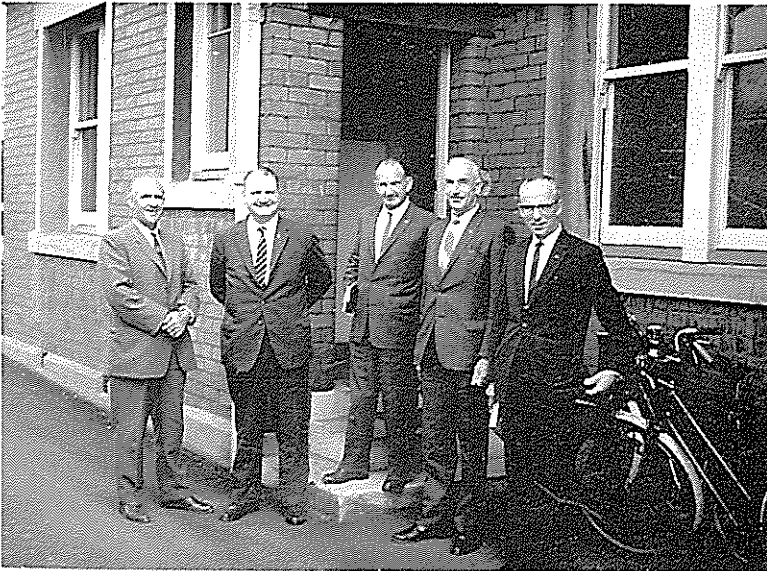


IN THE BEGINNING, GOD

In the beginning God was moving in the hearts of a few men who were meeting regularly for prayer and Bible Study as members of the Gideons, in Christchurch, New Zealand. They were concerned for bringing the Word of God to people in all walks of life; but one aspect of their work, presenting Testaments in schools, gave them a burden for young people growing up in a period which saw the birth of the phrase 'The Permissive Society'.

It was the evening of 31st March, 1963. Don Laugesen, Managing Director of Motorways, NZ, a keen member of Gideons and also of the Board of the Bible Training Institute, sat in the service at St Aidan's Anglican Church, Bryndwr, listening with growing excitement to the message. The preacher, an ex-Headmaster, was relating his experiences of teaching in England and how boys and girls, some from very difficult backgrounds, were changed after they handed over their lives to Jesus Christ. Impressed vividly on Don Laugesen's heart and mind that night was the vision of a Christian interdenominational school where every single person employed would be *'a truly born-again and committed Christian'*. The preacher was Peter Chignell,



Gideons, 1983. Max Paynter, Ted Davies, Don Laugesen, Cliff Wells, John Taylor.

at that time Director of Christian Education for the Diocese of Christchurch. The next morning when Don shared his vision with his sister Marian her words were, *Well, go ahead and start such a school.'*

At lunch that day Don met as usual with a small group of Gideons for

Bible Study and prayer, and shared with them the plan that was forming in his mind. Those first colleagues were Ted Davies, Christchurch Manager of the National Airways Corporation and Secretary for the Evangelical Alliance, John Taylor, an accountant, a loyal supporter of Riccarton Baptist Church, and Cliff Wells, an architect and long-serving member of Cashmere Presbyterian Church. All were enthusiastic about the proposal, and agreed to meet again soon to discuss the initiation of a Christian School project.

It is interesting to note that Ted Davies had met Peter Chignell early in January at the Waikuku Children's Mission, when their discussion centred around the idea of a Christian School. On 21st February Ted, as Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, had, unknown to any of the Gideon Group, written to England seeking advice about the possibility of establishing a school staffed by '*committed Christians*' which would combine '*Biblically based teaching in the Christian faith*' with '*a first-rate general education*'.

Very shortly Don Laugesen had made contact with Peter Chignell to ask whether he would be prepared to share in the project. He records the occasion in the first School Magazine. '*Before answering the challenge Mr Chignell said, "Let us have prayer about this great matter, so that we do not ask God to bless our plans but that we might know his plans for such a school." So in the back seat of a car we had our first prayer meeting for this Christian School in our city, and we committed it into the hands of Almighty God.*'

By the end of that week Mrs Chignell had located the Middleton Grange property which was being offered for sale. Cliff Wells, along with Don Laugesen and one or two others, went to inspect the buildings and grounds which consisted of the grand old house with approximately 5 acres of land left from the original 200 acre block.

