. The following year a woman student received a loan. Reducing the years of service cancelled seven loans; a total of thirty-nine years of service cancelled fourteen loans in 1970-1971. Subsidies were paid to six seminaries with the Dubuque Theological School continuing to receive the largest amount. McCormick Seminary received the second largest.

In 1970 Dubuque Seminary acknowledged receipt of over thirty-two thousand dollars from the Omaha Seminary Student Loan Program since it had begun in 1954. J. Arthur Depew, Director of Development at the Iowa school, wrote and expressed gratitude for the funds at a time when other seminary income had decreased and costs increased rapidly. He hoped that the Omaha Seminary would continue its financial support of the loan program, so that the Dubuque Seminary could continue to train ministers for the midwestern churches. The Omaha Seminary had been closed for almost thirty years, but it proved it could continue to function as a part of the theological education program of the Presbyterian Church.¹⁷

Three years after the Omaha Seminary began its scholarship-loan program, the first session of the Omaha School for Presbyterian Pastors convened at the Eppley Conference Center on the University of Omaha campus. The survey made in 1955 indicated strong interest in a graduate level in-service training program for ministers. A joint committee made up of representatives of the Omaha Seminary Board and the Council on Theological Education therefore proposed establishment of a summer school for midwestern Presbyterian ministers. In addition, the seminary Board realized that a new seminary would cost about five

¹⁷ Minutes, Board, III, pp. 48-50; Minutes, Board, June 17, 1971, Mimeographed Page 4; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 136, 138-39; Minutes, Executive Committee, September 24, 1971, Mimeographed Page 1; Letters, Arthur Depew, Director of Development, Dubuque Theological Seminary, to Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, April 6, 1970; May 8, 1970.

million dollars, which it did not have, and the Joint Committee estimated the cost of the pastors' school at about fifty thousand dollars for three years. Directors also felt that rural pastors, who lacked opportunities for fellowship with others in their profession, would benefit by meeting with their colleagues and learning from well-known ministers from "all over the world." Presence of such a program on a college campus might also influence the undergraduates there toward a career in the ministry. With the approval of the Board, the Court, and the General Assembly, the first summer school for Presbyterian pastors was held from July 17-24, 1957. Because the Omaha Seminary paid all expenses for the thirty-two men attending, the first session cost almost eleven thousand dollars. Board members met with the "students" and attended a special vesper service and dinner on Sunday afternoon.

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At a November meeting of the Executive Committee Dr. Milo Bail, who had done most of the planning for the school, reported that it was considered a success by everyone involved. Plans already were underway to double the number of students for July, 1958. Most still would receive full scholarships, but by specifying that about one-half the students--on a basis of need--pay their own travel or their own room and board, the costs for the pastors' school would only increase to

¹⁸ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 251-53, 257-58; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, p. 88; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 169th General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 214, 223-24.

about fourteen thousand dollars. At its annual meeting in June, 1958, the Board unanimously agreed that the scholarship-loan program would remain and that, in addition, the Omaha Seminary would continue to sponsor the pastors' summer school.¹⁹

In view of the favorable response to the program in 1959 the District Court approved the request of the Board to spend sixty thousand dollars for summer schools in 1960 through 1962. One hundred fifty-five pastors from twelve midwestern states had attended the first three schools. Most students had been out of seminary at least ten years and for many this was their first opportunity for post graduate education. With outstanding faculty members coming from almost every Presbyterian seminary, the curriculum covered five areas, a general worship service, Bible study, contemporary religious thought, work of the church, and the pastor as preacher. The average cost per student was \$244. There seemed to be no serious criticism of the school by anyone, and Board members agreed that even if in the future the Omaha Seminary should reopen, the pastors' school should never be eliminated from its program. The Directors also discussed improvements and additions for the schools. In 1960 they invited synod executives from the Midwest to come and observe part of the sessions, so that these men would be aware of the program for which they recommended pastors.

¹⁹ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 259-60; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 90-91; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 170th General Assembly, Part I, Journal and Supplement (Philadelphia, 1958), pp. 494, 722.

University faculty members were asked to lecture during the school. The Board adopted a tentative budget of twenty thousand dollars for the 1961 school and approved plans to invite one hundred pastors. Special resolutions of appreciation went to Dr. Bail and the University of Omaha staff for their work in presenting the program. The Board noted with pride that for five years Dr. George Bancroft, Omaha Seminary class of 1930, served as coordinator of the school. In 1962 the Board met while the school was in progress and members attended lectures and joined the students and faculty for lunch. It noted the continued success of the program, three hundred thirty-six pastors had attended the school during its first five years. The total cost to the seminary was just over seventy-six thousand dollars, but the cost per student had dropped to about two hundred twenty-six dollars. The Board unanimously approved a resolution requesting a new court order for sixty thousand dollars to continue the school for another three years.²⁰

Each meeting of the Council on Theological Education praised the school for pastors not only for the quality of its program, but also for its accomplishments at such a moderate cost. The Omaha Seminary Board, on the other hand, acknowledged the aid of the Council in planning the program and securing superior quality faculty members. After 1963 the Board paid traveling expenses and a five hundred dollar

²⁰ Minutes, Board, II, pp. 266-68, 271-72, 276-77, 282-83; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 95-97, 99, 101; United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 171st General Assembly, Part I, Journal (Philadelphia, 1959), pp. 357, 678.

honorarium to teachers at the school. Experience proved that a student body of about one hundred men provided the best learning situation. A system for selection of students also emerged. Executives were asked to recommend successful pastors who had been out of seminary at least four years and needed extra training and/or a special "inspirational experience." Since the purpose of the school was to up-grade the ministry, pastors of churches of every size became eligible to attend.

