

SPECIAL FOCUS

The writer of the following article which commemorates the 40th anniversary of Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School (Grand Rapids), is himself a graduate of the school. In fact, if my calculations are correct, he must have started kindergarten in September of the year in which Hope had just graduated its 10th class. That was back in 1958. Ten years later, in June of 1968, he graduated from the 9th grade. And now, 20 years after graduation, Mr. Larry Meulenberg is president of Hope's Board, and has five children of his own in attendance at the school, from kindergarten through 8th grade. So, in one capacity or another, Larry has been on hand at Hope's 10th, 20th, and 40th anniversaries. He knows whereof he speaks, therefore, in this keenly perceptive and interestingly written history of Hope School.

The picture on the front cover is of Hope School as it stands today; and the one below shows how it looked to the students and teachers who entered it in 1947. Elsewhere in this issue, look for a picture of a Junior High class in session, in Hope School, in 1954 — and see if you can spot anybody you know.

From Rivulets to Rivers

(40 years of Hope School)

Larry Meulenberg

The Stream Began

Although many rivulets were evident prior to March 4, 1946, it was on that date that these rivulets merged together. Over 20 they were in number, and with their converging, the stream had its beginning. A quiet beginning, but quite a noticeable beginning.

The Stream Was Named

Recognizable entities must be known, and many are known by

their names. Even so this small stream. It was established in hope, and so the STREAM HOPE it became, its very name bearing witness to its future.

The Stream Had a Purpose

To govern its course, the stream adopted a constitution, and it was here, within its Constitution, that could be found what is the basis for its existence: "The training of the Covenant

child in the School, as well as in the Home and Church, must serve to prepare them to follow their lifelong calling to reveal the glory of their God in a life lived from the principle of regeneration by grace."

Much would be placed in its path to dam this noble stream, and many would be the obstacles which the master dam builder utilized in order to divert the STREAM HOPE from its purpose. The Force propelling the stream was greater, however, and onward it flowed, slowly gathering momentum, and slowly gathering strength.

The Stream Begins Serving Its Purpose

By September of 1947 the stream had grown sufficiently to bear the first rafts of Covenant children along its course. Such was the beginning, over 40 years ago, of a purpose being realized and a responsibility being met.

The Stream Becomes a River

As with most streams that flow for a period of time, so it was with the Stream Hope. Other waters merged into it and mingled together, sharing a common purpose. In 1951 the STREAM HUDSONVILLE converged, followed in 1954 by the STREAM HOLLAND. So the stream became a River, and the River Hope moved determinedly onward.

Through the years, that River has borne many rafts of Covenant children along its course. Through the years that River has remained steadfast to its basis for existence. Such was not without turbulence, however, for in 1953 the River shrank within its banks. The master dam builder forged a new course, and in deceit guided a portion of the River along a different way, the way of vanity and pride. That hurt the River, that shrank the River, but that also purified the waters of the River Hope, giving it a rededication to its original purpose.

The River Becomes Congested

The River Hope was just barely contained within its banks, and although those banks had grown through the years, they could grow no larger. The rafts of Covenant children increased to such an extent that by 1983 something had to be done to enable efficient handling of the River traffic.

Through the Providence of God, a small channel was found, through which some of the River's water was diverted, along with some of the rafts of children. Such a solution was only temporary, for, as with many channels, it opened back into the River.

The River Branches

Permanent relief came to the swelling River in 1985 when the

River branched and the waters divided. The River Hope continued on its course, kept its size, but had fewer rafts to handle, while the River Heritage branched to the West, ran a parallel course and started a history of its own.

itself for its growth? Can a River pride itself on the number of rafts of covenant children which it has borne? Can a River claim for its own the River Pilots who have sacrificed themselves to its purpose?

The River Continues

Over 40 years have passed. The waters continue to serve the River's purpose. Many rafts of Covenant children have been, and are being, floated along its course. Many River Pilots have dedicated their lives to guiding these rafts along the river's length. God has blessed the River Hope. God has blessed the River pilots. God has blessed us.

HARDLY. Such would arise from the depths of foolish pompousness and pride.

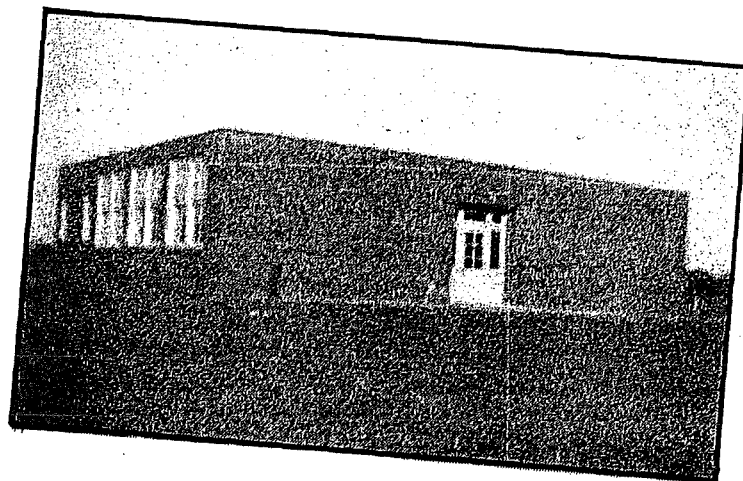
What can we say? We can quote Psalm 46:

There is a River, the streams
whereof shall make glad the city
of God. . . .

God is in the midst of her,
she shall not be moved. . . .

Come, behold the works of
the Lord!

What can we say? Can a River
boast of itself? Can a River credit



Hope
School
(1947)

You can do more than pray, after you have prayed,
but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.

John Bunyan