On Thursday 11 April a special lunch hour meeting was held in the National Party Headquarters Committee Room at 78 Lichfield Street. Those present at this 'Inaugural Meeting' were Dr John A Lewis, Messrs P L Chignell, C J Cross, J E Davies, D Laugesen, L K Laugesen, W J Taylor and C B Wells. John Lewis, an Anglican, was a medical man in general practice, much loved by his patients. Jim Cross, a well known member of the Rutland Street Open Brethren Assembly, and Council member of the Scripture Union, was the founding headmaster of Christchurch's newest secondary school, Burnside High School. Keith Laugesen, brother of Don, and member of St Ninians Presbyterian Church, was the Managing Director of Midland Motors.

Apologies were received from Rev. Wynford Davies (Presbyterian) and Mr M L Paynter, another from Rutland Street Open Brethren, and Manager of a large building firm.

That day a committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Don Laugesen, with John Taylor as Secretary, to '*prayerfully examine and consider the possibility of founding a school, undenominational in character, which will at one and the same time provide a Biblically based teaching in the Christian faith and a first rate general education*'. Mr Paynter did not feel able to accept the invitation to join the committee, and Mr L K Laugesen was to resign on 3rd May owing to the pressure of other commitments.

Already the foundations had been laid. The men who gathered came from

a wide range of denominations in which they were each well known and respected. They were men with a strong personal faith in the living God. The Bible was their daily food, and prayer their constant practice. They were also marked by a zeal to win people for Jesus Christ, their own faith having been quickened by the Billy Graham Crusade of 1959. These elements have continued as distinctive marks of the school to the present day.

Site for the School



*Aerial View, 1964. 1988
Boundaries marked.
(V. C. Browne photo.)*

When the Committee met again on Saturday 20 April there was unanimous agreement that steps should be taken to commence *'as soon as possible, a Preparatory Day School for boys and girls'*. There was clear recognition that in due course other questions would have to be faced such as *'the provision of boarding facilities and/or the establishment of a Secondary Department'*.

It is not surprising that the term *'Preparatory'* should have been used for a school in the city of Christchurch, where both English traditions and private school education are strong. Members of the group had little confidence that the kind of Christian education they envisaged could be provided by the existing denominational schools. The term *'Preparatory'* was soon dropped, and the school was usually described in official publications as *'A Christian School for Boys and Girls'*.

Already good financial planning was in evidence. A study of the financial prospects of the school was discussed at this second meeting which indicated an initial capital outlay of \$40,000, and routine operating costs for the first year of \$13,000. Estimated income, based on 130 pupils, was \$16,000. A legal adviser, Mr Glynn Parry, was appointed.



Middleton Grange, 1882.
From the Painting by Sir
Henry Wigam.

The immediate issue though was to be the site of the school. The Middleton Grange Property was on the market, and seemed attractive, but it was felt important to explore all possibilities. A special period of prayer was held during the meeting to seek the will of the Lord, and it was agreed that a request be made for the Middleton Property to be held till Monday 6 May. Questions as to its location, proximity to transport and size were at issue; but was there anything else more suitable? By the following Friday there was no change in this situation and the members pledged themselves to pray specifically that if another property was available, the Lord would make it known to them. Among the verses read at the beginning of that meeting was

'Therefore sirs be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.' (Acts 27.25).

Decision day was 3rd May. The only other suitable site located was not available and the Chairman and Legal Adviser were authorised to negotiate the purchase of the Middleton Grange property. It was also announced that gifts of \$31,000 had been received, and a promise of \$4,000. By 6th May arrangements had been made to purchase Middleton Grange for \$24,600 with possession on 1st October, 1963, but with permission to commence work on the site before that time.

Despite difficulties from time to time over zoning and the need for playing fields, time has proved the site to be eminently suitable. The Old House with its mature trees has become the focal point of the school, which although newly founded, could by its very situation inherit a tradition which went back to the founding of the Canterbury Settlement. On 26 August 1850, the year of its founding, Rev. Thomas Rowley of Willey Rectory, Shropshire, purchased a 200 acre block which was to become known as the Middleton block. Viewed on the map today, this block would have been bounded by Riccarton Road, Blenheim Road, Hansons Lane and Wharenui Road. It was his son Thomas who took up the land on his father's behalf, and almost

certainly built the original front portion of the Grange, constructed of rammed earth. A possible date is 1858, as his marriage in St Peter's Church, Upper Riccarton, was celebrated on 23 July, 1857.

In 1861 Rowley partitioned his property through what is now Middleton Road, and made over the western half to G A E Ross and Rev. Croasdaile Bowen. Croasdaile became the first vicar of St Peter's Church in 1857 at the age of 25, but he did not marry until 1880. It was his brother Charles who took up residence in the Grange in the early 1860's following his marriage to Georgina Markham. Charles came to Canterbury in 1850, and for two years was Secretary to Godley, the leader of the new settlement. By 1855 he was the Provincial Treasurer and already set on a career of public service. In 1864 he was appointed Resident Magistrate of Christchurch, a post he held for the next ten years. Then in 1875 he was appointed a member of the Executive Council, Minister of Justice, in the national government in Wellington, and entered Parliament through the Kaiapoi electorate. One of his strong interests was education.