With the retirement of Dr. Milo Bail as President of the University of Omaha in 1965, James Moore, an Omaha banker and Board member, and Dr. George Rosenlof, a professor at the University of Nebraska and Board member, assumed responsibility for coordinating the school with the College of Continuing Studies at the University of Omaha. That same year, viewing past experience and planning future programs, the Board asked the Court to authorize use of seventy-five thousand dollars for pastors' schools in 1966, 1967, and 1968. In these years pastors stayed at the more conveniently located Prom Town House Motel, rather than at a downtown hotel. Surveys of those attending indicated that over ninety per cent felt the program was a valuable supplement to their theological education and spiritual growth. At the suggestion of the students a "grass roots" pastor, who could share their experiences and "speak their language", was added to the faculty. Changes also were made in evening programs to enable the school to better meet the needs of the students. In 1967 Mr.

James Erixon, a Presbyterian layman and member of the university's Conference Center staff, joined the Board of Directors. Since he carried direct responsibility for planning the summer schools, this further strengthened their organization.²¹

The obvious success of the school led the Board in 1968 to ask the Court to not only continue authorization for the fifth three year period, but to increase it to thirty thousand dollars per year. In further recognition of the services of the faculty at the pastors' school, the Board raised the honorarium paid them to seven hundred dollars plus traveling expenses and paid guest speakers twenty-five dollars each. The Omaha School became so popular that a rule had to be made that candidates could not return more than once every three years. On the other hand, synod executives were informed that pastors of small "yoked" (cooperating) churches, even if only one was Presbyterian, were eligible to attend. When the University of Omaha became the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the Board discussed moving the school to the campus of Hastings College. Most Directors, however, felt the atmosphere and advantages of the metropolitan area campus outweighed those of the Presbyterian college. They did take note and express appreciation for the offer of the Hastings facilities as an alternative to the Omaha site.

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Minutes, Board, II, pp. 286-87, 294-95; Minutes, Board, III, pp. 6, 12-13, 22-24; Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 103-04, 106, 110, 112-13, 115, 119.

Representatives from the Omaha Seminary Board reported that the Omaha Pastors' School was considered one of the outstanding continuing education programs in the entire nation. The Council on Theological Education recommended that other Presbyterian groups study the Omaha School and initiate similar programs. In 1970 Mr. Erixon reported that the school appeared to be the only one where the majority of those attending were primarily from rural areas. While other churches generally ignored the rural pastor, sixty per cent of those attending the Omaha School were from towns of five thousand or less. The Board agreed that this emphasis was in keeping with the original purpose of the Omaha Seminary, and it would remain in the future.²²

The Omaha School for Presbyterian Pastors not only maintained the emphasis on service to rural ministers, but the program continued to be expanded and improved. To insure superior quality faculty members, they were invited two years in advance. To maintain the one hundred student enrollment fewer invitations were sent to students, but each year more accepted. Pastors of small churches felt the need to continue their education, but neither they nor their churches could afford to pay for other programs. Therefore, the Omaha Pastors' School presented them with a unique opportunity, as well as a valuable experience. Some alumni of the Omaha Seminary declared that while they

²² Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 122-24, 140; Minutes, Board, III, pp. 29, 37, 50-51; United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Minutes of the 182nd General Assembly, Part I, Journal (Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 1060-62.

formerly felt the closing of their alma mater had been a big mistake, they believed the pastors' school more than made up for the harm done by the closing.

The generally inflationary economic situation increased costs sufficiently so that for the sixth three year period, the Omaha Board asked the Court to raise the authorization to thirty-five thousand dollars a year for 1972 through 1974. The Directors felt the Omaha Seminary and the Presbyterian Church received value plus for the money spent. In thirteen years 1,159 ministers had attended the summer school and 101 were enrolled for 1971. The average cost for each student, including lodging, meals, faculty, and transportation, was \$241.08, less than in 1957, the year the school began.²³

While the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha no longer operates as an academic institution, the Board of Directors, as did the founders, continues to serve the Presbyterian Church and train ministers for the Midwest through the Presbyterian Pastors' School and the Student Loan Program. With a view to future service, in 1971 the Board obtained authorization from the District Court to spend four thousand dollars on a new pilot project for continuing education at Hastings College.²⁴

²³ Minutes, Board, June 17, 1971, Mimeographed Pages 6, 7; Minutes, Executive Committee, September 24, 1971, Mimeographed Page 2; Interviews with the Reverend Donald H. Bean, Omaha Seminary Class of 1940, and the Reverend Lewis Koerselman, Omaha Seminary Class of 1941, in July, 1971, at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

²⁴ Minutes, Executive Committee, III, pp. 136-37, 139-40; Minutes, Executive Committee, September 24, 1971, Mimeographed Pages 1, 2; Minutes, Board, June 17, 1971, Mimeographed Pages 7, 8.

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