



THE HEART OF HOME MISSION WORK

Rev. Ralph Hobson, Vice-President, Home Mission Board

Our denomination has become Home Mission conscious. In recent years we have made great strides in this direction. I am a strong exponent of foreign missions. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." However, in order to carry on a strong foreign missionary program it is necessary to have a strong base at home. The greater the investment in establishing home mission churches, the greater the returns for foreign missionary work.

In seventy years of denominational history we have not made any phenomenal development or rapid growth. There are many communities, cities and towns in the Maritime Provinces and Maine where we should have Reformed Baptist churches. This adds up to a great reflection on our lack of vision and lack of concern to reach out for the many yet unregenerated souls for whom we are responsible. As a denomination we should be larger. But what should we be larger for? To say that we have a greater organization? No. Our purpose for becoming larger as a denomination should be to reach more souls for Christ.

In any proposition it is the heart which gives it life. The activating motives within an institution may be thought of as the heart—that which gives it the ability and the will to live. In the animal world we think of the heart as the center of life. This is likewise true of spiritual bodies.

The strongest instinct of life is reproduction. We plant a grain of corn. In every kernel there is that something we call life. Under the influence of the warm sun, and the moisture of rain, that life begins to exert itself. It calls upon the surrounding substance to die and decay in order that it may break forth into its consummated design. What is that design? To reproduce itself over and over again. This is the nature of life. This is the design of the Reformed Baptist Church.

The man or woman who by the miracle of divine grace has passed from death unto life should have in their heart a consuming passion to reproduce in others that grace which makes them a Christian.

In order to do this one must give himself. Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." These words were doubtless spoken in reference to Christ Himself. In principle they apply to every child of God. Men and women must give themselves if increase and growth are to be experienced.

It is this heart passion to see men saved that has marked the progress of the Christian church from the day of Pentecost until now. It is only as men have given themselves in sacrifice and service that others might be saved that the church has gained and triumphed.

The strongest motivating influence in the world has been love. Love causes sacrifice. It caused God to give His Son for the world. It impelled Christ to die for us.

Here then is the heart of home missions. "The love of Christ constraineth us." We see in this sentence a driving force. Every Christian should possess this driving

FIRE AT BETHANY!

Early in the morning of Feb. 20th., fire destroyed the "Rogers' Residence" Dormitory at Bethany Bible College. This building housed the young men attending Bethany, and all were forced to flee in their night clothes. Some of the boys had to leap from second-storey windows to escape the flames. Nearly all personal belongings were lost in the conflagration and the building was completely gutted. Fire also broke out in the administration building, but this was brought under control.

While we are saddened over the loss of the Dormitory, the personal belongings of the boys, and the damage done to the administration building, we are thankful to God that no lives were lost and no serious injuries suffered.

The situation for our Bible School is difficult and critical. Temporary arrangements are being worked out to allow the students to complete the year. A joint meeting of the Bethany Bible College Board and the Alliance Executive will be held at Saint John, N. B., March 5th., to consider what action should be taken or recommended. The earnest prayers of all are solicited.

force, the love of Christ. Because of this constraining love we ought to engage ourselves in the greatest task ever, that of getting the gospel out and getting souls saved.

I am not convinced that we as Reformed Baptists are expending ourselves to our full capacity in spiritual, physical, and monetary resources. We are not setting the Maritimes on fire. There is a lot of loose talk about holiness, but very little impelling power of the Holy Ghost. A lot of dried-up experiences in lives, but very few springs of full salvation affecting the souls of our Maritimes.

Other church groups, faith organizations, gospel radio programs, advance forward and expand, but very little active interest on the part of some of our people to see the same type of programming in our denomination. Some of us can't see beyond the adherence to a doctrine, and a self-satisfied experience in God's grace, while the rest of the world dies and goes to hell. This was not the spirit of the early Christian church.

A doctrine, no matter how important it is, is no better than its effectiveness in the lives of those who profess it. The early Christian church was fired up with the power of the Holy Ghost. They went everywhere preaching the word of God. In Acts 12:24 we read that "the Word of God grew and multiplied." Also in Acts we learn that the early Christians gained favour with God and with man.

Home Missions will grow with the spreading of the Word. I know of no better way of spreading the Word of God in this modern age than by radio. We ought to have churches in every city and town in the Maritimes. To enter these towns we would be strangers. A radio ministry, with the sound proclamation of the gospel, would help introduce our Reformed Baptist Alliance to new areas and at the same time perform the ministry of spreading the gospel and reaching the hearts of men and women. In many of our Maritime communities people are starving for want of the gospel message. Where there is a Reformed Baptist Church, they will have an opportunity of hearing this gospel.

What will be our response to the call and challenge of God to preach the gospel to "every creature" in the Maritime Provinces and Maine.