Although a loyal Anglican and active churchman, Sir Charles was not in favour of denominational schools. As Chairman of the Board of Education in Canterbury in 1873-74 he was able to work for the opening of many public schools. Then in 1877 he was the Minister responsible for the Education Act which established New Zealand's free, compulsory and secular system of State schooling. He saw clearly that the religious differences of his day ruled out any agreed Christian teaching in the schools. He believed that *'when we establish a system out of public funds, and while men differ so seriously on religious subjects as they do now, we must take care that we do not allow every schoolmaster to give such religious teaching as he thinks right and suitable.... The notion that we can agree upon some general nondescript form of religion is a fallacy.'*

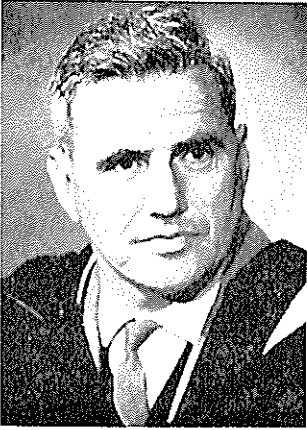
It may seem somewhat ironical that in the house and grounds he loved so much a private independent Christian school should be established, but if Charles Bowen were to apply his incisive mind to the situation which exists today, he could well recognise the need for a school in which the spiritual dimension of life is fundamental.

Sir Charles died in 1917. After the death of his wife four years later the property was taken over by their daughter, who married John Studholme. Then in 1946, Middleton, only 23 acres by this time, was sold and the 80 year old association with the Bowen family came to an end. In 1950 the land was sold again, and after roading and subdivision just under 5 acres was left when the Christian Schools Trust took possession of the property on 1st October, 1963.



Sir Charles Bowen.

Legal Basis and Control



Peter Chignell.

With the site secured, attention now turned to establishing a clear legal framework, and a system of control adequate for the strains of a developing school. It says much for the wisdom and foresight of the committee that this too has stood the test of time.

At the meeting of 25th May the Legal Adviser presented a draft constitution, and out of vigorous discussion there emerged a number of important resolutions. Control of the school was to be vested in a private Trust and the first trustees would be Rev. W Davies, Dr J A Lewis, Messrs C Cross, J E Davies, D Laugesen, G Parry, W J Taylor and C B Wells. Any additional Trust members would be appointed only by the unanimous vote of The Trust. The Trust would be known as *'The Christian Schools' Trust* and the name of the first *'preparatory school'* would be *'Middleton Grange School'*. Day to day operation of the school would be vested in a Board of Governors appointed by the Trust, and the initial members of the Board would be Rev. W Davies, Dr J A Lewis, Messrs J E Davies, D Laugesen, W J Taylor and C B Wells. Immediate steps would be taken to add others to the Board.

Two other important decisions were made at this meeting. One was a resolution, *'That it be established practice for all meetings to be opened with Scripture reading and prayer.'* This practice extended into all school functions and has continued as a distinctive characteristic of the school. The other important decision was to confirm the appointment of Mr P L Chignell as the first Headmaster of Middleton Grange School.

Peter Chignell was a man who loved much and was greatly loved. He was evidently one who lived in close personal relationship with his Lord, one to whom prayer was the natural recourse in moments of trial or triumph. He had the ability to inspire others with his enthusiastic faith and vision for the future of the school. He had a deep love for children which, along with his ready sense of humour, enabled him to relate well with them. Above all he had a passion to introduce them and anyone he met to his greatest Friend, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was no accident that the chorus the first group of children learnt on the opening day was, *'Jesus the Saviour is of boys and girls'*.

A married man with six children, he brought to his task a varied experience of life and types of education. He had learned to fly while still a schoolboy and in 1940 joined the Royal Air Force. He continued to fly till 1945 when he was to spend two years in hospital recovering from injuries sustained while flying. In 1947 he entered Queen's College, Cambridge, and graduated Master of Arts in 1951, after which he took up a teaching position. In 1954 he was appointed Headmaster of Christchurch School, a junior co-educational foundation in London. Then in September 1958 he was appointed a lecturer at the North Riding Teachers' College, and a year later accepted an overseas post with the Royal Air Force as Headmaster of a large co-educational Secondary School in Singapore. He came to Christchurch in September 1962 as Director of Christian Education for the diocese.

