

The King's Highway

AN ADVOCATE OF SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS

VOL. XXXIX

MONCTON, N. B., FEBRUARY 28, 1962

No. 4

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE REFORMED BAPTIST YOUNG PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION

by B. C. Cochrane

I was there when the child was born. In fact, I had the privilege of seeking the official approval of our Church concerning this new "arrival" and a part in deciding what its name would be. The "blessed event" occurred 30 years ago this summer at Beulah Camp. It all happened quite unexpectedly and rather suddenly, as human judgment views such events, but looking backward from this point we realize that it was a plan of Providence that had been long in the making.

Beulah Camp Meeting of 1932 was drawing to a close. Only a few more precious days remained. It had been a great Camp under the able ministry of Dr. C. W. Butler and the gracious presence of the Holy Spirit. A comparatively small group of young people were in attendance at the Camp and they found great inspiration and strength in the fellowship they enjoyed as Christian youth. But now the days of the Camp would soon be history and the young people faced the prospect of returning to the local community where there were few Christian youth and no organization within the Church specifically designed to meet the needs of their age group.

Gathered in the hallway of old Cedardale Dormitory, a mere handful of these young people who had come from widely separated points of the denominational constituency, were discussing the blessings of the Camp and the fellowship that such a gathering provided. The need of fellowship in Christian life and service was emphasized, and then the idea was conceived! Why could we not ask permission of the Alliance to promote a plan of organizing youth groups in the local churches with the view of uniting these groups in a denominational body? This would bring the youth of our Church together in a denomination-wide fellowship and would also give them a special area of fellowship and service at the local level. It was decided that the proposal would be presented to one of our ministers, and, if he approved, to carry it to the Alliance.

In the Alliance Minutes of 1932 the following items are recorded — ". . . a petition from the young people requesting permission to organize a Young People's Association in connection with the Alliance, and that a committee be appointed to assist in this work".

"Resolved that the Alliance Executive be requested to look after this matter".

On July 9, 1932, the Reformed Baptist Young People's Association was officially organized with Constitution and Bye-laws written, and "Christ for the Young People and the Young People for Christ" as its slogan.

In the August 15 issue of the King's Highway, Rev. P. J. Trafton commented editorially, "We are in hearty sympathy with the organization of the Young People's Association and believe there is fine material in the person-

nel of the officers and members of the Association. We are praying and planning for great things". So the Y.P.A. was given official status by the Alliance and an official welcome by the editor of our Church periodical, and the officers went to work with great enthusiasm and high hopes.

During the church year 1932-33, many Young People's Societies were organized and began functioning. A general fund was set up for the support of the Y.P.A. with request made for modest financial support from the local Society. The self-denial fund was also inaugurated that year as a means of raising money for missions. Special meetings were held in local churches and in conjunction with District Meetings, and the denominational youth programme was under way.

Coincident with the formation of the Y.P.A. was the development of a denomination-wide increase of young people and interest in youth work. It was a year of unusual growth in this area of the Church life. It seemed that the birth of the Y.P.A. was perfectly timed, and believing it to have been in the order of Divine Providence, we would expect it to be that way. A record high attendance of young people was registered at the Camp Meeting of 1933, and the fires of enthusiasm among young and old mounted still higher. All concerned, ministers and lay people alike, were pleased with the growth of this newest child of the Church and inspired with the prospects of the service it would render.

Across the years the Y.P.A. and its Y.P.S. groups affiliating have been increasingly important and influential in the life of our Church. Attendance at Camp Meetings has increased year by year until youth make up the largest section of the congregations. Thousands of dollars have been raised and contributed by our young people toward projects local and denominational. Highly profitable Bible study and memorization plans have been developed and promoted with outstanding success. Dozens of fine young people have moved out of the youth groups into full time service for the Lord at home or on the mission fields. The annual Youth Rally which has been held for fifteen years has outgrown our largest church buildings and is second only to Alliance and Camp Meeting in the annual gatherings of our denomination.

We who have watched the Y.P.A. grow and develop from infancy, through adolescence, and to its present healthy and mature state, have been pleased and proud with its progress. A generation yet unborn when the Y.P.A. came into existence gives capable and consecrated leadership to this important branch of the Work. May they be succeeded by others of like character, and so may it please God to guide and bless until Jesus comes!

Special Youth Edition