For the next three and a half years the development of the school with all its problems and growing pains, was to be for him an all-consuming task.

Wider Support

With the new school due to commence at the beginning of 1964, the initial group recognised the need for widespread support from all sections of the evangelical Christian community as well as the need for some female representation on the Board. Before the next meeting of the full Board on 22 June, approaches had been made to several people whose appointments were confirmed at that meeting. They were, ladies first, Mrs Hope Warnock, (Baptist) trained Primary teacher, Mrs Nora Cross, wife of Jim, Rev. H F Thomson, then Secretary of the Church Missionary Society in New Zealand and well-known as a children's worker for many years with Scripture Union, Mr Fred Baird, (Methodist) an accountant and executive in a large clothing firm, Mr Ernie Bennetts, (Salvation Army), manager of the Christchurch bookshop of The Scripture Union and Mr Cameron Purdie, (Open Brethren) a veterinary surgeon.

Also introduced to the members of the Board on this occasion was Mr Aalt Verkerk, a member of the immigrant Dutch community associated with the Reformed Church, and owner of a successful butchery business. He spoke of his experience of Christian schools in Holland, and of the burden his community had for their children to receive Biblical instruction and be taught by Christian teachers. Following this there was a unanimous invitation for him to join the Board. This was to prove a most significant move, for the loyal support of the Reformed Church community was to be a vital factor in the early success of the school, one third of the first day pupils coming from that source. In addition, the whole concept of the Christian School as developed at Middleton Grange, was to be enriched by the scholarly Biblical thought from the Reformed tradition.

This was not their only contribution to the nature of the emerging school. Very few of the immigrant Dutch at that point of time had penetrated into the professions. In many cases they had come as assisted immigrants with little more resources than the clothing and personal effects in their suitcases when they arrived in the late 40s and early 50s. They were in business ventures of various kinds, farmers, market gardeners, builders. They were hardworking, used to making the most of the opportunities before them. In a city with the strong English tradition of Christchurch, they provided a valuable counter to the tendency for a private school to acquire something of a superior 'class' character.

Developments had now reached the point where it was important to present the whole scheme to potential parents. Friday 5th July was the date chosen for an open meeting at Elizabeth House. It was a stormy night, but in spite of this over 200 people turned up to fill the place to overflowing. Those who were present at that evening still recall the air of expectation and excitement which marked the gathering.

Chairman Don Laugesen set out clearly and enthusiastically the objectives of the School and introduced Peter Chignell as Headmaster; Cliff Wells described the property and the buildings planned; Mrs Chignell presented samples of the uniform which was being developed (Hunting Fraser tartan

frock for winter and pink gingham for summer for the girls); and John Taylor described how fees would be paid. The copy of the first prospectus, which was available at this meeting, quoted fees as 20 pounds per term for children aged 5-7 years and 25 pounds for those aged 8-13 years. Already the Board had decided that there would be a 40% concession for children of ministers, 60% for children of missionaries, and 10% reductions for each child after the first. The possibility of the sponsorship of children had also been discussed. There was a genuine desire to ensure that all who wanted their children to attend should be enabled to do so. In the price system of the day the fees presented a substantial outlay, especially for those with several children attending at the same time. In the weeks and months that followed many families had to wrestle with the issue of how they could find the funds for their children to be part of this new school; but by the end of July 20 children had been enrolled from twelve families. In faith the Board was praying for 50 children for the opening day on 1st February 1964.



Dick & Jopie Bouman.

Included in that first group of 20 children to be enrolled were two with the name of Bouman. When Dick Bouman was giving details about himself to Peter Chignell he was asked for his occupation. When he said he was a gardener, Peter told him that just the night before the Board had been praying for a suitable person to look after the school grounds. Would Dick be prepared to do this? By the end of July Dick had been appointed as groundsman and caretaker to occupy the rear and upper portion of the Old House from 1st October when possession was taken.

From that day Dick and his wife Jopie have made their own unique contribution to the development of the school. Dick loved creating beauty, and in the school gardens and grounds has developed an environment which makes a distinct impression on every visitor. He loved the children too, even the difficult ones who might at times be assigned to work alongside him in

the hope they might 'work out' their problems. He was always at the morning prayer meetings, always willing, and enthusiastically recommended the school to the many visitors he conducted around it. As a member of the Reformed Church he provided an invaluable link with a group of parents who were sensitive to influences which they felt to be contrary to their understanding of Christian faith. His cheerfulness and good humour, together with his genuine love for the Lord, made him one who was always a welcome companion and friend. Jopie too made her own distinct contribution. She had a fine grasp of the principles of Christian education, and was a loyal advocate for the school.

Margaret Bell.

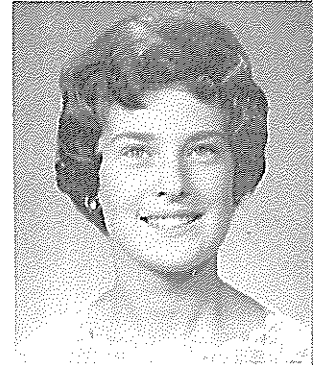


Gathering the Staff

Hope Warnock, the first lady member of the Board, recalls Peter Chignell being asked the question, *'If you had to choose, Mr Chignell, would you choose a well-qualified teacher or a dedicated Christian as a staff member?'*

Anne Crawford.

His reply, *'I wouldn't have either. I'd wait until I found a dedicated Christian who was also a well-qualified teacher.'* Here was another focus for faith and prayer, that the Lord would put the vision of the Christian school upon the hearts of Christian teachers. At this stage there were many who were somewhat sceptical about the prospects of the school, or too involved in the pressures for advancement in the State school system to be really interested. Many also genuinely felt that the place for Christians was to be witnessing in the system, not withdrawing from it. There was certainly no flood of applications for positions in the new school.



It was of course not easy to communicate with potential staff, as practising teachers were used to looking in the Education Gazette for vacant positions. Until the school was registered, it could not advertise in the Gazette. So on Friday 7th June Peter Chignell visited the Bible Training Institute (later Bible College of New Zealand) in Auckland to put before students the challenge of teaching in the new school. This was to prove a most fruitful visit, for two of the initial staff, Ann Crawford and Margaret Bell, were to come from this source. A group of students also established a prayer group there to pray for the needs of the school. Anne Crawford was the first to be appointed in July, and Margaret Bell as 'Infant Mistress' in September. At this point 36 enrolments had been received, and it was decided that further appointments be reviewed in the light of the numbers expected. By the middle of the following month, however, it was resolved that the school should commence as a four class school, and the Board interviewed two candidates for the remaining position. Geert Mostert was the applicant selected and so the initial group of staff was complete, four teachers and one groundsman-caretaker.

Geert Mostert.



Anne Crawford had Teacher's Certificates from the London University Institute of Education and the National Froebel Foundation, with an award of merit in Art. She taught for three years in a junior school in England and then for a year at Island Bay School in Wellington before going to Bible College. Margaret Bell trained at Auckland Teachers' College and taught for

two years at Grey Lynn School before her time at Bible College. Geert Mostert was a married man with four children. From 1948-1954 he had studied in the USA, and had graduated Th.B. from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. He later trained for the teaching of English in secondary schools in Holland, and then after emigrating to New Zealand trained as a primary teacher at Christchurch Teachers' College in 1960-61. In 1962-63 he was an Assistant Master at Burwood School, and it was there he met Peter Chignell, who in preparation for setting up at Middleton Grange, was spending some time at the school as a relieving teacher. He remembers praying with Peter beside the swimming pool about the possibility of joining the new school.

There is something special about sharing in the beginnings of a new venture. For Anne Niven (neè Crawford) the feeling of oneness and family marked the two years she spent at the school. Margaret Aspden (neè Bell) has written, *'I've always been convinced that Middleton Grange was a sovereign work of God — it could never have happened otherwise. Like a great jig-saw it was coming together, and we were privileged to drop a few pieces into place.'* She was to remain for ten years, the last four as Senior Mistress in the Primary Department, always greatly loved and respected by her pupils. Geert Mostert left after nine years, constrained by the call to bring the Gospel to children in Holland through the work of the Child Evangelism Fellowship in which he is still engaged.

Principles for the appointment of staff were established early. The Board minutes of 29 July record a resolution which provided for the Headmaster to advertise for staff, replies to be addressed to the Registrar, and then for these to be passed to the Headmaster who would bring his recommendation for appointment to the Board. The first record of any applicant being interviewed by the Board was in the appointment of Geert Mostert, but this soon became established practice.

From the beginning it was recognised that the success of the school would depend very largely on the calibre of staff recruited, and quickly a pattern emerged. First, every appointment was to be a matter for prayer that the right people might be found. Information about applicants needed to establish not just their academic achievements and teaching experience, but also their Christian commitment. The form of application asked therefore questions about Church association and experience in Christian youth activities. Then there were two key questions, *'What are your convictions concerning personal salvation?'*, and *'What are your convictions concerning the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures?'* On top of all this the applicant was asked to sign a copy of the Statement of Belief and to provide the names of three referees.

The next stage was a personal interview with the Headmaster. This usually established whether or not the applicant was in full sympathy with the aims of the school, as well as clarifying professional experience and attitudes. By the time referees had been contacted a clear picture usually emerged, although on occasions, only at the final interview with the Board did the answer come clear. At an early stage the Board established the principle that no appointment should be made immediately following an interview. A period of at least two

or three days was allowed during which Board members continued to pray concerning the appointment. Any objection by a Board member would be sufficient to either delay the appointment or pass over the applicant.

It must be said that such a system is cumbersome and time consuming, and yet my own experience convinced me that it was justified. This is not to say that no mistakes were ever made, but in general, by the time an appointment was confirmed, there was real confidence that the right person had been found. The overruling desire was that the Lord's will should be established, and if there was uncertainty or divided opinions, further prayer and deliberation was needed. The spirit of all this is reflected in an item for prayer in the July 1963 Praise and Prayer Sheet. *'That the members (of Board) may gather together with one accord under the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. That God's will may be done, even in the smallest administrative details of this project.'*

The Doctrinal Statement

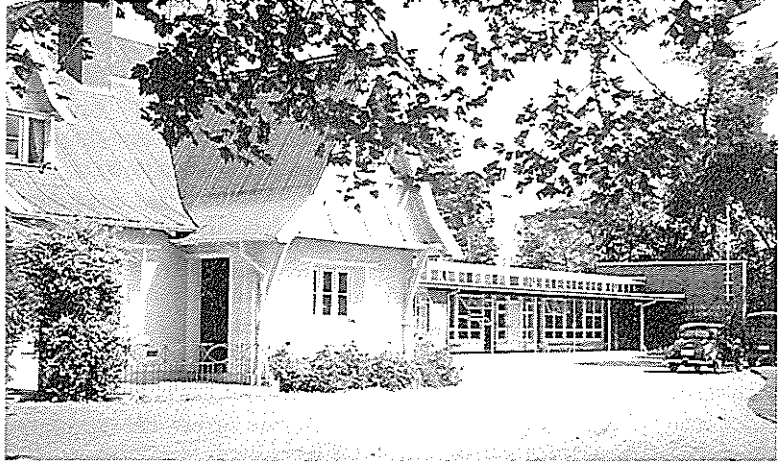
At the May 1963 meeting of the Trust, a sub-committee consisting of Rev. W Davies, Messrs Cross, Davies and Parry was set up to prepare a statement of belief for consideration by the whole Board. When the statement was presented at the June meeting it was decided that members should consider it for a further month. On 29th July the statement was adopted unchanged but with a very significant addition.

'In signing this statement I desire to declare my faith in Jesus Christ as my Saviour, Lord and God.'

This statement has continued unchanged. To some it has appeared very conservative. Others have wanted to define more precisely some of its statements; but it too has stood the test of time, and provides a clear statement of the fundamentals of the faith, acceptable to people from a very wide denominational range. It quickly became established custom that the statement should be signed afresh each year by all members of Board and Staff. There has been at least one instance of a member of staff resigning because he could no longer affirm it.

The Statement of Belief became an integral part of the Trust Deed, and indicated the clear intent of the founders to safeguard the vital spiritual principles and beliefs which were to be basic in the life of the school.

There is one little footnote here. In the June meeting of The Board a decision was made that no official chaplain should be appointed. In an Interdenominational school any such appointment could be open to question, and to my knowledge the matter was never again raised. The concept of the Christian School carried with it the understanding that every member of staff was involved in ministry to the students.



School Buildings, 4th
February, 1964.

There are no names on the foundation stone laid in the first new buildings of Middleton Grange School. It simply says, 'To the glory of God'. No architect named, no builder, no prominent person unveiling.

All this was quite deliberate, and represented the genuine desire of the Trust that no personalities should be given prominence. Similarly no prominence was given to the people who donated large sums to finance the project. Approximately \$50,000 was needed to purchase the property and build the first classroom block which consisted of two classrooms, cloakrooms and toilets, a Headmaster's office and a Staffroom. All of this and the money for equipment, came from donations, so that the school opened free of debt.

Cliff Wells, architect to the Board, was given the task of developing the plans for the buildings and carried that responsibility for the next twenty years. The buildings as they stand today are a testimony to his skill and capacity to adapt to changing circumstances and needs. This work was his voluntary contribution to the development of the school. Writing about these early days Cliff says, "*The idea appealed to me right from the start, and I was very enthusiastic. — Every week we all met to pray about the project to know what God wanted us to do in every aspect as 'Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.'*" Cliff was a quick efficient worker. Before the end of May he had a sketch plan of possible additions to the property, and the full plans were completed before the end of June. They provided for six classrooms together with toilet blocks and other facilities. The aim was to build for durability and ease of maintenance, and also to meet the current standards for school buildings. It was expected that within two years of opening the school would accommodate 250 pupils from Primers — Form 2.

On the basis of an offer to build at cost, the contract for the first stage was awarded to the firm of M L Paynter Ltd, and the team of builders moved on to the site on 16th September. Steady progress was made and by the Open Day on 7 December the buildings were well on the way to completion. The

300 people who came on that fine Saturday were impressed. There was considerable interest, and many inquiries about enrolling children.

It should not be thought though that everything proceeded without difficulty. As the whole project developed, the complexities of operating a school became apparent, and there were problems to be solved, hesitations to be overcome.

Transport

The need of transport to the school for younger children soon emerged as an important factor. Mr Verkerk raised the question in the Board on 16th September. The answer came in November in the form of a V W Kombi Van, which was placed in the care of Geert Mostert. The van, painted in the school colours, with the school crest on the front, became for many people their first introduction to the school. As the school grew the fleet grew ultimately to six; but with many school staff involved in driving morning and evening, undue strain developed. In February 1969 the first bus was hired and over the next few years a regular service with four buses was established to serve a large part of the city. The cost was always subsidised by the Board, but the availability of reliable transport was a key factor in the growth of the Primary Department.



The Original Kombi Van, 1964.

*In Van: Mr. Chignell, Darryl Honeybone.
Standing: Meryl Munro, Herminette van der Schaaf, Paul Burgin, Brian Legge, Roderick Webb.*

Uniform

A special meeting of the Board on 14 June 1963 was needed to examine and approve the proposed uniform for Middleton Grange School. It does not appear that there was any thought given to the possibility of a school without a uniform. In those days at any rate, all private schools and many state schools, had uniforms, and especially in Christchurch the traditions were strong.

The basic uniform approved for winter wear included a pinafore dress in Hunting Fraser tartan with blazer of 'muted' green to match. Summer uniform would be pink gingham frock with white Peter Pan Collar, bloomers also to be of pink gingham! There would be a green jersey or cardigan of similar colour to the blazer.

Dress uniform for boys was to be grey shorts, white shirt, plain 'muted' green tie with blazer. Caps would be the same material as the blazer with the school badge worked into them. Hats for girls were left undecided at this stage, but the first full uniform list provided for a winter felt hat (breton style) and a straw hat (breton style) for summer. The same uniform list included a tartan tie for the boys, hopefully in the Hunting Fraser tartan, but apparently this refinement was not able to be achieved, and the boys had to settle for a plain red tie.

From that day uniform has continued as a perennial topic of debate and sometimes dissension, the major objection usually being the cost. The costs of producing an exclusive school uniform are naturally higher than for mass produced items. The Board, however, saw a distinctive uniform as an essential element in establishing the school's identity in the community, and this view has continued to prevail.

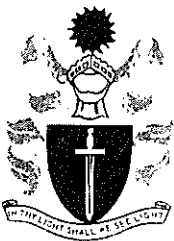
The cost factor through the years continued to be a problem. It was alleviated in two ways. Some aspects of uniform were simplified to reduce costs, and then over time a second-hand uniform pool was built up. As the school became established this meant that it was usually possible to outfit a student at very reasonable cost.

The School Crest and Motto

One vital part of the school uniform was the school crest and motto. This was designed by Mrs Chignell and first draft was presented to the Trust on 25th May. With minor modifications it became established as a symbol of all that the school stood for.

Basic to the emblem is the red shield — the shield of faith, with the gold sword emblazoned on it, the *'Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God'*. Above the shield is the *'helmet of salvation'* and the sun representing *'The Sun of righteousness'* (Malachi 4: 2). This was the name under which the prophet Malachi foretold the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The motto was taken from Psalm 36: 9

*'For with thee is the fountain of life;
in thy light shall we see light.'*



As the first school magazine put it the motto 'is really expressing the hope and belief that everyone connected with the school..... will one day come to the 'spirits of just men made perfect.' (Hebrews 12: 23) and 'Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (Eph.4: 13).

Fulfilment



Open Day, 7th December, 1963. Peter Chignell, Don Laugesen and Julie Wagner, (who unveiled the foundation stone.) (Green & Hahn)

As commencement day drew nearer there was real concern as to whether enrolments would reach the target figure. The Open Day on Saturday 7 December was to be the major focus for recruiting further students. It was a fine sunny afternoon and about 300 people came. By this time the new building was well advanced, and much interest was aroused. There were many enquiries for enrolments; but when the Board met the following Monday it was reported that a number of registrations had been withdrawn, and the total registered for the opening day was 30, well short of the faith goal of 50 students. This was to be a matter for earnest prayer. Over the next six weeks those prayers were answered in full and generous measure, so that by the end of January over 60 children were registered for the opening day, and enrolments were continuing to come in.

On the Saturday before opening it was Visitors' Day for parents and children to meet with Staff and Board members. The Staff had been preparing during the previous two weeks for the opening – textbooks, equipment, furniture, and routes for the school vans, for already the number had grown to two. That day, and the opening day that followed have been well described by Margaret Bell in the first school magazine.

I will not quickly forget that meeting in the Middle Room of the Old House. There was such an expectant hush, such a bond between us all as together

we put our hands to the plough.

After prayer and discussion Mr Chignell again affirmed to us all that which he had always stressed — that if a Christian school was to be worthy of the name it must aim always for the highest standards in all areas of education. To see the faith and trust these parents had, not only in a wonderful God but in us the teachers under God, was sufficient, not only to deepen our sense of responsibility, but to quell any last doubts we may have had. If the parents believed we could do it through God, we would. If they were prepared (in many cases) to sacrifice to give their children a Christian education, we were determined to give of our best. And what a thrill it was to be told that we were going to open debt-free!

And so the First Day dawned bright and clear — Opening Day — 4th February, 1964. The first children came trickling in very early, followed by a flood of children. The first Kombi rolled up on the loose metal playground, bringing its merry load.

We teachers looked at one another and smiled again. There could be no turning back now. But who would want to.

The first bell rang. We assembled in the Middle Room, sixty four children, four teachers and a Great God. We sang songs of praise and prayed that God's blessing might always be upon His school. Middleton Grange Christian School was born.'

First Day Pupils, 1964.



APPENDIX A

**THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS' TRUST
and BOARD OF GOVERNORS
of MIDDLETON GRANGE SCHOOL**

(Those who are or have been members of the Trust are marked with an asterisk.)

Name	Date of Appointment	Date of Resignation
C J Cross *	11/4/63	May 1983
Member only of the Trust		
J E Davies *	11/4/63	Dec 1982
Continued as member of the Trust till April, 1988, when he was appointed an Advisory Member.		
(Rev) W Davies	11/4/63	July 1963
D Laugesen *	11/4/63	Dec 1982
Chairman of Board, 1963-1976 Continues as member of the Trust		
(Dr) J A Lewis *	11/4/63	Nov 1970 May 1983
Resigned as member of the Trust		
W J Taylor *	4/4/63	Deceased Feb 1981
Registrar till March 1976		
C B Wells *	11/4/63	May 1985
Continues as member of the Trust		
F H Baird	4/6/63	Dec 1980
E Bennetts	4/6/63	1965
(Mrs) N Cross	4/6/63	Feb 1968
W.L.C. Purdie *	4/6/63	
Chairman 1977 -		
(Rev) H.F. Thomson	4/6/63	Mar 1972
A Verkerk	4/6/63	Oct 1972
(Mrs) H Warnock	4/6/63	Dec 1964
G G Parry *	4/6/63	Deceased 11 Sep 88
Legal Adviser - Member only of the Trust		
(Rev) A S Munro	Sept 1965	Aug 1975
(Rev) D G Stewart	Oct 1966	Mar 1972
(Mrs) G Currie	Aug 1968	
(Rev) W Wiersma	Feb 1971	May 1980
(Mrs) E Brown	Nov 1971	Deceased 10 Aug 76
B McConchie	April 1972	Dec 1980
(Dr) W D Troughton	March 1975	Aug 1986
A C Wildbore	March 1975	Dec 1986

H J Taylor *	March 1976	Dec 1987
Registrar from March 1976 - December 1988		
Appointed to Trust 15 July, 1982, and continues		
(Mrs) S Close	Aug 1977	May 1978
(Mrs) J Stoop	Aug 1977	
(Rev) R Yule	July 1979	Dec 1981
J C Bosma	May 1980	Dec 1986
(Mrs) M K Robertson	May 1981	
A J Andrews	May 1981	Aug 1987
R Allan	May 1981	Aug 1986
(Rev) P Stadt	Aug 1982	Jan 1984
P R Van Rij *	Oct 1982	
Legal Adviser from 3 November, 1978. Member of Trust from 15 July, 1982.		
(Pastor) M Palmer	June 1983	Dec 1985
B J Koller	May 1985	
(Rev) B Kroon	Feb 1987	
G R Pearman	Feb 1987	
A W Young	Feb 1987	
D A H Brown	Mar 1987	
Mrs H Robinson	Aug 1987	
H P Yarrell	Feb 1988	

Note: Members of the Trust formally appoint the members of the Board, although this is usually done on the recommendation of the Board.